Implementing a Scripted Literacy Curriculum: A Culturally Responsive Approach

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Abstract

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This qualitative case study researched the strategies fifth-grade teachers used to integrate culturally responsive instructional practices when using a scripted literacy curriculum. Research recommendations in the fields of differentiated instruction and multicultural education are often in direct conflict with the pedagogical philosophy of cultural literacy, the body of research associated with E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge curriculum. This study addressed expressly this tension. Data collection included observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis with three participants. Data analysis involved open-coding, analytic coding, and then thematic coding. The results showed that teachers who modified the curriculum used two specific culturally responsive strategies: developing a caring classroom community and supporting access to challenging curriculum through entry task activities. The results

demonstrated a potential intersection of culturally responsive teaching, differentiated instruction, and multicultural education.

Keywords: culturally responsive, Core Knowledge, cultural literacy

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Introduction

High quality instruction has the potential to close the achievement gap between White students and students of color, as well as the gap between students in poverty and students who do not qualify for NSLP. Because the practices of differentiated instruction are so closely aligned with what research considers high-quality instruction, it is highly possible that differentiating instruction can help close the achievement gap. Exploring differentiated instruction in school settings that are racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse can illuminate the possibilities of closing the achievement gap through differentiated instruction. Teachers who actively differentiate instruction are theoretically more likely to modify their curriculum and instructional practices to make learning relevant for their students. They are also more likely to hold high expectations of their students while meeting students at their level of readiness, and then designing cognitively challenging learning experiences at students' challenge level. Teachers who differentiate instruction are also more likely to use flexible grouping strategies to accommodate the learning needs of each student. Strong instruction is largely dependent on teachers who utilize best practices, challenge every student, and provide the scaffolds each student needs to meet their learning potential.

Contextualizing the Problem

Many scholars have documented the achievement gap between White children and children of color, as well as the achievement gap between students who qualify for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and those who do not (Banks, 2004; Howard, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2007). Recent data has shown a narrowing in graduation rates between White and Black students, and between White and Hispanic students (National Education Association [NEA], 2015). Graduation rates for Hispanic students increased by 4.2 percentage points and 3.7

percentage points for Black students (NEA, 2015). Achievement gaps on standardized tests have also narrowed in certain states. For example, Black and White achievement gaps in fourth grade mathematics scores decreased in 15 states between 1990 and 2007, and in four states for eighth grade mathematics scores in the same time period (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2009). Black and white achievement gaps in fourth grade reading also decreased in three states between 1990 and 2007 (NCES, 2009). However, significant gains in eighth grade reading scores between Black and White students between 1990 and 2007 were made in only one state (NCES, 2009).

Despite small gains in closing the achievement gap, as of 2013 Black and Hispanic students still scored "significantly lower" than their peers in reading and math (NEA). Additionally, students eligible for NSLP have demonstrated lower rates of proficiency in math and reading than students not eligible for NSLP in fourth and eighth grade. Twenty-two percent of fourth grade students eligible for free lunch achieved proficiency in math in 2013 compared to 46% of students not eligible for free or reduced lunch (NEA, 2015). Further, the levels of "below basic" proved higher in reading and math for both fourth and eighth grade students who qualify for NSLP than students who are not eligible for NSLP. Though small gains in closing the achievement gap are important, the gap still exists between students of color and White students, and students in poverty and those who are not.

While many scholars have acknowledged the existence of an achievement gap, its cause is largely debated. Some education experts have attributed the achievement gap to the historical denial of educational opportunities for children of color (Kaestle, 1983; Kozol, 1991; Kozol, 2005; Siddle-Walker, 1996; Moss, 2009). Siddle-Walker (1996) and Moss (2009) discussed alternative means of educating African American students, as they were denied access to

mainstream education until the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The students Siddle-Walker (1996) and Moss (2009) described attempted to prosper despite inadequate facilities, few curricular materials, and social scorn for even educating African American children. More recently, Kozol (1991; 2005) exposed funding inequalities in American schools, leading to the reduction in educational opportunities for children of color, and the subsequent low aspirations and low accomplishments of those children. These scholars argued that the generational marginalization of children of color from mainstream education has persistently reduced the overall quality of their education, thus making the achievement gap unsurprising.

Other scholars considered the educational achievement gap a consequence of American cities' history of economic and geographic exclusion of people of color (Hirsch, 1983; Hirsch 1996; Kruse, 2005; Sugrue, 2006; Lassiter, 2006). Hirsch (1983) argued that the calculated housing shortage instrumented by White city authorities in Chicago was instrumental in sustaining racial barriers. Red-lining practices produced a dual housing market, which consequently created a system of separate (and unequal) schools, given the propensity for neighborhood schools. Similarly, Kruse (2005) discussed neighborhood desegregation, the tipping point of the color line, and *White flight*. He argued that the integration of a few Black families in White Atlanta neighborhoods caused the abandonment of public spaces such as parks and pools, as well as the rise of privatization of previously public spaces. With this precedent, it was unsurprising that Atlanta schools followed the same pattern: when public schools became integrated, White enrollment in private schools soared, thus sustaining racial segregation and relegating students of color to the "intolerable conditions," of public schools (Kruse, 2005, p.171). Lassiter (2006) noted that despite attempts to integrate public schools, wealthy White families found means to resist desegregation while publicly expressing support for such policies.

He claimed that White families in the suburbs were "immunized" from meaningful integration while working class White families bore the burden (Lassiter, 2006, p.140). The busing policies Lassiter discussed in 1970's Charlotte showed an intolerance of both racial and socioeconomic integration, which arguably contributed to the achievement gaps still present between low-income and more affluent students. These scholars argued that in addition to educational policies, historical geographic and economic exclusion have contributed to the present discrepancy in achievement between Black and White students.

Still others have attributed the achievement gap to sociocultural characteristics and cultural deficiencies, such as a lack of motivation, low expectations, and little reverence for education (Moynihan, 1965; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2003). Though arguably misinterpreted, the 1965 Moynihan Report absolved White authorities and the White educational system of responsibility for low performing African American students. Instead, it shifted the blame to Black families, specifically Black families headed by single mothers. The culture of poverty in which they lived, Moynihan argued, prevented African American children from educational and economic success. Similarly, Ogbu (2003) controversially claimed African American students operated under a collective identity and resist academic achievement in order to reject White definitions of success and reaffirm their own identities. He argued Black students went to great lengths, even sabotaging their own opportunities for success, to undermine White society. Howard (2010) called these perspectives "disturbing," and noted the emotional, social, and academic damage these beliefs, rooted in a deficit perspective, have on students of color (Howard, 2010, p. 29).

While the causes of the achievement gap are debatable, earlier discussed data demonstrated the gap persists, regardless of the cause. To reduce the achievement gap, changes

should be made to educational policy. Further, social and political reforms could reduce the effects of poverty, racism, and other aspects of inequality. Those changes are necessary, but also beyond the parameters of this project. Regarding poverty, racism, and other aspects of inequality, Murphy (2010) asserted that although "much of the heavy lifting to address the achievement gap problem must be done by those outside of education, schools have a part to play," (p. 233). Further, for students of color, the "impact of school is more determinate," (Heyns, 1978, p. 188). In other words, students of color benefit more from the effects of schooling than their white peers (Symonds, 2004). For this reason, it is especially important to focus on high-quality instruction to reduce the achievement gap. Therefore, this project attempted to explore the potential for teachers, the curriculum, and high-quality instruction to close the achievement gap.

School Measures to Address the Achievement Gap

One in-school strategy for closing the achievement gap is to employ highly skilled teachers. The indices of "high quality teaching" vary from years of experience to type of certification to rankings in performance reviews. Nonetheless, research has shown strong teachers can impact student achievement. According to Lewis (2008), "Teacher expertise account[s] for more variation in student achievement than any other factor (about 40 percent)" (p.20). Thompson and O'Quinn (2001) assert, "Analysis of the TVAAS [Tennessee-Value-Added Assessment System] data has shown differences in the effectiveness of teachers to be the single most important factor accounting for differences in students' academic growth from year to year," (p.9). They noted that teacher effectiveness is more significant than class size, ability grouping, or students' prior levels of achievement. Thompson and O'Quinn (2001) even argued that providing students of color and students in poverty with teachers of the same quality as other children could cause "about half of the achievement gap to disappear," (p.3). Highly skilled

teachers with strong pedagogical content knowledge and effective instructional practices can help minimize the achievement gap.

A second in-school strategy to address disparate educational outcomes is to give all children access to high quality instruction. Shannon and Bylsma (2002) claimed, "Racial differences in performance can be reduced through high quality instruction," (p.43). Many scholars (Kozol, 1991; Howard, 2010; Murphy, 2010) noted that children of color and children in low-income schools often receive the least skilled, least experienced teachers; and quality of teacher certainly affects quality of instruction. If these students had access to more experienced, better trained teachers, they would be more likely to experience high quality instruction. Instruction is so critical in reducing the achievement gap that McGee (2003) stated, "Instruction matters more than standards," (p.244).

But what constitutes high quality instruction? Murphy described effective instruction as that which balances "basic skills, teaching for understanding, and culturally responsive pedagogy," (p.243). This description shares many commonalities with differentiated instruction, such as prioritizing understanding over memorization and adapting instruction to students' cultures and backgrounds. High quality instruction also carefully considers ability grouping. Thompson and O'Quinn (2001) claimed, "ability grouping as commonly practiced widens rather than reduc[es] achievement gaps," (p.6). Poorly implemented ability grouping can perpetuate disparate achievement by tracking students in groups with impermeable boundaries. Lower performing students rarely can advance into higher level groups. However, purposeful ability grouping for each subject and skillset can improve student achievement. When teachers deliver "instruction to the right skill level and pace for each group, [and if] students [are] also reassessed often and reassigned to groups as appropriate," (Thompson & O'Quinn, 2001, p. 11), ability

grouping allows teachers to provide the most appropriate level of instructional challenge for each student.

Another critical aspect of high-quality instruction is holding high expectations for all students. High expectations "increase both teacher and student perception of student capacity to learn," (Shannon & Bylsma, 2002, p.35). Conversely, Gay (2000) noted that low expectations, specifically for African American students, can foster "learned helplessness," (p.56), which can lead to disengagement and low self-efficacy. Expectations of student ability can affect instruction, positively and negatively, in that teachers may modify "the quality of learning opportunities provided to students" (Gay, 2010, p.57) based on their perception of students' academic skills. If a teacher holds low expectations for her students and believes the curriculum content is too challenging, they may lower her standards for student performance. Students then receive the message that they are incapable of challenging work, or that they need to lower their own expectations of academic achievement. Miller (1995) summarized the effects of expectations on achievement, saying, "low expectations tend to lower students' academic performance and high expectations tend to raise it," (p.227).

Lastly, high quality instruction can close the achievement gap through cognitively challenging instructional practices that teach for understanding rather than memorization. Emphasizing higher-order thinking skills and meaning-centered activities can improve student performance by teaching transferable thinking and learning strategies instead of sets of discrete facts. Shannon and Bylsma (2002) asserted, "learning for understanding has been shown to dramatically improve the performance of traditionally under-achieving students," (p.9). Knapp (2001) argued, "learners in high-poverty settings deserve, and can benefit from, challenging forms of instruction that are more prevalent (though still infrequent) in other settings" (p.195).

High quality instruction should balance explicit instruction with meaning-centered instruction, but too frequently low performing students receive remedial instruction that consists solely of direct teaching strategies (Tatum, 2005; Reis, McCoach, Coyne, Schreiber, Eckert, & Gubbins, 2007). However, research has shown all children can benefit from cognitively challenging tasks that promote understanding over rote memorization.

Statement of the Problem

High quality instruction, including practices of differentiated instruction, utilized by strong teachers can potentially close the achievement gap between white children and children of color and children in poverty. Yet there is debate of how to implement practices of high-quality instruction. According to E.D. Hirsch, students need literacy instruction in common cultural texts to build their background knowledge and existing vocabularies (1988). With purposeful, standardized curriculum based in these texts, children can use their background knowledge to increase comprehension of challenging texts. Additionally, Hirsch argued, children of diverse cultural backgrounds will have more substantial opportunities to participate in the culture of power (Delpit, 1995) because of their enhanced cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1988).

However, others (Gay, 2000; Banks, 2009) have argued children of racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds benefit from instruction adapted to meet their learning needs and curricula that represents their experiences. Differentiating instruction based on students' interests, backgrounds, and readiness is one approach to adapt instruction so learning is relevant to all children (Tomlinson, 1999).

These pedagogical approaches appear in direct conflict: a standardized curriculum and a call to differentiate instruction based on individual student need. Yet all curricula require the professional judgment and talent of individual teachers for implementation, and the goal of this

study was to explore the space between the required curriculum and the taught curriculum (Glatthorn, 1987). This study sought to name the specific instructional strategies used by teachers to differentiate instruction to their students of diverse cultural backgrounds when required to strictly adhere to the district's required core reading program.

This study contributed to the fields of differentiated instruction, multicultural education, and the Core Knowledge Sequence by revealing the specific instructional methods teachers used to make cultural literacy relevant to their students of culturally diverse backgrounds. Naming exact teaching strategies used by teachers to differentiate instruction within the parameters of a firm core reading program illuminated the opportunities for educators to personalize literacy instruction when opportunities to exercise professional judgment may appear limited. This study revealed how teachers adhered to district curriculum guidelines while individualizing instruction and making learning relevant for all students.

RQ1: What strategies do teachers use to differentiate reading instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds within the parameters of a firm core reading program?

RQ2: In absence of those teaching strategies, what are the effects on instruction?

Statement from the Researcher

I began this research project with the intention to study differentiated instruction with cultural considerations in a district without a well-defined reading curriculum. I wanted to explore the possibilities for the overlap of multicultural education teaching strategies and those recommended by the field of differentiated instruction. Having taught high school Language Arts in a district without a clearly defined curriculum and knowing the professional autonomy it afforded me, such a district seemed like the appropriate site for teachers to integrate instructional strategies recommended by research.

As I completed coursework and exams for my Ph.D. program at a large university, I worked as an adjunct professor in the School of Education for a small liberal arts college. The university of my employment expressed a firm commitment to culturally responsive teaching and social justice. The program also emphasized strategies for differentiating instruction. However, this university partnered with a local school district that assigned and expected strict adherence to the Core Knowledge Sequence, the reading curriculum developed by E.D. Hirsch. Many students in the teacher preparation program completed their internships and student teaching experiences in this district. Some teacher candidates were even awarded permanent positions the following school year. Teacher candidates with experience in this district expressed frustration and confusion with the pedagogical disconnect between the university and the school site. On one hand, experts in the university advocated differentiating instruction and teaching for social justice. However, teachers found little opportunity to use such strategies in a district that adopted the strict, arguably Euro-centric Core Knowledge Sequence. Their pedagogical dilemma became my line of inquiry for my dissertation study.

Previously, I wanted to explore the realm of possibilities for differentiating instruction in a district void of a reading curriculum. Now, I endeavored to investigate the small but powerful opportunities to differentiate instruction for culturally diverse students when professional autonomy was strictly limited by the Core Knowledge Sequence. This change required returning to the literature to review studies on the Core Knowledge Sequence, and it required modifying the subsequent course of study. Now I worked to identify methods teachers used to be responsive to students' needs while still adhering to the expectations of the district and the Core Knowledge curriculum. The results of this research are presented below.

The report of this study will begin with a review of current literature in Chapter Two. I will examine relevant studies in the fields of differentiated instruction, multicultural education, literacy instruction, and the Core Knowledge Sequence. Chapter Three will discuss the methods used in this study to collect and analyze data. Chapter Four will present findings of this study in response to the first research question while Chapter Five presents results answering the second research question. Chapter Six will address the limitations of the study and provide the interpretation of the data. Finally, Chapter Seven will initiate a discussion of the findings, present implications for practice and research, and offer suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

This study explored the interweaving of four bodies of literature: differentiated instruction; multicultural education; current practices in literacy instruction; and the Core Knowledge Sequence, a prescriptive core reading program designed to promote cultural literacy. This study examined the potential for differentiating reading instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds within the parameters of the Core Knowledge Sequence.

This study was classified as an *instrumental case study* in that provided insight to the pedagogical concept of differentiated instruction and the strategies teachers use to differentiate instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds within the structure of a strict core reading program (Stake, 2005). The case, its setting, and its participants facilitated a greater understanding of the sociocultural variables that influence teachers' literacy instruction when tasked with adherence to a required reading curriculum.

Differentiated instruction is a pedagogical philosophy that focuses on student learning, academic growth, and individual abilities. It is also the utilization of the practical teaching strategies to achieve each of those outcomes. Differentiated instruction modifies instruction to inspire and challenge individual students and to increase student enjoyment of learning (Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011; Reis & Boeve, 2009; Reis, McCoach, Coyne, Schreiber, Eckert, & Gubbins, 2007; Tomlinson, 1999). Differentiated instruction recognizes talents and abilities outside areas of traditionally privileged knowledge domains and disciplines, and the importance of capitalizing on those to help each student meet academic objectives (Tomlinson, 1999).

Multicultural education is concerned with transforming societal relationships of power and subordination, eliminating cultural oppression, and reducing the dominance of White

epistemologies in curriculum and instruction. With roots in critical race theory, it seeks to recognize and legitimize the knowledge and ways of knowing of people of color (Gillborn & Youdell, 2009). Priority is given to students' *funds of knowledge*, or "culturally developed bodies of knowledge," (Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez, 1992, p.133). Teachers integrate students' learning paradigms to validate their lived sociocultural realities and to help students maintain their cultural identities in mainstream society (Moll et al., 1992; Banks, 2009b). This study explored the intersection of differentiated instruction, multicultural education, and required core reading programs, specifically the *Core Knowledge Sequence*.

Existing literature tends to separate differentiated instruction and multicultural education, despite each recommending teachers make modifications to content, process, product, and learning environment for the purposes of engaging students and providing appropriate academic challenge (Gay, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999). Despite differences in theoretical purpose and social agenda, there exists overlap which can benefit students of diverse cultures. This study illuminated the possibilities of exploring differentiated instruction in literacy based in not only ability and interest, but also student culture and identity. Rather than testing and applying models of differentiated instruction to culturally diverse populations, the results of this study helped inform existing literature on how to integrate student culture into lesson planning, even within the bounds of a firm core reading program. Certain studies (Little, McCoach, & Reis, 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007) ask if the differentiation methods that help middle-class white children can work with children in high-poverty schools or African American and Latino students. This study instead asked how can student culture create pedagogical avenues for differentiation, as in accordance with Tomlinson's 1999 description of differentiated instruction.

Student culture and identity are advantageous and assist teachers in locating more possibilities for engagement and challenge.

For multicultural education, the results of this study demonstrated possibilities to provide culturally responsive teaching for students of various backgrounds in a single classroom with a strict curriculum. Some teachers express feeling overwhelmed at understanding the multitude of diverse races, ethnicities, languages, and religions enacted in their classrooms. They may avoid culturally relevant teaching due to feelings of inadequacy regarding cultural competency (Gay, 2000). Other teachers may feel pressured to adhere to the required curriculum and resist modifications to instruction for culturally diverse children (See, Gorard, & Siddique, 2017). The results of this study make culturally relevant teaching more accessible by demonstrating specific strategies teachers use to integrate students' backgrounds while delivering the required reading curriculum.

Further, some teachers may find they can better engage individual students of diverse cultures without having to commit to a social justice pedagogy. The results of this study provide teachers with practical strategies to engage children of diverse backgrounds and make instructional modifications based in student culture without having to participate in pedagogical practices so closely aligned with critical race theory or anti-oppressive pedagogies. For advocates of anti-oppressive teaching, the union of differentiated instruction and multicultural education can serve as a scaffolded introduction to the practices of teaching for social justice, even within the requirements of a strict core reading program.

Finally, this study contributed to the literature on E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence by offering strategies to modify and adapt the program for children of diverse cultural backgrounds. Hirsch (1988) claimed his emphasis on cultural literacy interrupts social

determinism and supports children in their journey out of poverty by providing them the requisite knowledge to participate in mainstream society. His pedagogical philosophy and corresponding curriculum have been contentious: many critics have argued his emphasis on cultural knowledge privileges certain (e.g. white, male, heterosexual, Christian) bodies of knowledge and reinforces the dominant cultural hegemony (Freire, 1970). But if the Core Knowledge curriculum can empower students of color and students in poverty, strict adoption may still generate a disconnect between students' background knowledge and the content recommended by the curriculum. The results of this study can provide teachers with specific strategies to differentiate instruction and assist students in accessing content for which they may not have existing background knowledge. This study offers educators methods to challenge students and practice culturally responsive strategies when given a firm core reading program such as the Core Knowledge Sequence.

This chapter discusses existing literature in the fields of differentiated instruction, multicultural education, literacy instruction, and the Core Knowledge curriculum in order to frame the research questions of this study. The following section addresses current literature in these fields and provides a critique of the literature.

Differentiation

The following section will discuss and define differentiated instruction. It will then explore current literature in differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is both a pedagogical philosophy and a series of teaching strategies that provide maximum challenge and meaningful engagement for all learners. Differentiated instruction asserts that children are individuals with unique learning needs, curricular interests, skills and abilities, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences (Tomlinson, 1999). Teachers should understand the

differences of all children and plan instruction accordingly. Abandoning a one-size-fits-all model allows teachers to differentiate instruction that is neither too difficult nor too easy for any one child; each child learns at his/her appropriate level of challenge. This perspective puts differentiated instruction in direct contrast to fixed core reading programs, such as the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Curriculum and Instruction in a Differentiated Classroom

The field of differentiated instruction has argued teachers should make curricular and instructional modifications for their students based on every student's unique learning, social, emotional, and cultural needs. Each child has his own interests, learning profile, and level of readiness that the teacher must consider when planning instruction. Each student will integrate new information into their own, specific existing schema. Bransford (1999) argued that experts construct meaningful patterns of information, and that a learner's ability to chunk and organize new content into existing schema depends on their curiosity and background knowledge. In differentiated classrooms, teachers integrate students' previous knowledge and existing interests into the curriculum. Doing so maximizes opportunities for intellectual growth. Because children are so different, it is the responsibility of the teacher to adjust their curriculum and instruction to be responsive to students' diverse needs (Hertzog, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).

Differentiated instruction begins for teachers by clearly defining learning outcomes the students must meet. All learners "focus on essential concepts, principles, and skills of a unit," (Tomlinson, 1996, p. 56). In a differentiated classroom, teachers identify non-negotiable outcomes and modify course content, the learning process, the final product, or the learning environment to help students achieve the determined outcome (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013; Tomlinson, 1999). Curriculum designers recommend creating outcomes that assess

understanding instead of knowledge (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). While knowledge may be described as discrete facts, understandings are the inferences that connect those facts into larger, transferable ideas; understandings are "hard-won insights" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p.7). By assessing students' grasp of understandings, teachers provide clarity to students of which ideas matter and how to use the most important ones.

Having established a well-defined outcome, the teacher then differentiates instruction by introducing modifications for students depending on their needs, interests, and readiness. Content modification allows students to investigate topics related to their interests and experiences while still working toward the themes and issues of the *enduring understanding* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Teachers can modify the instructional process by providing multiple sources to create access points for students' various intelligences, such as Gardner's (1983) intelligences, including visual-linguistic, visual-spatial, and even intrapersonal. Lastly, the teacher can assess student understanding through a range of products, like essays, presentations, discussions, or artistic representations. Teachers then use student assessment data to directly plan instructional next steps and curricular choices. They may reteach concepts for students still struggling to meet the learning outcome, or they may compact the curriculum for students who have met the desired outcome. Differentiation serves to provide multiple access points to curricular knowledge and multiple means of achieving learning outcomes while meeting students at their readiness levels and accounting for their different learning styles (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013).

Changing Student and Teacher Roles

In traditional classrooms, the teacher holds the authority over knowledge and knowledge construction. But differentiated instruction accepts that all children have areas and skills of expertise. This perspective requires that teachers then share authority in knowledge and

knowledge construction with students. In a differentiated classroom, the teacher recognizes the broad range of interests and abilities, and they facilitate learning opportunities to best expand students' knowledge. One of the first requirements for differentiating instruction is to help the child assume ownership of their own learning to become self-reliant learners (Tomlinson, 1999).

Shifting the teacher's role into a learning facilitator or educational coach requires change in not only their instruction and actions, but also their pedagogical philosophy about their purpose in the classroom. First, the teacher expects to be a learner and admits their own gaps in knowledge (Tomlinson, 1999). Teachers serve a resource for learning, but students support each other by acting as additional resources. Under Vygotsky's (1978) Theory of Social Constructivism, learning occurs through social interaction, often when a more skilled peer guides the novice learner through the generating of new concepts and ideas. From this perspective, teachers are helpful but certainly not necessary if grouping patterns can offer opportunities for meaningful student-student learning interactions. The teacher understands their individual students and facilitates opportunities for them to become self-reliant learners.

Before the teacher gradually releases the responsibility of learning to their students, they engage children in frequent, varied assessments to generate data to make adjustments to the existing curriculum (Tomlinson, 1999). Written and oral activities make students' thinking visible so the teacher can readily identify and label their misunderstandings (Bransford, 1999). Then, with targeted feedback, the teacher helps children see precisely where they misapplied their knowledge and provides solutions to prevent future challenges. With repeated modeling and the introduction of new corrective strategies, the child learns to recognize their gaps in knowledge, apply flexible intervening strategies, and monitor their own growth (Tomlinson,

1999). Because the teacher is no longer the exclusive authority over learning, students become self-reliant learners, and the teacher and students can collaborate on knowledge construction.

The teacher also becomes a student of their students: in order to design instructional sequences and environments that best meet students' unique learning needs and interests, the teacher seeks to understand all his students beyond a superficial level. Linda Darling-Hammond (1996) refers to this as a *two-way pedagogy* in which teachers listen and observe students to learn about them, so that they may best design instruction based on the skills and interests students bring to the classroom. Just as we expect teachers to ground their instruction in data derived from curricular assessments, so too should their instruction be based in assessments of students' social, emotional, and cultural characteristics.

Differentiated Instruction and Student Culture

Properly differentiated instruction should intentionally integrate students' cultures when assessing and planning instruction. Differentiated instruction is often interpreted as curricular and instructional modifications based on student interest, ability, and need. Less frequently discussed is differentiation based on students' culture. Tomlinson (1999) recognized the relationship between learning and student background, stating, "Our experiences [and] culture" affect learning and understanding (p.10). For that reason, it is important that educators make instructional modifications for students' cultural affiliations. In this discussion, culture is considered to be the aspects of one's identity that influence their beliefs, values, relationships, learning paradigms, and motivation (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2010). Culture is not static, nor is it predetermined by one's race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or ability. Nieto (1999) argued that culture is a dynamic product of the individual's selection and rejection of elements of culture, and the frequent adaptation of these for specific contexts. Recognizing that culture is not

permanent or predetermined reduces the possibility of *essentualizing* individuals, or believing that individuals automatically share beliefs and qualities based on their membership to a particular group (Bigler & Hughes, 2009). All groups are heterogeneous, and instructional modifications based in culture must account for this.

Teachers differentiate instruction for the purpose of motivating students through appropriate challenges to maximize their learning. For children of diverse cultures, connecting the curriculum to their interests and abilities may be insufficient; students may need differentiated instruction based in their cultural knowledge and practices.

Geneva Gay's (2000) concept of *culturally responsive pedagogy* asserts culturally diverse learners will be more invested in their education when curriculum and instruction are filtered through their unique cultural experiences. Although it recognizes cultural hegemony as lived in schools, it advocates for the celebration and validation of cultural diversity in efforts to expand what constitutes culturally privileged discourse. Culturally responsive teaching insists on "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them," (Gay, 2000). Attempts are made to integrate students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) or cultural areas of expertise, in order to positively affect student engagement and interest in learning. In essence, culturally responsive pedagogy validates cultural diversity and affirms its legitimacy by using diverse instructional strategies to meet the needs of learners, by creating epistemological bridges between home and school, and by reaffirming students' cultural identities in the classroom.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is often associated with *multicultural education*, which promotes the ability of children from diverse cultures to "maintain commitments to their

community cultures," (Banks, 2009b, p.14) while granting children access to the knowledge and practices of the *culture of power* (Delpit, 1995). Like differentiated instruction, multicultural education advocates challenging traditional methods of knowledge construction, the privileged content of the classroom, and traditional modes of demonstrating academic achievement. When theory is translated into practice, differentiated instruction can share certain characteristics with multicultural education, specifically its inclusion of culturally responsive teaching.

Not all teachers of culturally diverse children use culturally responsive teaching practices. Some teachers may adopt a cultural deficit paradigm in which students' cultural differences are viewed as suspect or inferior rather than rich sources for knowledge (Banks, 2009b). Unless students' background knowledge and experiences parallel the dominant cultural knowledge and social experiences of schools, it is possible for teachers to believe that students' cultures "prevent them from attaining the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for academic success," (Banks, 2009b, p.17). Among the causes of the cultural deficit ideology, Gay (2000) listed teachers' inadequate knowledge of diverse ethnic groups, the mistaken belief that treating culturally diverse students differently is a form of racial discrimination, and the perception of good teaching as transcendent of all cultural contexts. From the framework of cultural deficit, many teachers may attempt to "correct or cure" students, focusing on "what students of color can and can't do" (Gay, 2000, p.24) versus the strengths afforded to them by their culture.

Other teachers may engage in practices of color- and cultural-blindness, the belief that White middle-class experiences and learning paradigms are universal (Ramsey, 2009; Young, 1990). They may subscribe to an assimilationist ideology, believing that students must "surrender their ethnic and cultural attachments" in order to achieve academic success (Banks, 2009, p. 11). Teachers might refrain from making cultural modifications to their instruction for

varying learning styles or deviating from the assigned textbook. Intentionally or otherwise, these teachers contribute to the continuance of the dominant cultural values and knowledge. By using textbooks published from the dominant cultural perspective, by failing to build bridges in knowledge from the curriculum to students' background knowledge, or by engaging in instructional methods associated with White Protestant learning paradigms, even great teachers may not be aware that "they have become instruments of dominant interests," (Valdés, 1998, p.15).

Without consideration of diverse cultural learning paradigms or content representing diverse experiences, children of diverse cultures can experience marginalization in the classroom, which consequently reduces motivation and lowers student engagement (Valdés, 1998). In her qualitative study of Mexican-American youth in Houston, Valenzuela (1999) interviewed many high school students who complained of their school's narrow, Eurocentric curriculum, saying that teachers neglected to "teach youth about the country and culture they come from," (p.121). When subjected to marginalization, alienation, and powerlessness, students in her study resorted to anti-academic behaviors that "looked to teachers and administrators like opposition and lack of caring," (Valenzuela, 1999, p.94). Because teachers and their curricula demonstrated an absence of value for their native cultures, students resorted to not learning in order to preserve their cultural and community connections.

Another group of teachers recognized that imposing the dominant culture on children of culturally diverse backgrounds interferes with their motivation, disrupts their learning paradigms, and stigmatizes their behavior (Howard, 2010; Gay, 2000). To circumvent such outcomes, teachers can actively consider student culture and modify course content and instructional practices in order to maximize learning for their culturally diverse students, believing that

alignment of pedagogy with student background is critical for student investment in learning. Both differentiated instruction and multicultural education advocate adapting teaching and learning for students of diverse cultural backgrounds.

However, multicultural education is concerned with transforming societal relationships of power and subordination, eliminating cultural oppression, and reducing the dominance of White epistemologies in curriculum and instruction. With roots in critical race theory, it seeks to recognize and legitimize the knowledge and ways of knowing of people of color (Gillborn & Youdell, 2009). Priority is given to students' funds of knowledge and learning paradigms to validate their lived sociocultural realities and to help students maintain their cultural identities (Moll et al., 1992; Banks, 2009b). Banks (2009b) noted that in the 1970s and 1980s, antiracist educators argued that multicultural education should question and challenge existing institutional power structures such as racism and capitalism. The recommendations to analyze inequality have now been absorbed by multiculturalist educators, thus marking a point of divergence for differentiated instruction and multicultural education. Multicultural education (sometimes called *transformative multicultural education* or *critical multiculturalism*), now may carry a social justice agenda.

Additionally, transformative multicultural education encourages teachers to engage students in questions of that challenge the underlying epistemologies that sustain curricular bias (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004; Banks, 2009a). Curricular content is modified in part to engage children of diverse backgrounds, but also to subvert the privileging of the dominant cultural hegemony and to encourage counter-storytelling, or the practice of recounting events from perspectives outside the dominant White view (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). By including multiple voices, perspectives, and experiences, critical multicultural education invites racially diverse participants

to contribute to the construction of knowledge, further interrupting the replication of White dominance. Critical multiculturalism has a clear social and pedagogical agenda: it requires participants to engage in social critique, which then compels them to activism (Banks, 2009b). Modifying instruction and personalizing learning for students is important, but critical multicultural education argued education should also address structural inequality and oppression (May, 2009). The tension between transformative multicultural education and education for cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1987) will be discussed after a review of differentiated instruction, multicultural education, and methods in literacy instruction.

Current Literature on Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction and multicultural education advocate making curricular and instructional modifications based on individual student need, often through culturally responsive teaching. Despite similarities in pedagogical practice, differentiated instruction and multicultural education are interpreted quite differently by educators and researchers. The following section will discuss current literature in differentiated instruction.

For this study, I reviewed literature concerning differentiated instruction as practiced in literacy classrooms, specifically empirical studies. These studies demonstrate the current practices as well as future possibilities for differentiated instruction. Selection criteria is shown in Appendix A-1.

Search terms included: Differentiated instruction, literacy, and elementary. Inclusion dates were set from 2001-2016. The 2001 passing of the No Child Left Behind Act emphasized excellence in reading and writing, as well as assessment and accountability that is still present in education. Because of that critical juncture in education and educational policy, I intentionally selected 2001 as a cutoff date so that studies surveyed would reflect the heightened emphasis on

instruction, accountability, and literacy. This search yielded 167 results. All studies selected for this review were empirical studies, qualitative and quantitative to develop a clear understanding of differentiation as well as its potential for achievement results. Discussion of trends in education, principles of differentiation, or guides for implementing differentiated instruction were excluded. The following were used for inclusion criteria: studies of teachers; reading and writing in language arts; studies in the United States; studies of certificated practicing teachers; and studies of general education. The following were used for exclusion criteria: instructional coaches; teacher candidates; literacy in math or science; and students with learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, students with autism, or students with dyslexia. That search yielded 10 total studies.

Four of the results included interventions of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model for Reading (SEM-R) developed by Sally Reis. Reis's SEM-R model evolved from the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) that is typically used with highly capable students (Renzulli, 1977; Renzulli & Reis, 1985). In this three-tiered model, teachers first led children through high-interest texts by reading texts out loud and asking high order questions (Reis, McCoach, Coyne, Schreiber, Eckert, & Gubbins, 2007). Reis called these sessions, "book hooks." In the next phase of the SEM-R model, called "Supported Independent Reading" or SIR, students read self-selected texts while the teacher provided differentiated reading conferences (Reis et al., 2007). In the last phase of the SEM-R model, students were encouraged to transition from teacher-directed activities to self-choice activities, which included learning centers, exploration of eBooks and authors' webpages, partner reading, writing activities, and discussion groups, for example (Reis et al., 2007). The SEM-R model has demonstrated success when adopted by charter or magnet schools (Reis & Renzulli, 2003). As it is an enrichment framework, studies of SEM-R have

shown the model being adopted in public schools as an afterschool program or for temporary periods of research, either supplementing or temporarily replacing remedial reading programs (Little et al., 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007).

One other study in this review adopted a similar enrichment model. The remaining six studies explored elements of differentiated instruction such as self-regulation, flexible grouping, and student choice. The following section will review studies of enrichment models of differentiation, including the SEM-R model.

Little et al. (2014) implemented the SEM-R model in 47 classrooms across four middle schools, with 2,150 student participants in 6^{th}-8^{th} grades. Though this study occurred in middle schools, I included it in this review because of its inclusion of 6^{th} grade students, which many districts consider an elementary grade. Using a multi-site cluster-randomized design, the researchers had treatment groups implement the SEM-R model daily for 40 to 45 minutes per day or three hours per week. This study used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to analyze students pre- and post-test data on the following measures: fluency (from an oral reading fluency [ORF] assessment) and the comprehension sub-test of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Fourth Edition. SEM-R affected fluency differently across the four sites: two schools showed statistically significant gains in fluency while two schools had no statistically significant differences between the treatment and control groups. There were no statistically significant differences between the treatment and control groups in comprehension. The authors reported that this model is "at least as effective as more traditional approaches in the middle school reading classroom," (Little et al., 2014, p. 398).

Reis et al. (2011) implemented the SEM-R model in 37 fifth grade classrooms in an experimental study of cluster-randomized groups, with 33 classrooms in the control group. Sixty-

three teachers and 1,1,92 students participated. All schools had a two-hour literacy block. Teachers in the control group used the regular language arts curriculum for the entire block while teachers in the experimental group switched to the SEM-R model after one hour of using the regular language arts reading program. The researchers collected pre-and post-test student data of oral reading fluency and comprehension with an ORF assessment and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), respectively. Using HLM, results indicated statistically significant gains for the treatment group in fluency at one of the four sites, though statistically significant gains were not made at the other three sites. Comprehension results paralleled those of reading fluency: three of the four schools showed no statistically significant gains while the fourth site did have statistically significant gains in comprehension. The school with significant gains in fluency and comprehension was the same school, the high-poverty urban school. The authors believed students at this school outperformed the control group students because of the increased engagement offered by the SEM-R model.

In their 2009 study, Reis and Boeve implemented the SEM-R model to culturally diverse, highly capable students for 90 minutes, two afternoons each week in a six-week afterschool program at an urban school. Students ranged in grade from 3rd to 5th, and all were identified as highly capable through standardized achievement and/or aptitude scores in the top 3%-5%. This mixed-methods study collected data through observations, ORF assessments, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS; McKenna & Kear, 1990), the Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students-Reading (SRBCSS-R; Reis, 2005), and the Reading Interest-a-Lyzer adapted from Renzulli's Interest-a-Lyzer (1977). ORF scores indicated statistically significant gains in fluency. Students in the afterschool reading program struggled with reading at an appropriate level of challenge. The authors reported that many students

actually felt discouraged by the challenge level offered by SEM-R. Students also had difficulty answering comprehension questions when reading books at their appropriate challenged level.

In a 2007 SEM-R study, Reis et al. implemented the model to 226 elementary students (3^{rd}- 6^{th} grade) in two elementary schools, assigning students to either treatment or control groups to assess the effectiveness of the model on fluency, comprehension, and attitude toward reading. The groups participated in 90-minute sessions of the Success for All (SFA) reading program. Treatment groups also participated in the SEM-R model for up to 45 minutes each day while control groups used district curriculum materials, such as workbooks or basal reading programs. Oral reading fluency assessments were administered to collect pre- and post-test data, while the ITBS, the measure of comprehension, was administered for post-test data only. Results indicated no statistically significant gains in comprehension, moderately significant gains in attitude toward reading, and no statistically significant gains in fluency, with pre-intervention fluency scores being the largest predictor of post-intervention fluency scores. The authors stated that an enriched reading supplement may produce more positive attitudes toward reading.

Beecher and Sweeney (2008) reported on a single elementary school implementing a more flexible model of differentiated instruction, though still based in Renzulli & Reis' (1985) Enrichment Triad Model. In their eight-year ethnography, they described an adaptable model of differentiation that allowed teacher choice in areas such as content, learning experiences, structure, and environment. Their study reviewed documents such as staff meeting agendas, documents of their strategic plan, materials prepared for professional development sessions, lesson plans, and other curriculum documents. The single elementary school included a student population of 43% culturally and linguistically diverse students, 30% ELL students, and 45% of students receiving free and reduced lunch. Over eight years, the school adopted an enrichment

model of instruction in which teachers introduced students to content through experiential field studies, internet sites, trade books, and community guest speakers, similar to SEM-R's high-interest book hooks. During this stage, students contributed artifacts from their funds of knowledge to help broaden the class's understanding of various concepts (Moll et al., 1992).

In the second stage of instruction, teachers worked toward standards and objectives for their grades, and facilitated student choice in process skills and assessment products. The authors reported teachers having control over curriculum and instruction, despite following a semi-structured model. The researchers assessed academic progress through district and state mastery tests, informal assessments, and analysis of student work samples. Based on state assessments in reading, writing, and math, the study reports a narrowed achievement gap over eight years between students receiving free and reduced lunch and other students in all three areas. Writing and reading scores increased for all populations studied. The authors advocated an enrichment model to increase scores for all students and to narrow the achievement gap.

Not all studies of differentiated literacy instruction involved three-tiered enrichment models. Pierce, Katzir, and Noam (2007) conducted a quantitative study looking at different types of at-risk readers to show the heterogeneity within this category of students. This study found that teachers could use a classification system of four different reader profiles to then differentiate instruction based on student ability. The subjects of the study included 140 2nd and 3rd grade at-risk readers in five afterschool programs in Phoenix and Boston. To develop the four at-risk reader profiles, researchers collected the following data for each participant: phonological awareness through the Elision Subtest of the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processes (CTOPP; Wagner, Torgesen & Rashotte, 1999); vocabulary knowledge using the Multiple Meanings subtest from the Word-R Test (Huisingh, Barrett, Zachman, Blagden, & Orman,

1990); speed of lexical retrieval using the Letter Naming subtest from the Rapid Automatized Naming Test (RAN; Wolf & Denckla, 2004); nonword decoding abilities through the Word Attack subtest of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (WRMT-R; Woodcock, 1997); word-level fluency using the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE; Torgesen, Wagner, & Rashotte, 1999); oral reading fluency using the Gray Oral Reading Test, 4th Ed. (GORT-4; Widerholt & Bryant, 2001); and oral reading comprehension using the Gray Oral Reading Test, 4th Ed. (GORT-4; Widerholt & Bryant, 2001). The authors used cluster analysis to develop four distinct reader profiles.

Students in cluster one, for example, proved stronger in word attack and picture vocabulary but scored below average in sight word efficiency and passage reading. Cluster two showed average scores in word attack but low average scores in sight word efficiency, passage reading accuracy, and picture vocabulary. The authors recommended different instructional next steps according to each student's learner profile, such as decoding, fluency, or vocabulary. Results showed the strategy of using learner profiles to differentiate instruction and provide appropriate academic challenge based on student ability in various reading skills.

Like the learner profiles of the previous study, McDonald Connor, Morrison, Fishman, Crowe, Al Otaiba, and Schratschneider's 2013 longitudinal study of individualized student instruction (ISI) revealed the prevailing practice of modifying instruction exclusively from testing data. This study used a longitudinal cluster-randomized controlled design to determine if students' reading outcomes varied when they received one, two, or three years of individualized reading instruction compared to a control group. In the first year, 468 first-grade students were recruited to receive either the ISI intervention or a math-intervention condition. The researchers followed those students into second grade and recruited their classmates (N=568). Of those

students, 398 were also in the first-grade sample. Each class was randomly assigned to the treatment or control group. They followed those students into third grade and recruited their classmates (N=541) and randomly assigned classrooms to treatment or control conditions. Researchers assessed students' literacy skills through the Letter-Word Identification and Passage Comprehension from the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement each fall, winter, and spring (WJ-III; Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001). Researchers then used Assessment to Instruction (A2i) software to compute recommended types of literacy instruction for each student (Connor, Fishman, Crowe, Underwood, Schratschneider, & Morrison, 2013). Teachers in the treatment group implemented the A2i recommendations for code-focused and meaning-focused activities using their core reading programs and other materials, while teachers in the control group provided math lessons during that time period. The recommendations included independent reading, partner work on core curriculum materials, teacher-led small group work, and large group discussions. Results showed that students who spent more time in the ISI classrooms made significantly greater gains in reading (Cohen's *d*= 0.20 per year or 0.60 for three years) compared with students who spent no years in ISI classrooms, which was a large effect. This study showed promise in its adoption of differentiation. It included modifications of content, process, and product; the transference of authority to student learners; and appropriate levels of challenge. Though the school utilized a core reading program, teachers in this study also had autonomy to modify and supplement curriculum materials.

In 2011, the same researchers McDonald Connor, Morrison, Fishman, Crowe, and Schratschneider worked with researchers Giuliani, Luck, Underwood, and Bayaktar and published a similar study of ISI. This study was a randomized control study to explore the effects of ISI through the A2i software on third grade students to explain individual differences in

responses to reading instruction. Their study included 448 third grade students in seven schools who were either assigned to the ISI intervention or the control group, which received non-individualized vocabulary instruction. The researchers assessed students reading abilities using the WJ-III Passage Comprehension, Letter/Word Identification, and Picture Vocabulary Tests (Woodcock et al., 2001). They also collected data on teacher instruction through videotaped observations and field notes by trained research assistants. Results indicated significantly greater gains in comprehension for students who participated in the intervention. The researchers also predicted that students in the control group would demonstrate greater gains in vocabulary, but this hypothesis was not supported by the results; the control group did not have statistically greater gains in vocabulary. The authors advocated differentiated instruction in literacy to support students diverse reading abilities, stating, "We cannot assume that a one-size-fits-all whole-class instructional approach promoted in many core literacy curricula is going to be generally effective for many third graders," (McDonald Connor et al., 2011, p.207).

Geisler, Hessler, Gardner, and Lovelace investigated the effects of two writing interventions on total words written for high-achieving African American first graders. They selected five students (four females, one male) to implement two interventions: student self-counting and charting of total words written, and a synonym list to help students produce better quality of writing based on a district rubric. The interventions were introduced to the participants after a whole-class mini lesson about writing. The researchers collected data through student graphs of total words written after 25 writing sessions with the intervention measures, as well as the rubric scores of students' writing samples. Results showed that all five participants increased the total number of words written over the 25 writing sessions. Four of the five students increased the average number of different words written when using the synonym list. The

authors reported that the results of this study demonstrated a need for differentiating instruction for all students, and especially high achieving students. This study also encouraged teachers to actively involve students in self-monitoring and metacognitive processes in writing.

The previous study investigated curricular modifications and challenge level for students. Other studies explored elements of differentiation, such as flexible grouping. Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Kouzekanani, Bryant, Dickson, and Blozis investigated three grouping patterns (one teacher and one student, 1:1; one teacher and three students, 1:3; and one teacher and ten students, 1:10) on the reading outcomes of 90 struggling second grade students. The study took place in 10 Title I elementary schools in two school districts where at least 70% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch. The study assigned students to one of the three grouping sizes. All students received the same 30-minute intervention lesson, five times per week for a period of 13 weeks. The researchers administered pre- and post-test assessments of students in the following measures of literacy: phoneme segmentation through the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS; Kaminski & Good, 1996), comprehension through the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), decoding and comprehension from the Word Attack and Passage Comprehension subtests of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (WRMT-R; Woodcock, 1987), oral reading fluency (ORF), and the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey (W-MLS). Results showed the 1:1 grouping "was not superior to the 1:3 grouping on any outcome measure," (Vaughn et al., 2003, p.311). However, significant gains were made in comprehension, phoneme segmentation, and fluency between the 1:1/1:3 groupings and the 1:10 groupings. The authors state that the 1:1 and 1:3 groupings are highly effective group sizes for reading interventions.

The studies reviewed above discussed current strategies for differentiating instruction in reading and writing. The following section will provide a critique of the studies, noting their limitations and effect in shaping the research questions of this study. First, I will address the studies of the SEM-R program and then provide a critique of the studies that differentiated instruction through other methods.

Critique of the Literature: Differentiation

Some of the reviewed studies of differentiated instruction demonstrated positive results while others found no statistically significant gains. The results of these studies raise several questions. Regarding the *enrichment* SEM-R model, what are the implications for schools who currently utilize *remedial* reading programs? Reis et al.'s 2007 study of SEM-R demonstrated moderately significant gains in attitude toward reading but no statistically significant gains in comprehension or fluency. In that study, treatment and control groups continued receiving 90 minutes of instruction in the remedial core reading program, Success for All. The differentiated instruction and culturally relevant teaching provided by the SEM-R model again operated against a remedial reading model, making the lack of statistically significant results unsurprising. Even if the SEM-R model of differentiated instruction could provide statistically significant gains in reading comprehension and fluency, which it did not, it is up against the predominant pedagogical approach of remedial reading programs for struggling readers.

Further, what are the possibilities of implementing the SEM-R model in a district that requires adherence to a firm core reading program? In these scenarios, can SEM-R effectively operate as a supplementary or afterschool program? The Core Knowledge Sequence, for example, is heavily reliant on whole-class instruction of the same text, whereas SEM-R permits student choice over content and learning activities. Even as an afterschool program, could the

SEM-R approach coexist with a curriculum of an opposite pedagogical philosophy? If not, what strategies can teachers take from the SEM-R approach and apply within their firm core reading programs to differentiate the required curricular activities?

Second, as SEM-R is a model, it introduces the possibility of a reduction in the professional decision-making of the teacher, a critical element of both differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching. When the SEM-R model is adopted, participating teachers receive a classroom set of varying texts designed to be of high-interest to the given population of the school (Little et al., 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007). Participants in Reis et al's 2011 study received "a collection of approximately 250 books for their classroom library selected to include multiple levels of reading achievement across various interest areas," (Reis et al., 2011). Here, the researchers, not the teachers, determined the curriculum texts. The texts of the interventions may have been culturally relevant and of high-interest to the recipient students, especially if the intervention included a student-interest questionnaire (Reis & Boeve, 2009. Without the questionnaire (Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007), it is possible that such a model may reduce the possibility of employing Darling-Hammond's (1996) concept of two-way pedagogy. Instead of teachers determining the curricular texts for students, the researchers make selections they deem relevant for the recipient populations (Reis et al., 2007). The texts selected for use by the SEM-R model were designed to be relevant for students of color and students living in poverty, which was closer to culturally responsive pedagogy than the Core Knowledge Sequence. Yet the students' teachers have a limited influence over the curriculum.

Finally, the SEM-R model revealed limitations in its ability to offer culturally relevant instruction. Though the SEM-R model offered culturally relevant *curriculum*, it was limited in its ability to provide culturally relevant *instruction*, despite its dependence on student choice in

reading-related activities. The curriculum was designed to fit students' interests, including students of diverse cultural backgrounds, but Phases 1 and 2 of the model had few opportunities for instructional modifications. For example, during Phase 2 of the SEM-R model, students engaged in supported independent reading (SIR), in which students read silently while the teacher personalized instruction through conferences (Little et al., 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007). Literature in multicultural education has suggested that students of diverse cultural backgrounds may need specific instructional modifications (Gay, 2000; Howard 2010). Phase 2 did not provide culturally relevant instruction to students who needed oral or communal reading activities, as well as students who struggled with silent reading (Au, 1985; Gay, 2000). Task variation may have supported other groups of culturally diverse students who learned best through intentionally varied learning opportunities (Boykin, 1982). Further, using conferences as a predominant form of assessment might not have been culturally congruent for students of diverse cultural backgrounds. SEM-R could benefit from making cultural considerations for students of color, students in poverty, and ELL students during Phase 2 in efforts to make instruction more culturally relevant.

It should be noted that in contrast to Phase 2, Phase 3 made many cultural and learning accommodations by providing students choice over reading activities and products (Little et al., 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007). By allowing students to choose between activities based in technology, others involving group discussion, and activities of interest-based projects, the SEM-R model could be applied in a culturally relevant manner.

For studies of differentiated instruction without the SEM-R model, the most common theme was the modification of instruction based on student ability without consideration of student background, culture, or identity. Studies indicated a strong use of assessment data only to

modify instruction instead of recognizing the possibility of engaging students and improving achievement through culturally relevant means (McDonald Connor et al., 2013; McDonald Connor et al., 2011; Vaughn et al., 2003). Though student assessment data is critical for planning differentiated instruction, so too should be student interest and cultural background (Tomlinson, 1999). Pierce et al. (2007) demonstrated the need to differentiate to specific literacy needs, but the authors failed to consider how student language, ethnicity, or gender could affect learning and motivation. Geisler, et. al's 2009 study of differentiated writing instruction for high-achieving African-American students echoed the same pattern. Their five elementary students were all African-American, and the authors recognized the cultural disconnect between background knowledge and assessments that students of color often experience (Geisler, et. al, 2009). Yet they selected their instructional interventions because of research supporting these interventions, not specifically because of students' backgrounds or the relevance to their learning styles. This study paralleled previously discussed studies in that the authors missed a promising opportunity to integrate student culture when differentiating instruction.

Many of the studies surveyed occurred in schools with high free and reduced lunch rates, a majority of Latino students, all African-American students, or moderately high ELL populations. Each of these sites would have been ideal for differentiating instruction based on student background and identity. Yet the studies discussed above demonstrated teachers or researchers overlooking the role of culture on cognition and the implications of this for delivering appropriate instruction. If student culture was not a consideration for differentiation in culturally diverse settings, it is possible that student background plays an even smaller role in schools with more culturally mainstream students.

Additionally, instructional planning based on student assessment or demographic data presupposed the opportunity for teachers to plan their curriculum and instruction. Teachers using core reading programs may not have the opportunity to differentiate instruction, despite the quantitative and qualitative data collected about student performance and demographics, respectively. In absence the opportunity to design lessons based on student learner profiles, what recommendations from the literature of differentiated instruction can teachers use to challenge their students? Is it possible to share the authority over knowledge when the curriculum intentionally elevates certain bodies of knowledge over others? Can teachers employ a two-way pedagogy while adhering to the requirements of the curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 1996)? The above studies of differentiated instruction either adopted a curriculum dedicated to differentiation or occurred in schools where teachers had a certain degree of curricular autonomy. This raises multiple questions for subsequent research. For example, when district administrators require firm adherence to the core reading program, what opportunities, if any, do teachers have to differentiate instruction? What strategies do they use to help students access texts and demonstrate knowledge without opportunities to modify process, product, or content? This study worked to answer those questions.

The previous section reviewed current literature in the field of differentiated instruction. The following section will explore literature in multicultural education.

Multicultural Education

This section will discuss critical contributions to the literature of multicultural education. First, I will review influential studies that have shaped the field of multicultural education. Then I will examine current studies applying strategies of multicultural instruction, specifically culturally responsive teaching.

Foundational Multicultural Literature

The field of multicultural education has argued that children of culturally diverse backgrounds learn best when teachers modify content to reflect students' experiences, and when instructional methods are adjusted to be culturally congruent with students' learning styles. The literature has claimed that traditional teaching maintains privileged knowledge and methods of knowledge construction. The field has recommended changing these to help students of color and students in poverty construct and demonstrate knowledge. The following section will review empirical studies that demonstrate a need for multicultural education for children of diverse races and ethnicities.

To understand the theory of culturally relevant teaching, I reviewed foundational studies of multicultural education, as well as studies older than 15 years that have also shaped today's pedagogical practices of multicultural education. In this investigation, I reviewed studies cited by Geneva Gay in her (2000) *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*. I selected the articles based on the following criteria: empirical studies and not articles deliberating theory; all elementary school sites, not high school, college, or graduate school; and all articles related to learning, whether assessment or learning preferences. Not all the studies reviewed collected data during literacy instruction, though most did. Additionally, purposeful sampling of studies was done to ensure a representation of students of various races, ethnicities, cultures, and socioeconomic statuses.

Multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching have advocated the broadening of privileged knowledge and the inclusion of texts by authors of diverse cultural backgrounds. While content modification is critical, so too is the modification of instructional methods (Gay, 2000). Au explored this practice in her 1980 qualitative case study of a single 20-minute reading lesson at the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) in Honolulu

Hawaii. In this study, Au analyzed the interactions between the teacher and four second-grade children, though the class included approximately 20 children at various learning centers. The teacher and students were all Hawaiian, and Au characterized the teacher as an "extremely capable reading instructor," (Au, 1980, p. 95). Au found students best demonstrated their knowledge when allowed to speak in a hybrid style that blended traditional classroom discourse with the Hawaiian style of *talk-story* expressed outside of school. During reading lessons, Au observed students speaking in patterns of cooperation, synchronizing their talk to convey their comprehension. Conventional classrooms often express expectations that limit the verbal responsiveness of children, and of what Cazden would later classify as *IRE*: a teacher initiating a question, a student providing a response, and the teacher evaluating that response (Cazden, 1988). Au's observations showed that this population of Hawaiian children learned best without IRE. Their engagement increased when permitted to speak in culturally congruent patterns. The teacher facilitated open talk and joint student talk, allowing students to communicate in talk-story style sessions in which multiple students contributed to a question's response. Au concluded that appropriate learning contexts for minority children may best help them learn.

In 1985, Au and Kawakami further studied Hawaiian students at the KEEP and found that Hawaiian students learned best when reading instruction focused more on comprehension, rather than word identification alone, and that students responded best to culturally compatible instructional methods. To test the benefits of small group lessons, they compared lessons taught by two teachers to the same group of six-grade students. The teacher who had less experience with Hawaiian children relied on conventional instructional methods and expressed expectations of conventional structural interactions. The second teacher, who had more experience with Hawaiian children, allowed students to participate in talk-story. As a result, the authors reported

the first teacher spending more time on management and working to control the class than on the discussion of reading. In contrast, the teacher with more experience with that population accepted the talk-story practices and focused the discussion on reading comprehension. Seventy-seven percent of student responses in the "high contact" teacher's lesson were related to the reading compared to 50% of the teacher with less familiarity with Hawaiian children. The authors closed by stating that teachers working with culturally diverse children should be aware of the different values that affect any cultural group's rules for speaking and communicating.

The studies reviewed indicate a need for multicultural instructional methods, but they also reveal the importance of the teacher in regard to authority. Au and Au & Kawakami wrote that Hawaiian children have been found to perform poorly with high degrees of teacher control. According to the authors, the successful teachers in these studies had firm control over the reading lessons, but they shared authority over knowledge construction. These teachers allowed students to share their experiences with the themes of the texts and draw relationships between their own knowledge and the ideas in the stories. Additionally, the authors noted that the inclusion of talk-story gave the appearance of the students controlling the conversation, but the teachers asked questions that deliberately guided students through the knowledge construction. Au's 1980 and 1985 studies showed Hawaiian students have conversational, instructional, and relationship needs that may differ from mainstream students.

While Au studied Hawaiian children, Boykin (1982) looked at the unique instructional needs of Black children in comparison to White children. Boykin studied 64 third-grade children, 32 Black and 32 White. Half of each group was male, and the other half was female. All the Black children came from working-class families while all of the White children lived in a middle-to-upper-class area in New York. The author wrote, "It seems clear that race and class

were confounded," but that the sampling was done in awareness of the confounding (Boykin, 1982, p. 473). Boykin provided participants with four different types of tasks, including color-matching, listening, scanning, and schema-reproduction over testing periods that lasted 40 minutes each. Testing periods included either a) Level 1 Variability in which four different orders of the task types were presented, or b) Level 2 Variability in which four random strings of the 20 tasks were presented. The researcher presented these tasks under the conditions that a) no more than two of the same task type could be presented and that b) each task type had to appear at least once in each string of five tasks (Boykin, 1982). Additionally, the researcher measured home stimulation from a questionnaire that surveyed the total number of children in the household; the total number of people in the household; the number of rooms in the house; and the frequency of the television, radio, and record player being on.

Boykin (1982) found that Black subjects had statistically significant higher scores of home stimulation than those of the White children. Additionally, Black and White children displayed differential responsiveness to the variability of tasks presented to them. The author noted, "Black children's performance was markedly better in the more variable condition than it was in the less variable format," (Boykin, 1982, p. 480). White children's performance was not affected by the presentation of tasks. Additionally, Boykin analyzed the effects of Black children with high and low levels of home stimulation and found statistically significant results for the performance of Black children from high levels of home stimulation when the variety of task presentation was higher. Boykin developed a relationship between the level of stimulation in children's homes and students' performance on tasks given the variability of tasks presented, and he concluded that adaptive practices for African American children should be further investigated.

Delain, Pearson, and Anderson (1985) also studied African American students and found standard assessments did not always accurately capture the knowledge of students of diverse cultural backgrounds, specifically their knowledge of figurative language. They studied 161 seventh grade students from two distinct subpopulations: Black subjects included 89 students from a working-class area in a large Tennessee city and 17 from a mid-sized Illinois city. The 50 White subjects were from the working-class area of a mid-sized Illinois city. They wrote, "multiple regression analyses were done with the major dependent variable of interest being figurative language," (Delain et al., 1985, p.163). Students completed the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (Kalsen, Madden, & Gardner, 1978) and the Anderson-Freebody type vocabulary test (Anderson & Freebody, 1983). Students were then asked to complete comprehension questions that asked about figurative expressions and literal statements. For instance, the literal statements included prompts such as, "Dad went over and closed the curtains on the window. He said, 'Sun, you certainly are *bright*!'" and figurative statements included prompts such as "Dad looked at Junior's report card and said, 'Son, you certainly are *bright*!'" (Delain et al., 1985, p.164). The researchers also measured figurative language through multiple choice questions in which participants ranked four possible responses. One assessment prompt stated, "You so ugly that when you were born the doctor slapped your face," (Delain et al., 1985, p.165). Students then selected the best comeback response, out of the following options:

a. You so ugly everybody laughs at you!
b. You so ugly you don't need to wear a mask at Halloween!
c. You so ugly that when you were born the doctor slapped your momma!
d. All the trees dry up when you walk by because you are so ugly!

According to the researchers, preferred rankings were c, b, d, and a.

Recursive regression analyses evaluated the relationship between general language ability, Black language ability, sounding skill, and figurative language comprehension.

Regarding the area of figurative language, White children's understanding was effectively captured in measures of general verbal ability. For Black students, their understanding of figurative language was best explained by a combination of measures general verbal ability and features of Black language patterns, such as idioms, signifying, marking, or sounding (also referred to as ritual insult). The results of this study suggested that general language ability exams may be insufficient to capture students' knowledge of figurative language. The author stated that Black students may benefit from assessments in Black language patterns to best demonstrate their understanding of figurative language.

Guilmet (1979) looked at the instruction of Navajo children compared to their White peers in his study of the preschool and daycare classrooms at the Tribal American Consulting Corporation (TACC) in the Los Angeles area. His study included 13 Navajo children, all of whom could speak Navajo but rarely did under the parents' beliefs that it may have interfered with their child's understanding of English, and seven White children who spoke English. Guilmet (1979) observed the teachers' behaviors in formal and informal observations over a period of sixth months, classifying their behaviors as either instructional or disciplinary. In his research, he noted that White Children and Navajo children were evenly distributed in the classrooms, which reduced the possibility of teacher or researcher bias. Through a weighted analysis of variance technique, he found teachers and aides were near or talking to the White children significantly more than the Navajo children. He also found teachers and aides spent significantly more time away from or not talking to the Navajo children. Guilmet (1979) summarized his results, saying that the instructors speak to White children significantly more than the Navajo children; that instructors ignored Navajo children at a distance more frequently than White children at a distance; and that Navajo children who are at a greater need of teacher

assistance received less assistance than their White peers. He used his study to suggest teachers be more aware that quiet children also need instructional direction, and that teachers should be aware of the impact of students' cultural backgrounds on their help-seeking preferences.

Howard (2001) studied children's interpretations of instructional practices by four elementary school teachers who were identified as culturally responsive for African-American students. His qualitative case study purposefully sampled 17 students, deliberately selecting children of varying academic abilities to prevent overly positive or overly critical reviews of the teachers. The researcher interviewed the children individually and in focus groups with other participants. Data analysis consisted of "standard qualitative measures," (Howard, 2001, p.136). Three central themes emerged from data analysis: a) the importance of caring teachers, b) a family-like classroom environment, and c) education as entertainment. Students perceived teachers as caring when they held high expectations, vocalized caring, and expressed vulnerability. Students described a family-like classroom environment as one that allowed for the sharing of personal events, had daily rituals, and students who treated each other as family. Students also expressed appreciation of their teacher making them laugh, making learning fun even with "hard stuff like math," and integrating elements of performance like "jumping up and down," (Howard, 2001, p.144). Howard concluded that the teachers worked for cultural congruence between students' home and schools. He also concluded that teachers who practiced culturally relevant teaching were successful for their ability to integrate students' cultural capital into their pedagogical practices.

Multicultural Education and Culturally Responsive Teaching

For this study, I reviewed literature concerning culturally responsive teaching as practiced in literacy classrooms; selection criteria are shown in Appendix A-2.

Search terms included: Culturally responsive pedagogy and literacy. Inclusion dates were set from 2001-2016. As with the search for literature in differentiated instruction, I selected 2001 as a cutoff date to remain consistent with today's culture of assessment and accountability. This search yielded 98 results. All studies selected for this review were empirical studies, qualitative and quantitative to develop a clear understanding of culturally responsive teaching as well as its potential for achievement results. Literature reviews, literature describing the principles of culturally responsive teaching, or discussions of theory were excluded from the review. The following were used for inclusion criteria: studies of teachers; reading and writing in language arts; studies in the United States; studies of certificated practicing teachers; and studies of general education. The following were used for exclusion criteria: instructional coaches; teacher candidates; literacy in math or science; and students with learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, students with autism, or students with dyslexia. That search yielded seven total studies.

Current literature in multicultural education in practice revealed two trends: first, studies of multicultural practices were often qualitative case studies of single teachers purposefully sampled for their reputation as culturally responsive. Second, when teachers do engage in multicultural teaching practices, their responses ranged from the modification of instructional practices, to the inclusion of texts identified as multicultural, to practices of critical literacy. Below I will discuss these two trends in more detail.

Worthy, Consalvo, Bogard, and Russell (2012) followed a single 19-year veteran teacher to describe multicultural teaching practices in action. In their ethnography, they observed the second-grade teacher over the course of one school year through participant-observations for a total of 38 observations. Each observation occurred during the two-hour literacy block. In

addition, they conducted three formal interviews with multiple spontaneous interviews. After data collection, the authors open-coded the entire data set. Data analysis also consisted of group discussions and continued reading on research and theory. Their study found the teacher frequently used teacher-selected texts based on relevance to students' families and backgrounds. She connected reading activities to students' lives by discussing "issues relating to family and cultural experiences, relationships, feelings, and ethical dilemmas," (Worthy et al., 2012, p.574). They also noted the teacher providing choice to students over the learning process and the products of assessment through the workshop model. Writing instruction connected to "students' purposes and interests, again in concert with effective and culturally responsive teaching," (Worthy et al., 2012, p.575). Additionally, this teacher utilized flexible grouping patterns and allowed for modifications of the classroom environment to facilitate student learning. The authors concluded that the teacher created a learning environment that valued "students' agency, interests, responsibility, and collaboration," (Worthy et al., 2012, p.586).

Similarly, Toppel's (2012) teacher-researcher case study revealed the possibility of using students' cultural backgrounds as the basis of instruction, also by studying the practices of a single teacher. She reflected on one year of teaching kindergarten and the ways in which she increased student engagement in literacy by using culturally responsive practices in conjunction with a rigid core reading program. For instance, she reported introducing personalized student projects such as personal alphabets in which students used family members, pets, important places, and favorite activities to represent each letter of the alphabet. She believed this form of reciprocal sharing allowed her to learn about her students while making learning personally meaningful for them. Toppel (2012) also used curriculum-required choral reading as an opportunity for collaborative learning. When the class sounded out a vocabulary word, she made

time for students to situate that word in their language contexts by sharing ways they used the particular word. Finally, the author included students' families in the learning process by sending home alphabet art projects for families to complete together. Toppel (2012) reported this time of teaching helped bridge the disconnect between children's homes and the culture of schools.

Adkins's (2012) collective case study of two English teachers identified as particularly successful with Black students also revealed the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices. She studied two Black women with 18 years and nine years of teaching experience with children of diverse cultural backgrounds. Data collection included 39 classroom observations, 12 interviews, and 21 instructional artifacts. Data analysis included emergent coding, frequent member checks, and reflective memos. Adkins (2012) found both teachers regularly connected the curriculum texts (*Black Boy* and *Romeo and Juliet*) to students' lives during regular instruction. Specifically, during the *Romeo and Juliet* unit, a student at the study site was stabbed by another on the school bus (Adkins, 2012). The English teacher used that as an opportunity to make connections between the feuding students at the school and the warring families in *Romeo and Juliet*. Additionally, both teachers integrated student voice and student experiences. They approached reading comprehension from a standpoint of personal interpretation but insisted students study deeply the author's message. The teachers valued collaboration, community experiences, and the social nature of learning, which the author identifies as key points of culturally relevant teaching. Adkins concluded that both teachers exemplified a spirit of warm but demanding instruction designed to increase their students' confidence as learners.

Other studies revealed teachers engaging in practices of critical literacy. Labadie, Mosely Wetzel, and Rogers (2012) studied how elementary teachers provided opportunities for critical

literacy specifically through the introduction of class texts and the questioning practices that followed. The study was a year-long investigation of a single teacher-researcher's classroom, Melissa Mosely Wetzel. This study focused on four videotaped guided reading lessons that the authors assert were representative of the larger data set. Data analysis included critical discourse analysis and multimodal analysis to explore student and teacher interactions. First, the authors observed the participant teacher using culturally relevant historical texts that discussed themes such as the Underground Railroad; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; The Montgomery Bus Boycott; and school desegregation, specifically Ruby Bridges. Then, when the teacher-researcher introduced new texts, she engaged in practices of critical questioning and purposeful prompts, such as, "How are the characters/setting represented in the illustrations, and how does it make you feel?" and, "Whose point of view does the illustration show? Who or what is left out?" (Labadie et al., 2012, p.121). These practices were consistent with elements of critical theory like critical questioning and counter-storytelling (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). The teacher also helped students generate and test possible theories about the text, the themes, and the authors' messages. The authors reported the teacher continually made space for critical social issues and worked to connect those to her students' lived realities.

Wies Long and Gove (2012) implemented a culturally responsive practice, literature circles, over four class sessions in a single fourth-grade classroom in attempts to integrate multicultural education. They purposefully selected a class of 27 African American students, 16 of whom participated in their study. They observed the classroom during typical literacy instruction, but also implemented literature circles of culturally relevant materials for four sessions. The literature circles included texts designed to reflect the historical group experience of the Jim Crow South and its relation to the students. The authors described students feeling

more engaged in reading and discussions of racism and injustice. They also noted the teacher engaging in practices of critical literacy like critical questioning and counter-storytelling. Wies Long and Gove concluded that children in their study were more engaged in reading and writing because of the emotional involvement of the themes in the stories and the opportunities to share their reactions in the activities associated with literature circles.

Regarding multicultural curricular modifications, Stallworth, Gibbons, and Fauber (2006) surveyed 142 secondary teachers in Alabama about their usage of multicultural literature to understand teachers' motivations for using or nor using texts considered multicultural. The survey was quantitative and qualitative. Teachers first listed the book-length texts they taught for each grade. Then they answered questions such as, "Do your selections include writers from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and if so, how?" and "Do you include book-length works from authors of non-European descent? Why or Why not?" (Stallworth, et al., 2006, p.481). They reported that 216 surveys were mailed to the addresses of public school teachers, retrieved from the state department of education. Of those mailed, 142 (66%) were returned. The researchers totaled the book titles mentioned and categorized the qualitative data by themes. They found most teachers adhered to classics in the canon of literature, such as *The Crucible, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* and *Romeo & Juliet*. These titles reflected the importance of American authors and Shakespeare in literacy education. Teachers who did integrate diverse literature usually selected texts from what may be considered the canon of multicultural literature: *A Raisin in the Sun, Their Eyes Were Watching God,* and *Things Fall Apart*. Teachers who included such works reported doing so in efforts to expose their students to more perspectives in literature and a deliberate attempt to integrate non-European authors. Teachers who did not integrate multicultural texts admitted to anticipating problems with

parents, colleagues, or administrators for using content with which some may consider controversial. Teachers who did not use multicultural literature also expressed a lack of expertise, admitting that even if they wanted to teach more culturally diverse texts, their own inexperience and lack of familiarity caused them to teach texts from the classic cannon of literature, such as the Shakespeare works. The authors recommended teacher preparation programs better equip future English teachers to use more culturally diverse texts. They also suggested that teachers use care when integrating culturally diverse texts that may perpetuate racial stereotypes if not taught sensitively, such as Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* or Richard Wright's *Black Boy.*

Other studies showed multicultural modifications made in instructional methods, often for children of diverse cultural backgrounds, but also for English Language Learners. Kieffer and Lesaux (2012) recruited 482 sixth-grade students (349 language minority [LM] students and 133 native English speakers) for their 18-week teacher-delivered intervention to improve ELL students' morphological awareness. Their intervention, Academic Language Instruction for All Students (ALIAS), consisted of eight two-week units and two one-week review units over the 18 weeks. Each unit was thematically organized, used a single expository text, and included eight to nine cross-disciplinary academic vocabulary words, such as "method" or "complex." Control classrooms continued standard instruction. The researchers assessed students' morphological awareness pre- and post-test using researcher-created instruments. They found no statistically significant differences between treatment and control students on the two measures of morphological awareness administered at pretest. The treatment then had a statistically significant positive main effect on both the relational and the syntactic aspects of morphological

awareness for LM students. The authors reported that intentional, culturally responsive vocabulary instruction has positive effects of LM students when compared to standard practice.

Critique of the Literature: Multicultural Education

The following section will evaluate studies of multicultural literacy instruction, noting the resulting gaps in research. First, studies reporting successful practices in multicultural education relied heavily on teachers' professional judgment. In these studies, teachers demonstrated extensive knowledge of their students and students' communities, and consequently had the autonomy to modify curriculum texts and instructional practices to best support their students. In absence of teacher autonomy with curriculum and instruction, what are the strategies teachers can use to make learning relevant to students of diverse cultural backgrounds? Second, many of the studies in literacy instruction based in principles of multicultural education were single case studies, often reliant on teachers already skilled in multicultural teaching practices. Third, studies which reported encouraging findings for multicultural teaching practices often occurred in homogenous classrooms of children of color, such as exclusively African-American communities. This raised the question of what multicultural instruction might look like in classrooms with children of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds. The following section will describe these critiques in greater detail.

First, the reviewed studies of multicultural education occurred in absence of a strict core reading program, such as the Core Knowledge Sequence. Teachers were given autonomy to decide curriculum texts (Labadie et al., 2012) or methods of instruction (Adkins, 2012). Yet many districts adopt a firm core reading program and have expectations of internal validity. How are teachers modifying the curriculum and challenging students within the strict parameters of a firm core reading program? In other words, the reviewed studies, with the exception of Toppel's

(2012) study of a kindergarten class, highlighted the opportunities for differentiated instruction and multicultural education when teachers could express their professional judgment. The question then emerges: how do teachers differentiate instruction and challenge children of diverse cultural backgrounds within the guidelines of a strict core reading program? Specifically, what strategies do teachers use to engage and challenge children of diverse cultural backgrounds in upper elementary classrooms in absence of curricular and instructional autonomy?

Second, the reviewed studies have indicated a need for modifications to traditional curriculum and instruction based on student culture and identity. They have also shown the possibilities in teaching to student need and interest. However, many were single case studies. Many of the subjects also had reputations as skilled multicultural educators. While there was much to be learned from the subject of Worthy et al.'s study (2012) about culturally responsive teaching practices, these practices may not be possible for average or low-performing teachers, as well as new teachers. Culturally responsive pedagogy can be complicated and labor-intensive; are these practices only performed by top performing or veteran teachers? Similarly, Toppel (2012) showed the possibilities of implementing practices of critical literacy, blending differentiated instruction and multicultural education. But, being a study of a single teacher, the question remains whether these effective practices can be expected by other teachers, or if she is an anomaly.

The results of Wies Long and Gove (2012) reiterate the previous questions: as it is a single case study, are their results strong enough to inform future instruction? For example, is it possible to create culturally responsive reading units in a culturally heterogeneous classroom, and if so, what might that look like? How might instruction differ in classrooms not exclusively African American or in classrooms where teacher and student ethnicities were not the same?

These studies offered insight into the possibilities of intersecting differentiated instruction and multicultural education with the Core Knowledge Sequence, but more research needs to be done to investigate how probable it is to observe contrasting pedagogical philosophies simultaneously enacted.

The third trend in multicultural literature was the variability in multicultural practices. This finding is unsurprising given Banks' (2009b) description of multicultural education, which involves knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, an empowering school culture, an equity pedagogy, and content integration. It was understandable that teachers may adopt some of these features without fully subscribing to multicultural education as a pedagogical philosophy.

On one end of the multicultural education spectrum, some teachers only made modifications through content integration, incorporating texts by authors of diverse cultural backgrounds to expose children to diverse works of literature and to make the curriculum relevant for their students. However, Stallworth et al. (2006) demonstrated that even when teachers attempted content integration, their motivation may have had little to do with student interest, readiness, or cultural background; they may simply have included culturally relevant texts because they wanted to broaden children's (of all cultures) literary backgrounds. The type of multicultural education in Dockrell et al. (2010) demonstrated changes to content and instruction but without the social justice agenda as expressed by transformative multiculturalism. These studies reveal further the range of practices in multicultural education.

The pedagogical practices of the teachers in Labadie et al. (2012) and Wies Long and Grove (2004) attempted to challenge traditional relationships of privilege and oppression, as encouraged by transformative multiculturalism, by empowering their students and legitimizing their experiences. These teachers engaged in practices of critical literacy and demonstrated a

sociopolitical commitment to dismantling oppression in their schools. They showed a commitment to transforming the knowledge of the dominant culture by questioning cultural assumptions about privileged knowledge and ways of knowing. They also modified their instructional methods in order to facilitate the knowledge construction of children of diverse cultural backgrounds.

While the curriculum texts of the 2012 Labadie et al. study challenged the dominant narrative, it should be noted that all their texts contained issues of historical racism, such as slavery, bus boycotts, and school desegregation. This could potentially present the message that racism and injustice are social issues of the past. With careful instruction, these issues can be connected to the barriers to structural inclusion that many people of color face today.

The discussed studies show the various interpretations of multicultural education as practiced in schools. This dissertation study sought to explore iterations of differentiated instruction and multicultural education within the requirements of a strict core reading program. Before discussing the methods of the study, I will review current trends in literature on literacy instruction to provide a sense of instruction that could be considered typical for upper elementary students. Then I will discuss the core reading program featured in this study, the Core Knowledge curriculum, and review empirical studies of its implementation.

Literacy Instruction

This section will explore current practices in literacy education in order to effectively map differentiated instruction and multicultural education onto literacy instruction. For this study, I surveyed literature discussing current instructional methods in literacy based on the five pillars of reading by the National Reading Panel (2000). The pillars include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The present study focused on

comprehension strategies, including vocabulary, but did not address issues of phonemic awareness, phonics, or fluency, which typically pertain to the primary grades. However, some of the reviewed studies also included aspects of fluency or phonics instruction. Reutzel, Child, Jones, and Clark (2014), for example, examined core reading lessons in first, third, and fifth grade, thus integrating aspects of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. The evaluation of the core reading program at those three levels also speaks to Hirsch's call for spiraled curriculum, to be discussed in the section following this (1987). Sonnenschein, Stapleton, and Benson (2010) used longitudinal data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study data set and studied instruction in kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grade, thereby including all five pillars of reading instruction. Though fifth-grade reading instruction typically emphasizes comprehension, their study noted the benefits of a clear grasp of phonics prior to comprehension instruction, regardless of the students' academic grade.

After reviewing studies that broadly discussed the five pillars of reading instruction, I narrowed the focus to studies on comprehension and vocabulary. Additionally, I included a single study of writing instruction to demonstrate the role of meaning-focused instruction (versus code-based). Hill (2009) also provided insight to the role of teachers in differentiating literacy instruction. This study segued into Kesler's (2013) investigation of the impact of testing pressure on teachers' literacy instruction. Lastly, Valencia, Place, Martin, and Grossman (2006) explored the effect that teacher content knowledge can have on teachers' instructional practices. The following section discusses current practices in literacy education, both within and in absence of a firm core reading program, while the succeeding section expressly discusses firm core reading programs, specifically the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Selection criteria is for studies of literacy instruction based on the five pillars of reading instruction is shown in Appendix A-3.

Search terms included: literacy instruction and elementary. Inclusion dates were set from 2001-2016. As with the search for literature in differentiated instruction and multicultural education, I selected 2001 as a cutoff date to survey literacy instruction as it has been impacted by the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act. The 2001 passing of the No Child Left Behind Act emphasized excellence in reading and writing, as well as assessment and accountability that is still present in education. Because of that critical juncture in education and educational policy, I intentionally selected 2001 as a cutoff date so that studies surveyed would reflect the heightened emphasis on instruction, accountability, and literacy. All studies selected for this review were empirical studies, qualitative and quantitative. I excluded discussions of philosophies of teaching literacy and essays debating best practices. The following were used for inclusion criteria: studies of teachers; reading and writing in language arts; studies in the United States; studies of certificated practicing teachers; studies of general education; and studies of instructional methods. The following were used for exclusion criteria: studies of instructional coaches, reading specialists, teacher candidates, or professional development instructors; literacy in math or science; studies of student motivation or self-efficacy; and studies of Special Education, including Response to Intervention practices, students with learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, students with autism, or students with dyslexia.

Based on that criteria, I deliberately selected the following studies to provide a sampling of instructional practices in literacy based on the five pillars of reading, such as explicit instruction, literature circles, vocabulary instruction, and phonics instruction. This sampling assisted in the creation of observational guides used during data collection (Appendix E) and the

development of pre-codes used during data analysis (Appendix F). The following section discusses these studies in greater detail.

First, Valencia and Buly (2004) examined the specific needs of struggling readers. They looked at 108 randomly selected 5th grade students who scored below 4th grade standards on reading assessments. They assessed each student for two hours over several days, measuring word identification through the 1989 Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised (WJ-R); oral reading errors through the 1995 Qualitative Reading Inventory-II (QRI-II); comprehension through the QRI-II; receptive vocabulary through the 1981 Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R); and fluency rate of reading and expression (Samuels, 2002). The authors reported that test scores fell into three statistically significant categories in three distinct areas: word identification, meaning, and fluency. Using cluster analyses (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984), they found six distinct profiles of struggling readers. The clusters included: automatic word callers, struggling word callers, word stumblers, slow comprehenders, slow word callers, and disabled readers. The authors suggested that their results indicated the need for multi-level flexible grouping. The results also demonstrated the need for teachers with a thorough understanding of the reading process who could diagnose the reading challenges of their students and administer appropriate instruction. They encouraged teachers to consider the student and the assessments when planning reading instruction. They also advocated differentiated instruction through a wide range of reading materials at varying skill and interest levels to meet the reading needs of each type of struggling reader.

Other reviewed studies examined reading curricula with limited consideration of student background, specifically literacy instruction within core reading programs. Reutzel, Child, Jones, and Clark (2014) used content analysis to investigate explicit instruction within core reading

programs. They looked at 290 reading lessons (165 in first grade, 100 in third grade, and 65 in fifth grade), using stratified sampling. For each grade level, they randomly selected one week of lessons from the curriculum that focused on reading essentials, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension. In their content analysis, the authors excluded modifications for ELL students and students of low ability, as well as lessons that focused on areas such as genre study, grammar, or speaking and listening. The authors developed an a priori coding scheme that identified the type of lesson of the five essential skills, and the type of instruction, such as independent practice, guided instruction, modeling, explicit instruction, or discussion, for example. First, the authors found that core reading programs recommended explicit instruction for all five reading essentials. They also found that explicit instruction accounted for almost half (44%) of the instructional moves in the first-grade core reading program lessons, 31% in third grade, and 25% in fifth grade. The results of this study suggested that students whose schools adopted core reading programs were likely to experience explicit instruction in the five essential areas of reading instruction. Though lessons also allowed for teacher modeling and teacher-directed guided practice frequently, explicit instruction still dominated the instructional recommendations in the core reading programs surveyed.

Sonnenschein, Stapleton, and Benson (2010) explored the relationship between the type and amount of reading instruction and students' growth in reading abilities using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study data set (ECLS-K cohort). Of the 17,565 participants, the authors selected 10,673 students who were followed through fifth grade and who participated in researcher-selected five data points: fall and spring of kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grades. Researchers then reduced the data set to public school students, leaving 6,381 participants. They measured instructional approaches through teachers' ratings of the type and frequency of various

kinds of instruction, further creating scales in phonics and integrated language arts, and rating teachers based on their responses. Children's reading skills were represented through item response theory trait scores based on responses linked to reading assessments at each grade level. The researchers used quantitative analyses methods such as latent growth model. The researchers found that children's entry level reading skills and students' ethnicity (specifically whether they were African American) were strong predictors of reading scores at the end of kindergarten. In other words, much of the variance in children's growth in reading was predicted by factors occurring before the child even entered kindergarten. Children who entered school with lower scores than their peers continued to earn lower scores regardless of the type or amount of instruction they received. Parents' education was moderately and positively related to student growth in reading abilities. Additionally, African American children's reading growth rates progressed more slowly than White or Hispanic children. They reported that the achievement gap which was present at kindergarten among ethnicities continued to expand by fifth grade.

Sonnenschein et al. (2010) also explored schooling factors in relation to reading growth, noting that school-based factors were easier for educators to control than factors affecting students before entering school. They found that children benefitted more from a phonics- or code-oriented approach to reading rather than a meaning-oriented focus to reading. They noted that the emphasis on meaning-focused activities differentially benefitted students with strong phonics skills upon entering kindergarten. In other words, children fluent in phonics demonstrated greater growth through meaning-related activities than students who lacked fundamental phonics skills. The authors concluded by saying the type of reading instruction students receive should be based in assessment data of their current abilities and skill levels.

They argued that for at-risk readers especially, phonics instruction should be emphasized to remove the differences in competencies based on student background.

While the previous study looked at the use of phonics versus meaning based instruction, others explored interpretations of either approach. For example, Wies Long and Gove looked at the use of literature circles, an approach often associated with meaning-based instruction (see previous section of literature in multicultural education for a more detailed discussion of their study). Hill (2009) looked at the use of writer's workshop, another approach associated with an integrated language approach. Though the focus was *writer's* workshop, the activities involved the negotiation of meaning, explorations of language, and student perspective. These learning experiences were consistent with a meaning-focused approach to literacy. Hill (2009) looked at 29 seventh grade students, the majority of whom were White, with five African-American students, one Asian student, and one Ethiopian student. The author observed the class for 46 minutes, three to five times per week over a five-month period. She found that the workshop model allowed students to experiment with language in conventional and non-standard, culturally congruent ways. The workshop model employed by the teacher allowed students to emphasize the content of their writing instead of the correct use of spelling or grammatical conventions. Students explored ideas and content without adhering to specific expectations of grammar. She also claimed that to require students to write in standard English would be "an inaccurate depiction and diminish who they are," (Hill, 2009, p.124). However, Hill noted the teacher required students to turn in a final draft of their work that did follow conventional grammar rules, but that this draft was scaffolded from previous drafts that were linguistically congruent with students' backgrounds. The author then called for literacy teachers to create

inclusive language environments for students, and to balance conventional and nonstandard uses of English in the classroom.

Other studies of current practices in literacy investigated code-focused activities, including vocabulary learning. Carlisle, Kelcey, and Berebitsky (2013) examined teachers' support of students' vocabulary learning in various literacy lessons. Their study included 44 third-grade teachers working in 19 high-poverty and chronically underachieving schools across six school districts. Data collection included the observation of four lessons per participating teacher. Observation notes occurred at five-minute intervals in which the researcher recorded features such as lesson purpose, grouping, materials, word meaning activity, and student engagement. The researchers used Automated Classroom Observation System for Reading (ACOS-R) with automatic coding and data management. To control for students' prior reading ability, the authors used reading comprehension scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for the previous two years and fall scores of Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessments. The researchers then developed an explanatory multilevel item response model to assess the effects of teacher instruction in vocabulary on student reading achievement (De Boeck & Wilson, 2004). They found that teachers' support of students' vocabulary learning was significantly related to gains in reading comprehension. They noted that most teachers engaged in "shallower discourse actions" (Carlisle et al., 2013, p. 1382) during vocabulary instruction instead of cognitively challenging word work. Also, most vocabulary discourse (or discussion of words and meanings) occurred during vocabulary lessons, compared to writing or fluency lessons. The authors also found that teachers of culturally diverse backgrounds tended to engage in more vocabulary discourse than White teachers. Overall, they reported that purposeful vocabulary instruction,

regardless of depth or context in literacy instruction, helped improve students' reading achievement scores.

Other literacy studies focus on neither code- or meaning-based activities. Instead, they studied lessons to best prepare students to perform well on high-stakes testing measures. Kesler (2013) investigated literacy instruction and test preparation during the 2006-2007 school year in two purposively-sampled classrooms. Teachers selected were nominated for their ability to use Balanced Literacy with urban poor students. In his ethnographic case study, he conducted multiple participant-observations, two semi-structured interviews with each participant, one semi-structured interview with each principal and literacy coach, and he attended collaborative meetings among the teaching staffs. In this study, Kesler found that test preparation did in fact narrow the curriculum and instructional methods for both teachers. However, the teachers adopted different approaches. One teacher provided increased time for independent reading activities, believing that uninterrupted reading time at students' individual reading levels would best prepare them for achievement tests. The other teacher in the study reduced independent reading time to devote more time to test preparation. This teacher also believed her students had family-supervised independent reading at home. Additionally, both teachers reported receiving more test preparation materials than they could reasonably use in the time allotted for test preparation. Finally, one teacher reported the pressure to target individual students, specifically those most likely to make gains from one achievement level to the next. This teacher referred to this as differentiation in a "morally awful manner," (Kesler, 2013, p. 504). This teacher reported pressure to work intensively with middle-ability students for their potential to increase school-wide achievement ratings, often at the expense of instructional time for the lower-performing students. This study revealed that despite strong curricular materials or highly regarded teachers,

literacy instruction may encounter consequential interruptions such as test preparation. It also showed that even when given specific test preparation materials, which could parallel an assigned curriculum, teachers still found means to differentiate instruction.

When differentiated instruction was possible, in both code- and meaning-focused activities, some studies showed that critical aspects of instruction depend on the individual teacher and their literacy content knowledge. Valencia, Place, Martin, and Grossman (2006) conducted a three-year longitudinal study of four teachers' abilities to use and adapt reading materials for their students. They followed four recent graduate teachers in the first three years of their teaching experience in classrooms ranging from first to fourth grades. The researchers conducted multiple classroom observations, at least 17 per teacher, as well as participant interviews, at least 32 per teacher. Additionally, they interviewed school personnel about participant teachers, including principals, literacy coaches, and mentor teachers. The authors found that teachers with the strongest knowledge of reading instruction as well as those with the greatest access to instructional materials were most likely to modify instructional methods and curricular texts based on student need. The teachers with limited pedagogical content knowledge or with limited access to supplemental instructional materials were more likely to adhere to the mandated curriculum. These teachers placed strong faith in the basal reading curriculum and its ability to meet all students' learning outcome needs. When these two teachers did attempt to differentiate instruction or integrate supplemental texts, they expressed less than satisfactory results, as well as intentions to follow the adopted core curriculum. The authors reported that teacher decision-making was heavily influenced by teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and their confidence in their professional judgment. The authors advocated helping teachers make

thoughtful decisions about the use of curricular materials and to make appropriate instructional decisions based in student learning and ability.

Critique of the Literature: Literacy Instruction

The reviewed studies create a picture of current practices in literacy instruction. Some (Sonnenschein et al., 2010) indicated a need for differentiation based on student ability and instructional background. Hill (2009) suggested the ease of differentiating instruction through meaning-based activities like the writer's workshop. Through this approach, it was possible to allow for culturally congruent instruction in the sense that students can experiment with their home and academic languages. In this study, the possibility of differentiating instruction was more explicit. But this did not suggest the inability to differentiate instruction in code-focused activities. In fact, Sonnenschein et al. (2010) argued that certain populations need more code-focused activities than others. Further, phonics, vocabulary, and other code-focused instruction may still be delivered in culturally congruent means. Phonics instruction should not be considered synonymous with memorization and repetition, though those activities might be appropriate for some students. Literacy teachers should assess and understand their students so that students may receive instruction appropriate for them and their needs, be it code- or meaning- focused, conventional or culturally responsive. Students have varying needs, and a teacher skilled in differentiated instruction will be able to deliver the best instruction for each student in each learning context.

The previous studies provided a sampling of current practices in literacy instruction that may be modified through differentiated instruction. This dissertation study sought to understand the considerations teachers make when differentiating literacy instruction, specifically the extent to which they base instructional decisions in students' cultural backgrounds. Tomlinson (1999)

advocated using knowledge of students' experiences and identities when differentiating instruction, yet many of the reviewed studies on differentiated instruction emphasized the exclusive use of academic ability data for planning instruction with little consideration for students' cultures and backgrounds. The field of multicultural literature has revealed teachers differentiating instruction through culturally responsive teaching for their students of diverse cultural backgrounds. However, in studies of successful culturally responsive teaching (Worthy et al., 2012; Adkins, 2012; Wies Long & Gove, 2012), the classrooms tended to be racially, socioeconomically, and linguistically homogenous, allowing teachers to differentiate for an entire sub-population, such as low-income African American students. What strategies do teachers use to differentiate instruction, accounting for students' cultural backgrounds, in culturally heterogeneous classrooms, classrooms in which multiple races, ethnicities, and languages are present? Additionally, when teachers differentiate instruction through students' cultural backgrounds, what types of multicultural education are most prevalent and why? Are teachers relying exclusively on content integration, or are teachers engaging in practices consistent with Banks' (2009b) description of multicultural education, such as knowledge construction and prejudice reduction? To what extent is there overlap between differentiated instruction and multicultural education, and how are these pedagogical philosophies manifested in current literacy methods?

Further, how are teachers modifying instruction for students when given a firm core reading program? If teachers are prescribed lesson content, objectives, activities, and assessments, how are they finding opportunities to differentiate instruction and integrate students' cultural backgrounds? Before introducing the research questions of this study, I will review the literature on a specific reading program, the Core Knowledge Sequence, a curriculum

created by E.D. Hirsch. I will introduce his pedagogical philosophy and then review the limited studies of the Core Knowledge curriculum and its implementation.

Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy, according to E. D. Hirsch. (Hirsch, 2016; Hirsch, 2006; Hirsch, 1987) is both a philosophy for teaching and learning, as well as a commentary on social status in the United States. Hirsch argued that students need a foundation of *shared cultural knowledge*, or a collection of topics and events that every adult in the United States must know to be successful in society. According to Hirsch's philosophy, this shared knowledge "is possessed by successful adults and taken for granted by literate writers and speakers," (The Core Knowledge Foundation, 2018). The *canon of knowledge and vocabulary* is "known to all highly competent readers and writers," (Hirsch, 2016). Those who lack the shared cultural knowledge, or those whose knowledge is locally based, participate on the margins of society, failing to understand literary allusions or references to historical events. Students may be ill prepared for Advanced Placement classes or college coursework. According to Hirsch, schools must create learning opportunities that allow students to expand their proficiency in cultural literacy.

As a pedagogical philosophy, Hirsch claimed students learn best when curriculum and instruction draw upon students' background knowledge and vocabulary base (1988). Rather than adapting the curriculum to each student's prior knowledge, he advocated a spiraled curriculum, one that introduces new ideas based on the instructional units of the prior grade. A spiraled curriculum aligned with this philosophy, he argued, expands existing background knowledge and vocabulary, which then helps students access and comprehend complex texts (Hirsch, 1988). Critics of Hirsch have asserted that this approach reinforces the privileging of certain bodies of knowledge, specifically knowledge reflecting masculine, White, Western values and experiences

(Freire, 1970). The following section will discuss the philosophy of cultural literacy in more detail, as well as examine studies of schools that have implemented Hirsch's curricular series, Core Knowledge Sequence.

Cultural Literacy and the Core Knowledge Curriculum

Core reading programs attempt to align content and skills throughout grade levels to provide consistent lessons that build upon previously learned knowledge, skills, and vocabulary. The Core Knowledge Sequence is similar to other programs in its ambition to connect curricular texts to students' existing schema to increase comprehension (Hirsch, 1988). But it differs from some programs in its intent to address functional literacy of American adults and its goal to fight social determinism affecting American students (Hirsch, 1988). Hirsch's pedagogical philosophy and subsequent Core Knowledge Sequence curriculum have attempted to address three aspects of American education and society. First, this philosophy has sought to serve a national purpose by fostering "effective nationwide communication," ((Hirsch, 1988). Second, it has attempted to have a social function by countering social determinism and offering children in poverty avenues to participate in learning experiences with requisite background knowledge. Third, the Core Knowledge philosophy and curriculum have intended to serve an individual purpose in enhancing students' reading comprehension by connecting new information to their existing background knowledge and vocabulary (Hirsch, 1988). Each of these principles of Core Knowledge will be discussed in greater detail below.

According to Hirsch, Jr. (1988), all students need a body of shared cultural knowledge to actively participate in American society. Hirsch defined cultural literacy as "the network of information all competent readers possess," (Hirsch, 1988, p. 2). With an understanding of shared information, students can interpret literary allusions, understand references to current

cultural knowledge, and comprehend evolving domain-specific texts. The body of shared cultural knowledge changes slowly, a phenomenon Hirsch referred to as "cultural conservatism," (Hirsch, 1988, p. xii). Cultural knowledge can evolve to include emerging critical terms like *The Brown Decision* after 1954 or DNA in the 1980's, and it also contains persistently important topics like the *Federalist* papers or the Seneca Falls Declaration of Human Rights. Hirsch clarified that cultural knowledge is not limited to literature or historical documents and actors. Instead, it includes knowledge of American and world geography, knowledge of biology concepts like embryo or chromosomes, chemistry knowledge of terms like hydrocarbon or carbon dioxide, and economic knowledge like compound interest or rate of exchange (Hirsch, 1988). While critics have argued this approach is elitist (Freire, 1970), Hirsch contended the emphasis on national rather than local information can preserve American national identity and culture. Rather than excluding individuals, he argued, cultural literacy is inherently democratic because "it cuts across generations and social groups and classes," (Hirsch, 1988, p.21). Any student who receives an education in the shared cultural body of knowledge can then participate in American society.

To demonstrate the intersection of cultural literacy and democratic participation, Hirsch (1988) offered the example of the Black Panthers and their publication, *The Black Panther*. Hirsch noted that despite the radical nature of the publication, the rhetoric it utilized was often conservative, using regular references to the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, the Bible, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag (Hirsch, 1988, p.23). Content, whether conservative or liberal, Hirsch argued, is most effective when delivered in conservative avenues, specifically in references and allusions to the texts of the shared body of cultural

knowledge. Cultural knowledge in itself cannot apply pressure to existing social structures, but it can be used as a starting point for social change.

The second purpose of the Core Knowledge curriculum is to counter social determinism and enable full societal participation for marginalized individuals. Hirsch (1988) argued that American schools are designed to acculturate children into American society. Though private institutions like churches and families share this responsibility, only public schools are subjected to the influence of public policy (Hirsch, 1988, p.111). All children enter public schools with background knowledge that affects the acculturation process. However, certain children enter knowing more of the privileged bodies of knowledge while others are fluent in knowledge not as readily discussed in public schools. Hirsch (1988) called it "an accident of history" (p.106) that American cultural literacy privileges English literature like Chaucer and Milton. His argument severely oversimplified the intentional actions of curriculum developers, districts, and individual teachers to promote bodies of knowledge that predominantly address white, middle-class, male, heterosexual beliefs, values, and authors. However, he noted that despite changes in students' demographics, American schools are slow to change their curriculum texts and instructional methods.

Because American schools typically implement a curriculum based on the shared cultural knowledge, Hirsch (1988) argued schools and classes that deny students of diverse cultural backgrounds opportunities to become literate in the shared cultural knowledge were doing students a disservice and condemning them to poverty (p.12). Without the requisite background knowledge and vocabulary, children have been denied opportunities for full societal participation.

Hirsch (2006) also attacked locally developed curricula, calling them, "sparse, repetitious, incoherent, and fragmented," (p.117). Individualizing instruction or basing learning exclusively in children's existing background knowledge may increase engagement and learning for a single school year but may create gaps in background knowledge for those children the following schoolyear, which would detrimentally affect their achievement. "Curricular incoherence" (Hirsch, 2006) is further exacerbated, Hirsch claimed, by high-mobility students, including children in poverty, who may receive drastically different curricula depending on their enrollment to a given school. To Hirsch, explicitly teaching students to be culturally literate *is* social justice education in that it seeks to fill a gap in background knowledge, as subjective as that background knowledge may be, so that children in poverty will have the same background knowledge, and thus the same educational opportunities, as their affluent peers. Schweizer (2009) claimed affluent and mainstream children already receive an education based in America's shared cultural knowledge; therefore, denying children in poverty access to the knowledge is even more elitist. Like Delpit (1988), Hirsch believed teaching children to access the knowledge privileged by the culture of power is the strongest avenue to close the achievement gap between children of color and children in poverty, and those children fluent in the culture of power.

The third purpose of the Core Knowledge curriculum is to support individual students' reading comprehension. Hirsch (1988) claimed first that skills-based instruction is insufficient for comprehension, and second, students need background knowledge and background vocabulary. Citing Chall (1982), Hirsch described how skills-based instruction such as phonics instruction can reduce the reading gap between disadvantaged students and middle-class students in the first grade. However, the achievement gap widens by fifth grade when comprehension of

complex texts requires more meaning-based instruction. Reading comprehension, he asserted, "requires 'domain-specific' knowledge about the things a text refers to," (Hirsch, 2006, p.17). Students must connect the new information to their existing schema, and if that schema is limited, students will struggle to understand a text. Good reading, he claimed, "requires the rapid deployment of schemata that have already been acquired," (Hirsch, 1988, p. 63). Students can quickly interpret difficult texts by making connections to their existing knowledge. With a broad background of knowledge, he claimed, students reduce their cognitive load and struggle less to make meaning from challenging texts.

He uses this point to critique the Common Core State Standards' emphasis on close reading as a comprehension strategy. Hirsch contended that given the limited nature of human memory, a reader's attention is better suited for understanding the meaning of texts and making judgments of the text, rather than emphasizing the vehicles of meaning, or the specific words (Hirsch, 2016, p.111). Hirsch employed a theory of reading similar to Rosenblatt's 1986 transactional theory of reading, that words on the page cannot convey meaning independent of the experiences and knowledge the reader brings to the interaction of reading. For this reason, he argued, core reading programs should avoid the phenomenon of "curriculum narrowing" through "skill-centrism," (Hirsch, 2016, p.77). Instead, reading curricula should emphasize knowledge construction over the explicit teaching of reading skills.

Hirsch conceded there may be an initial benefit to strategy instruction, but exercises like finding the main idea only assist the "very inexperienced readers," (Hirsch, 2006, p.49). He suggested that more than six sessions devoted to finding the main idea waste valuable class time (Hirsch, 2006). Inexperienced readers still demonstrate the ability to employ complex reading skills like finding the main idea, classifying information, making inferences, and retaining the

information when reading a text of a familiar subject (Hirsch, 2006, p.47). Additionally, he claimed, children enter school with the ability to determine a main idea and make inferences in oral language. Rather than burden children with lessons designed to enhance reading skills which they already possess as oral language skills, Hirsch argued instruction should broaden children's background knowledge and background vocabulary.

In summary, Hirsch advocated a curriculum expressly designed to increase students' background knowledge for three specific purposes. First, a knowledge-based curriculum, in contrast to a student-centered curriculum, allows students to participate in the national shared cultural literacy. It equips them to understand references, interpret allusions, access new knowledge in advanced courses or college classes, and communicate in a common language. Second, Hirsch claimed a knowledge-based curriculum can provide avenues of access to children in poverty and children from diverse cultural backgrounds. He avoided a deficit-perspective but argued that children whose background knowledge may not be valued by American schools need explicit instruction in the knowledge American society expects individuals to possess. By directly teaching children this body of knowledge, they will be better prepared to participate in the culture of power (Delpit, 1988). In his view, this is social justice education in that it provides pathways to equitable education. Lastly, Hirsch claimed a knowledge-based curriculum facilitates reading comprehension by providing requisite background knowledge to interpret and evaluate complex texts. Skills-based instruction, in his view, interferes with understanding because it requires students to employ inauthentic comprehension strategies, fails to connect to students' existing schema, and expects students to create new knowledge without proper context. For these three reasons, Hirsch recommended a firmly spiraled core reading program based in the nation's shared cultural knowledge.

Hirsch's pedagogical philosophy has been strongly criticized by many as elitist. The privileged texts, events, and terms, while common in American culture, have largely been determined by those in power: White, heterosexual, Christian men. History has largely marginalized the voices and literary contributions of those not of the dominant religion, race, ethnicity, and gender. This has resulted in a Canon of Literature and body of shared cultural knowledge that largely excludes the experiences of many American students. The Core Knowledge Sequence does not engage students in critical questioning to disrupt existing structures of privilege and oppression, nor does it include counter-storytelling, which gives voice to marginalized groups. Instead, the Core Knowledge curriculum reinforces the notion that certain bodies of knowledge deserve to be privileged over others. Through the curriculum, students may have access to the shared cultural knowledge, but often at the expense of their existing funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992).

Paulo Freire, an influential theorist in the field of critical pedagogy, frequently criticized Hirsch's philosophy. In his 1970 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he discussed the importance of critical consciousness, or the ability to problematize and impact existing social, political, and cultural inequalities. Critical consciousness rests on the assumption that one's social and historical contexts will inherently affect their interpretation of knowledge (Freire, 1970). The field of critical pedagogy has condemned the conservative approach to disrupting existing structures of privilege and oppression. From Freire's perspective, Hirsch's philosophy failed to engage students in critical consciousness and instead asked them to accept existing inequalities. Freire advocated democratic determination of shared cultural knowledge through dialogue and negotiation, not the imposing of the dominant group's knowledge on the marginalized groups (Freire in Leistyna, 1999). Children of color and children in poverty, according to Freire, cannot

separate their knowledge and identities from the social and historical contexts that created their beliefs and values. Basing instruction exclusively in America's shared cultural knowledge can require students to ignore their knowledge and ways of knowing, to moderate the manifestations of their identities and cultures. Leistyna (1999) considered this a false form of assimilation into the dominant group. Students may have their voices silenced in exchange for becoming culturally literate and having access to the culture of power (Hirsch, 1988; Delpit, 1988).

The following section will discuss relevant studies of implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum. The reviewed studies expressed limited consideration for student culture and multicultural education, with the exception of one participating teacher in the 2001 Johnson, Janisch, and Morgan-Flemming study. My dissertation research project attempted to fill that gap, which will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

Studies of the Core Knowledge Sequence

The following section will discuss attempts of schoolwide implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence in elementary schools. Hirsch and the Core Knowledge curriculum maintain that reading ability is knowledge-dependent, vocabulary-dependent, and cumulative (Hirsch, 2005). Given this philosophy, the Core Knowledge curriculum has sought to build students' background knowledge and background vocabulary to support reading comprehension (Hirsch, 2005). Hirsch argued the Core Knowledge curriculum teaches a "coherent" curriculum, one that is intentionally spiraled to build upon the knowledge students gained in previous lessons, units, and grades (Hirsch, 2005, p. 184).

Studies of schools and districts that have adopted the Core Knowledge curriculum have generally addressed issues of implementation. Specifically, some discussed a) the intentional adaptions made to the curriculum; b) the barriers to successful implementation, including the

teachers' lack of curriculum knowledge and their abilities in their instructional roles; c) teacher efficacy during adoption of the new curriculum; and d) the effects of the Core Knowledge Sequence upon student achievement.

Each of the reviewed studies addressed aspects of implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum in elementary grades. However, schools in all the reviewed studies permitted loose implementation of the curriculum. This dissertation study sought to understand opportunities for differentiating instruction when the district held firm expectations of adherence to the Core Knowledge curriculum.

The following section closely reviews the implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum in elementary schools in language arts or social studies. Selection criteria is for studies of the Core Knowledge curriculum are shown in Appendix A-4.

Search terms included: E. D. Hirsch. Inclusion dates were set from 2001-2016. As with the earlier discussed searches in other fields of literature, I selected 2001 as a cutoff date for publication in order to accurately reflect the impact No Child Left Behind (2001) had on public education. Studies selected for this review were all empirical studies, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies. I intentionally excluded essays advocating for or against the Core Knowledge Sequence, as well as letters and responses to or by E.D. Hirsch deliberating the merit of the Core Knowledge Sequence.

The following were used for inclusion criteria: studies of teachers; studies of the Core Knowledge Sequence; studies in language arts or social studies, as the literature on the Core Knowledge Sequence in language arts alone proved limited; studies in the United States, Canada, or United Kingdom, again because of the limited literature exclusively in the United States; studies of certificated practicing teachers; studies of general education; and studies in elementary

or primary schools. The following were used for exclusion criteria: studies of instructional coaches, reading specialists, teacher candidates, or professional development instructors; studies of Special Education or involving implementation of the curriculum with students with learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders; studies of core reading programs besides the Core Knowledge Sequence; studies published prior to 2001. This search yielded three results, including a doctoral dissertation. Upon reviewing Brown's (2017) dissertation, the ProQuest database of doctoral dissertations recommended a dissertation of similar content, which also met the above-outlined criteria. The following section reviews and evaluates those four studies.

Johnson, Janisch, and Morgan-Flemming (2001) examined the implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence in a large urban district in Texas. They collected data from 31 teachers from six elementary schools, but only published the data from 18 teachers at one of the elementary schools. The school described in the study had a free and reduced lunch rate of 95% and served a student population that was 65% Hispanic and 25% African American. The school participated in a two-year program called CLICK (Connecting Literacy with Content Knowledge) in which teachers selected themes and units from Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence. In this "bottom up" implementation plan, teachers had agency over which units to teach from the Core Knowledge Sequence. All participating teachers were enrolled in graduate classes in literacy at a nearby university, and ten of the 18 teachers identified as Hispanic or African American. The authors noted the significance of the teachers' ethnicity because their cultural understandings likely impacted their instructional planning. Data collection included weekly observations of teachers' meetings, analysis of lesson plans and student work, and a single interview with each teacher near the end of the study. Data analysis used the "constant comparative method of analysis," (Johnson et al., 2001, p.264).

The study found that teachers primarily chose units to teach based on their own interests, and rarely on student interest or background. For instance, one teacher selected a Core Knowledge unit on the Middle Ages because she "didn't know much about the Middle Ages and [she] wanted to do something new and exciting," (Johnson et al., 2001, p.265). Another teacher expressed having enjoyed Shakespeare as a student and thought, "Why not?" (Johnson et al., 2001, p.265). However, one of the 18 teachers recognized the predominance of Hispanic students in her classroom and their interest in early civilizations of Mexico and Central America, and consequently selected a unit focused on Aztec culture. Another teacher began a unit on the American Civil War but expanded instruction to include discussion of conflict in Yugoslavia after students inquired about other civil wars. During interviews, teachers reported increased student interest and higher quality of writing during the Core Knowledge units.

More recently, See, Gorard, and Siddiqui (2017) explored the effects of the Core Knowledge curriculum on reading achievement for children in England through an adaptation of the curriculum called, "Word and World Reading," (WWR), a geography and history curriculum. This study utilized a two-group waitlist design in that it randomized nine primary schools to receive the WWR intervention in the first year of the study while the remaining eight control schools received the intervention one year later. The authors claimed that the ensuring of future participation in the intervention incentivized the control classrooms to remain in the study. 1,628 students participated in this study, ranging from seven to nine years old, in Years 3 and 4. The authors noted that the selected schools included many in "areas of high social deprivation," schools with "high challenge pupils… predominantly serving white working-class communities," (See et al., 2017, p. 378).

The intervention included whole class lessons taught twice per week for 45 minutes, taught by literacy teachers. In total, students received 34 pre-planned geography lessons and 35 history lessons. The authors stated the lessons were "very structured, following a set sequence," (See et al., 2017, p.377). Each lesson required the reading of a single, page-long passage; workbook questions; and discussions dependent on pre-planned questions, follow-up prompts, and suggestions for participation. Control classrooms received literary instruction typical for their schools. Data collection included pre- and post-test scores on the Progress in English (PiE) test, a standardized reading comprehension assessment; 12 participant observations of each class; group interviews with teachers; and group interviews of students. The authors analyzed test score data by converting the difference in gains to Hedge's *g* effect size, as well as two-step multivariate regression analysis. The authors provided limited discussion of their qualitative analysis, saying that they evaluated their observational data against their questions of which factors hindered and supported the implementation of the intervention.

The results of this study showed no discernable benefit in reading comprehension for the treatment group, as measured by the PiE. The intervention may have had a slight positive effect on children in poverty (effect size of +0.06). The authors found that 42% of the post-test gains could be explained by factors prior to the intervention ($R = 0.65$, $R^2 = 0.42$). From the quantitative data, the authors concluded that the curriculum made little difference in student achievement outcomes.

The qualitative data of the study revealed some of the limitations the teachers perceived. For instance, many teachers expressed disappointment at the lack of differentiation in the curriculum. One teacher described difficulty engaging children of diverse cultural backgrounds, specifically Romanian students, while another teacher struggled to engage "more able pupils,"

(See et al., 2017, p. 386). Some teachers reported inadequate teaching materials while others described the curriculum texts as unappealing or not inspirational. Some teachers expressed inadequate subject knowledge of the curriculum. In fact, the authors stated there were "many instances where teachers made factual errors," (See et al., 2017, p. 387). If the teachers struggled with the curriculum content, it was not surprising that students did as well. Regarding discussion opportunities, the authors stated that some teachers found it challenging to adapt the prescriptive questions of the curriculum to the background knowledge and interests of the students. Some teachers claimed they felt pressure to adhere to the curriculum lessons while others admitted feeling "rushed" in their instruction, thus eliminating opportunities to develop intersections between curricular themes and students' interests. Both perceived limitations directly impacted the opportunities for discussions and cooperative learning in the treatment classrooms.

Brown (2017) investigated teachers' perceived self-efficacy when implementing the Core Knowledge Sequence in Arizona charter schools, and found that the Core Knowledge curriculum enhanced teacher self-efficacy by providing a framework for instruction, a supportive community, and flexibility for implementation. The doctoral dissertation was a qualitative case study. The researcher used convenience sampling of elementary teachers using the Core Knowledge to recruit 15 elementary teachers who worked in teams of two in a single charter school. She collected data through semi-structured interviews, document analysis of curriculum materials, and a quantitative questionnaire, the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The questionnaire of self-reported data asked teachers to rate their efficacy in three areas: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Data analysis of the questionnaire included descriptive statistics to calculate the mean, median, and mode of responses. Interview transcripts were

analyzed through thematic analysis measures, specifically open-coding which produced thematic codes that then answered the study's research question. Lastly, the researcher used content analysis in studying the related curriculum documents.

The results of this study showed teacher perceived self-efficacy was affected by the adoption of the Core Knowledge Sequence in that it increased their sense of professional community, provided a framework of instruction, and permitted flexibility in implementation. Teachers reported appreciating a rationale for each lesson, noting that lesson concepts and vocabulary built on previous lessons. They also discussed the emergence of a supportive teaching community, both in their ability to learn from other teachers' instructional methods and the expectation of alignment among the grade level teams. Brown's (2017) final finding pertained to flexibility in implementation. Teachers in this study reported using their own creativity in the delivery of lessons, so long as they covered the assigned topic. One teacher referred to the lesson guide as a "skeleton" in that the lesson indicated required topics but allowed for teacher autonomy in instructional delivery (Brown, 2017, p. 165). Like Johnson et al. (2001), this study revealed the possibilities of teachers to differentiate instruction when implementation of the Core Reading Program is not rigid and allows teachers to utilize their professional judgment.

Smith (2003) looked at the long-term effects of schoolwide implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence on elementary student achievement for advantaged and disadvantaged students using quasi-experimental, matched comparison design with longitudinal data. After analyzing cohort data, he found mixed results using assessment data from the Standards of Learning assessment, but statistically significant differences for two of the cohorts in reading and language assessment data using the Stanford 9TA achievement test.

Smith used purposeful sampling of students enrolled in kindergarten in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998 at two schools who remained at those schools through 2002. Students at the treatment school received instruction in the Core Knowledge curriculum, while students enrolled in the control school continued typical instruction. The author noted that schools were similar in terms of racial, ethnic, academic, mobility, and socioeconomic (as measured by free and reduced lunch rates) demographics. Smith gathered assessment data using the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment and the Stanford 9TA achievement test. Data analysis included descriptive statistics and inferential statistics and revealed mixed results. For instance, the experimental cohorts of 1994 and 1997 outperformed the control cohort in four areas of the SOL based on mean test scores, while the 1995 control cohort outperformed the experimental cohort in the same four SOL areas, based on the mean test scores. The 1996 and 1998 cohorts revealed mixed results, with the 1996 control group outperforming the experimental group in three of four SOL categories, and the 1998 experimental school outperforming the control cohort in three of four SOL categories, all comparisons being made based on mean test score data.

The author then used the Independent Samples t-test to determine significant differences at the .05 level for the third and fifth grade Standards of Learning assessments and the fourth and sixth grade Stanford 9TA achievement test in the experimental group versus the control (2003). Smith found statistically significant differences in the reading test score data for the 1996 fourth grade cohort taught with the Core Knowledge curriculum. In every other cohort, the author did not find statistically significant differences in Stanford 9TA achievement test score data for schools using the Core Knowledge curriculum compared to those using the control curriculum.

Criticism of the Literature

The 2001 Johnson et al. study suggested possibilities of engagement and achievement with Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence when teachers had the opportunity to adapt the instruction and content within the curricular constraints. Teachers reported supplementing the curriculum with activities like research reports, "Know, Want to Know, and Learned" (KWL) charts, illustrations and visuals, and a festival-style presentation. Similarly, Brown (2017) found teachers expressed confidence in using the Core Reading curriculum, but largely because of its role as a framework for instruction, without strict expectations of delivery and pacing. Teachers reported using the curriculum as a reference when planning their own curriculum units (Brown, 2017, p.165). But how can teachers engage all children when the adoption of the Core Knowledge units is mandated by their district without the opportunity for adaptations? Many districts require firm implementation of an adopted curriculum. In absence of teacher-selected units or activities, what strategies can teachers use to engage their students in the lessons of a core reading program? When the selection and execution of a reading curriculum is a "top-down" approach, what instructional strategies can teachers use to challenge their children of all backgrounds?

See et al. (2017) was significant in its assessment of the Core Knowledge Sequence, but its results were limited to geography and history materials. The question remains whether this achievement data would be consistent with English/ Language Arts curriculum and instruction. Secondly, though no significant gains in achievement were recorded, the authors note faulty data collection. For example, an entire treatment school did not take the post-test examination, causing a significant rate of attrition. Other schools and teachers did not accurately assess students with learning difficulties, sometimes expressing beliefs that such students could not access the texts, and therefore did not need to participate in post-test assessments.

The limited qualitative data of this study captured the difficulty in implementing a highly prescriptive curriculum. Yet many school districts adopt firm curricular programs and expect strict adherence. This study failed to address the strategies participant teachers used to successfully engage students despite the prescriptive nature of the lessons. When the curriculum fails to include opportunities for differentiation, what are the strategies teachers can use to make learning relevant and appropriately challenging for all their students?

Smith (2003) was notable in capturing student achievement data and reporting mixed results on nearly all assessment measures for nearly every control and experimental cohort. The data would suggest the inability of the Core Knowledge Sequence to affect student learning. However, the study only measured outcome data without naming and analyzing the teaching practices during adoption of the Core Knowledge Sequence. The author also did not study teacher adherence to the curriculum, raising the question of validity of the assessment data. In other words, without describing teacher practices of loose or strict adherence to the required lessons, it is challenging to draw conclusions of students' performance data based on the school's reading curriculum. Perhaps some teachers used the curriculum as a unit planning guideline, like Johnson et al. (2001), or perhaps they taught Core Knowledge lessons expressly as written. Without greater description of the instructional methods, conclusions remain elusive.

As philosophers, Freire and Hirsch argue in direct opposition with one another. Yet implementation of pedagogical philosophies can be ambiguous, allowing opportunities for influence from multiple, even contrasting perspectives. As noted in the preceding literature review, implementation raises several questions. First, when required to teach Hirsch's curriculum of cultural literacy, can teachers differentiate instruction and integrate students' cultural identities and experiences into lessons with nonnegotiable content? Second, is it

possible to awaken students' critical consciousness and engage in practices of transformative multicultural education while instructing from the Core Knowledge Sequence? This study explored the possibilities for incorporating strategies of differentiated instruction and multicultural education within the strict guidelines of the Core Knowledge Sequence. It explored the following research questions:

RQ1: What strategies do teachers use to differentiate reading instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds within the parameters of a firm core reading program?

RQ2: In absence of those teaching strategies, what are the effects on instruction?

Methods

This chapter describes the methodological approach for this dissertation study. It includes a rationale for the research design to explore the research questions. Additionally, I discuss the setting of the study and the participants involved. This section also contains the methods of collecting data, including semi-structured interviews with participants, observations of participants' lessons, and document analysis of worksheets that participants used to supplement the prescribed curriculum. I also describe data analysis and I discuss coding practices and matrices developed to triangulate the information collected through the three data sources. Next, I attend to ethical considerations, specifically efforts to ensure trustworthiness and efforts to ensure neutrality and reduce subjectivity. Lastly, I will discuss the limitations of the study.

Research Design

This research study was a qualitative, descriptive case study examining the factors that influenced teachers' differentiated literacy instruction within the guidelines of a firm core reading program. The investigated phenomenon was the instructional strategies used by teachers to differentiate instruction within the bounds of the Core Knowledge curriculum. This case was the tangible, observable enacting of the abstract concepts of differentiating instruction and multicultural education. The unit of analysis was the specific, discernable instructional strategies teachers used to make the prescribed curriculum relevant and challenging to their specific students.

A qualitative case study was necessary for the specific research question because the observations allowed me to witness and describe in detail the contextual factors that affected the instructional delivery of the required curriculum. Additionally, interviews let the teachers speak to the decisions they made to differentiate instruction or to strictly deliver the curricular lessons.

In this study, I took deliberate care to capture the immediate interpretations and meanings of action from the participants' point of view (Erickson, 1986). This study intended to create "thick" descriptions of the curricular and instructional choices for children of various abilities, interests, and cultural backgrounds when the reading curriculum provided little flexibility (Geertz, 1973). Through explanatory interview data and analytic observational data, I sought to understand the instructional strategies teachers utilized to differentiate instruction for children of varying racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

This study was descriptive case study in that it attempted to include "as many variables as possible and portray their interaction," including variables such as curriculum, instruction, cultural background, social relationships, and socio-emotional supports (Merriam, 2009, p.43). This study was an *instrumental case study* because it provided further insight to differentiated instruction within the bounds of a firm core reading program, such as the Core Knowledge curriculum (Stake, 2005). It also illuminated the extent to which students' culture factors into instructional planning when teachers differentiate instruction within the parameters of their required reading curriculum.

This study contributed to the literature in differentiated instruction in that it facilitated a greater understanding of how students' sociocultural backgrounds affect teachers' delivery of literacy curriculum and instruction when required to adhere to a strict reading curriculum. Stake (2005) noted that researchers in instrumental case studies were more likely to be aware of critical issues in the discipline prior to conducting the study, which could prove helpful during data analysis. In designing, implementing, and analyzing this study, I had knowledge of differentiated instruction and the impact of student culture on cognition and motivation. This background

influenced data collection and data analysis, though I made all attempts to remain as neutral as possible.

This study also contributed to the literature of the Core Knowledge Sequence by demonstrating the strategies literacy teachers used to adapt required lessons to students' background knowledge and existing skillsets. Though the Core Knowledge curriculum boasts the ability to transcend student demographics and even interrupt social determinism (Hirsch, 1988), teachers are still charged with implementation, and as such, their specific instructional strategies must be named and described. This study identified and explained the strategies teachers use to differentiate instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds when using the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Context of Study

This study sought to name the strategies literacy teachers use to differentiate instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds when tasked to instruct within a firm core reading program. The schools selected for this study were part of a school district that subscribed to Hirsch's pedagogical philosophy and implemented his Core Knowledge Sequence. The schools, part of a small school district in the Pacific Northwest, adopted the Core Knowledge Sequence. The district divided its students by assigning K-4 students to multiple primary schools, 5-7 students to intermediate schools, and all students attended a single junior high school, grades 8 and 9, and a single high school, grades 10-12.

I selected these schools through purposeful sampling, or the selection of participants based on their ability to provide information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). The schools met the selection criteria in that they required strict adherence to the lessons in their core reading program, thus raising the line of inquiry of how teachers differentiated instruction within the

guidelines of the curriculum. Additionally, these schools accurately represented the racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity of the school district and surrounding community. At the time of data collection, the district enrolled 5,726 students. This included roughly 14% Hispanic/Latino of any race(s) students, 9% Black/African American students, 9% Asian students, and nearly 17% students of two or more races. Almost 37% of the district's students received free or reduced lunch, a proxy for measurement of students in poverty. Eleven and half percent of the students in the district received special education services, while 5.6% of the students were considered transitional bilingual.

The demographics of the two participant schools roughly paralleled those of the district. The first school served a population of 687 students, including 15.6% Hispanic/Latino of any race students, 8.3% Black/African American, 8.8% Asian, and 15.8% students of two or more races. The school's free and reduced lunch rate was 39.4%, the special education population was 9.2%, and the transitional bilingual population was 4.9%.

The second school had a population of 619 students, which included 14.4% Hispanic/Latino of any race students, 10.7% Black/African American, 8.4% Asian, and 17.4% students of two or more races. This school's free and reduced lunch rate was 36.5%, the special education population was 9.9%, and the transitional bilingual population was 4.8%.

Exact OSPI demographic data from the 2016-2017 school year for district and two sites is listed in Appendix B. Inclusion of specific school demographic data is not intended to generate a comparison, as data from the schools is not significantly different. Rather, school data is included to show potential opportunities for differentiation based on students' racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Participants

This study focused on the strategies teachers used to differentiate instruction within their core reading programs, so the participants only included teachers. Recruitment began by narrowing the investigation to fifth grade teachers. In this study's initial stages, the objective was to investigate teachers in grades 4-6 to understand comprehension strategies rather than the decoding strategies often utilized by the primary teachers. In this district, 4th grade was housed at the primary schools, and eliminated from consideration due to the potential to include decoding strategies during reading instruction. Although the intermediate schools taught 7th grade students, many districts assign seventh grade to their middle schools, thus limiting the potential applications of this study. I then limited the site of data collection to either fifth or sixth grade classrooms.

Prior to participant recruitment, I met with the Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Executive Director of Primary Education. This initiated the process of chain sampling, asking "well-situated people" which teachers could or could not provide instances of differentiated instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds (Patton, 2002, p. 237). The two directors recommended observations in 5th grade classrooms. The directors noted the sixth-grade teachers were involved in a writing unit during the proposed dates of data collection, and the intention of this study was to observe reading instruction. The choice to study fifth-grade was reinforced by my familiarity with a reading achievement gap between the primary and intermediate schools (fourth and fifth grade) in the district. The results of this study may provide insight to district administration about the persistence of that gap.

After I narrowed participant selection to the fifth-grade teachers, the directors suggested four specific teachers to study within the pool of eight fifth-grade literacy teachers. They recommended four teachers across the two schools. They noted that one participant expressed

interest in social justice education and culturally relevant teaching, which they knew was of special interest to this study. During the planning stage of recruitment, teacher characteristics such as age, race and ethnicity, gender, or teaching experience were not inclusion/exclusion criteria. These factors also did not affect data analysis or interpretation of results.

The participating district was small. Due to the potential to identify participants, I have assigned pseudonyms and randomly changed the gender of certain participants. Their race, ethnicity, age, leadership positions, and years of teaching experience are intentionally not specified. I made these choices to protect participant anonymity.

After narrowing the prospective participants, I emailed teachers inviting to participate in this exploratory, and not evaluative study of the intersection of differentiation, multicultural education, and a firm core reading program. Data collection was then scheduled two weeks later to coincide with the beginning of a new reading unit.

All data collection occurred in March 2017 during a single, two-week reading unit. Observations of instruction illuminated the contextual factors that affected differentiated instruction that interviews alone could not capture. The intermediate schools followed a block schedule, meaning each literacy teacher taught the same lesson to the morning cohort and the afternoon cohort. Literacy blocks were 80 minutes long. I had intended to observe five lessons of each participant, but illness, absence, and early dismissal reduced that number to four total observations per teacher. During the first week of data collection, I observed four lessons of one teacher's morning block and four lessons of another teacher's afternoon block. I intended to repeat this process with the remaining two teachers the following week through the duration of the unit. However, one participant withdrew from the study for personal reasons. This left three participants.

Additionally, I conducted three planned, semi-structured interviews with all participant teachers, and a fourth, spontaneous interview with two of the three participants. The first interview introduced me to each teacher's pedagogical philosophy, including perspectives on differentiating instruction. The second interview helped me synthesize information from the first interview with actual instructional practices witnessed during observations. The final interview continued the synthesizing process, as well as provided the opportunity to collect and clarify final thoughts and impressions. During the final interview, two teachers initiated the conversation based on questions I had asked in previous interviews. This allowed each of us to clarify data collected. Data collection is summarized in APPENDIX C.

Data Collection

Stake (1995) asserted that qualitative researchers keep thorough notes of the events to provide a "relatively incontestable description for further analysis and ultimate reporting," (p.62). They note events and seemingly non-events with the understanding that most readers expect the researcher to guide them toward meaning they may otherwise overlook. I conducted all observations from this perspective, striving to record all actions as they occurred in the classroom. By keeping thorough records of observations, I prepared to let "the occasion tell its story," (Stake, 1995, p.62).

In order to thoroughly explore this phenomenon and triangulate the data, I collected data from three sources, including observations of instruction, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of supplementary curriculum materials. The following section discusses the process of data collection in more detail.

Observations

Prior to conducting observations, I questioned my own positionality and its impact on my lenses of observation. I reminded myself that research is an interactive process, and my own assumptions and interests can affect the collection of data. I made myself deeply aware that meaning construction "is shaped by [my] own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting," (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). Being conscious of my positionality as a researcher and my interest in culturally responsive pedagogy and sociocultural theory helped me contextualize the data captured during observations. Knowing the "socially constructed nature of reality," I anticipated the temptation to narrow my observational focus to manifestations of differentiated instruction and multicultural education (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). Even though Denzin and Lincoln (2005) emphasized "the value-laden nature of inquiry," (p.10), I attempted to capture all interactions as neutrally as possible while still answering this study's research questions. During data collection, I noted all subjective observational data in parentheses to denote my reflections on the data, distinguishing it from the objective data written down.

Data collection began with *observer as participant* observations of instruction. Merriam (2009) described this role as one in which the "observer's activities are known to the group," (p.124), but participation in the group's activities are minimal and secondary. Adler and Adler (1994) labeled it a "peripheral membership role," (p.85). Reducing interaction with participants allowed me to observe instructional delivery in context without my actions affecting data collected. I observed events as they occurred and refrained from inserting myself into the events in the classroom. One goal of this approach was to reduce bias in the field notes of events observed, even though by nature, "human perception is very selective," (Merriam, 2009, p. 118). Limitations of this approach include the inability to probe participants' statements, the inability

to immediately clarify events captured in field notes, and the potential for selective coverage of classroom events.

Data collected as an observer as participant included four, 80-minute observations of reading instruction with each of the four (later reduced to three) participant teachers. During the lessons, teachers delivered instruction from a structured, semi-scripted curriculum. Each lesson centered on the assigned text, excerpts from a Shakespeare play, and included four to six student assignments to facilitate comprehension of the text. Two teachers supplemented the curriculum with slideshows, worksheets, and discussions while the third participant did not. The curriculum included discussion questions with recommended follow-up questions and suggestions for grouping during discussions. Observations of instruction revealed varying adherence to the required and recommended curricular tasks.

Observations also allowed me to collect information regarding student data, including behaviors, comments, and reactions. For this study, student participation was not as critical as participants' instructional strategies. However, interview questions probed teachers' understanding of students' cultural diversity. Nieto (1999) asserted culture is determined by the individual as they select or reject aspects of their race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, and socioeconomic status. Individuals have agency to negotiate their cultural identities in different social settings (Nieto, 1999). Classroom observations allowed me to witness students' negotiated cultural identities in the context of literacy classrooms. Observations also revealed the intentional and assigned manifestations of student culture in a way that demographic data alone could not capture. Though the teachers and I came to the classroom contexts with different experiences, biases, and assumptions, observations allowed me to witness the same manifestations of student

culture that teachers encountered, and to check the statements in their interviews against observed events.

During observations, I also noted the classroom environment of each participant's room. Instructional environments offered insights to teachers' willingness to individualize instruction or their proclivity for adhering to the curriculum. For instance, two classrooms included a designated space for small group work, in addition to the traditional seating assignment, while the third classroom did not. Observations of instruction showed me how those two teachers utilized the small group space during curricular events which the text recommended whole-class instruction. Observations of environment also revealed the usage of multicultural teaching strategies, such as displaying student work to promote feelings of inclusion, accepting student interactions with the whiteboard (an indication of knowledge authority), and partner groupings that facilitated social constructivism. Additionally, each classroom included a sink and water fountain. Observing student and teacher interactions with the facilities proved indicative of teachers' expectations of curriculum engagement and management of the learning environment. Seeing the classroom environment during learning activities provided the opportunity to check participants' described actions against the actual delivery of their instruction.

I collected all observation data, concurrent fieldnotes, and subsequent analytic memos on my password-protected laptop using Microsoft Word. After data collection, I changed all participants names to pseudonyms and edited for clarity in preparation for data analysis. Information obtained about students' races and ethnicities was based in observational data and then confirmed with respective participant teachers during interviews. Data collected about students' socioeconomic status was based solely on participant schools' free and reduced lunch rates in order to protect students' socioeconomic privacy.

Interviews

To better understand each participant's instructional decisions and to clarify events observed, I invited each teacher to participate in individual semi-structured interviews. Interviewing is an active process, and not "merely the neutral exchange of information," (Fontina & Frey, 2005, p. 696). The descriptions and explanations disclosed were contextually bound, and the data generation mutually negotiated. Together, the participants and I actively constructed "knowledge around questions and responses," (Fontina & Frey, 2005, p. 699).

Prior to conducting interviews, I developed an interview guideline based on the literature with direction from my dissertation committee (APPENDIX D). Semi-structured interviews offered many benefits. First, they ensured the inquiry of the most significant questions pertaining to differentiated instruction and multicultural education. Second, the interview guideline ensured the consistency of language and purpose among the participants. Third, semi-structured interviews allowed the path of inquiry to raise additional questions not initially considered in the development of this study. Most notable was the opportunity to unpack my and the participants' assumptions

Lastly, semi-structured interviews granted the flexibility in "probing and in determining when it [was] appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth," (Patton, 2002, p. 409). For instance, I was able to ask follow-up questions about curriculum supplements, student assignment to small group instruction, and the attainment of personal knowledge of students. Additionally, the nature of semi-structured interviews gave teachers the choice to tell the narrative in their own terms. One teacher used the interviews as an opportunity to disclose her perceived shortcomings while another participant used the interviews as a starting point for professional reflection. That teacher began each subsequent interview by clarifying information

discussed during our previous conversations. The questions of the interview guideline ensured I addressed the focal points of the study, but the unanticipated responses filled in the overall narrative.

The design of the study called for three interviews with each participant. The first interview intended to initiate myself to each teacher's instructional style, while the second interview gave me the chance to ask clarifying questions based on observations. The final interviewed introduced questions from the interview guideline not previously addressed, it and summarized for participants the emerging data patterns. One participant was available for a fourth interview, which most closely aligned with the purpose and structure of the second interview. Before each interview, participants were asked permission to interview them and record their responses. I recorded all semi-structured interviews for transcription and coding purposes. I transcribed each interview for data analysis. For all participants, interviews occurred roughly five minutes after the literacy block ended, allowing them to attend to student and personal needs before settling in to the interview. Each interview lasted between 15-25 minutes, depending on the subjects' responses. All interviews were conducted in the participants' classrooms with closed doors and without the presence of students or other teachers. On about five occasions, various students interrupted interviews with questions for the teacher, and the interview was paused, including the audio recording of the interviews.

Additionally, two teacher interviews arose as informal conversations or spontaneous interviews (Schumacher, 1993). On both occasions, I thanked the participant and stopped recording the interview, but the conversation continued longer than anticipated. For these interviews, I recorded data in my field notes after leaving the school sites. In these instances, both participants granted their permission to include their informal comments.

Care was taken to intentionally gain trust and develop rapport with the participants without blurring the boundaries of researcher and study participant (Fontina & Frey, 2005). I gained trust through frequent reminders of confidentiality and anonymity. Also, I frequently told participants that I was not evaluating their teaching practices, and the data collected would not be communicated to their administrators. Fontina and Frey (2005) contended that it is "paramount to establish rapport with respondents (p. 708). Attention to rapport and trust facilitated the collection of high-quality responses from all the participants.

Document review

Observations and interviews were the primary sources of data for this study. However, I reviewed and analyzed relevant curriculum documents in order to deepen the understanding of instructional choices and teaching strategies. Document analysis facilitated the triangulation of data and the corroboration of statements participants made during interviews (Bowen, 2009). During document analysis, I intentionally questioned the potential biases I could bring to the document's review to ensure analytic neutrality (O'Leary, 2014). I assessed the documents to understand their purpose, target audience, and relevance to the themes of differentiated instruction and multicultural education (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis was conducted during data collection, which allowed me to construct subsequent interview questions about the emerging codes and themes of the analyzed documents. This process strengthened the research by triangulating all data sources (Bowen, 2009).

During data collection, I obtained multiple documents to review. Each document was either a public source, such as the lesson plans, or given to me with the consent of the participant without their request to maintain confidentiality of the document (O'Leary, 2014). Curriculum maps and individual lessons plans proved useful providing a baseline of instruction. The

district's curriculum showed which curriculum texts were required of teachers for each lesson. Each lesson also included a sequence of instruction activities. Though teachers mainly adhered to the required activities, deviations provided opportunities for interview questions to triangulate the data and understand the decision behind the omission (Bowen, 2009). For instance, some teachers eliminated activities because of time constraints while others decided as a team to make certain activities optional, and others still cut activities because of their perceived lack of value. The reading curriculum also revealed guidelines for discussions, indicating recommended questions and follow-up questions, discussion grouping choices, and appropriate responses for each question.

In addition to the required curriculum, I reviewed supplementary documents. These were limited to two of the three participants, as one participant strictly adhered to the mandated curriculum. One participant created a PowerPoint document for each lesson, which I reviewed. Though the slideshows included the discussion questions from the curriculum, the teacher also provided connections to students' lives and entry tasks for each activity. The teacher did this through pictures, statements, and questions. Analyzing these sources revealed the instructional choices that teacher made to help students access the curriculum and make it relevant to their lives. The final participant created an entry task worksheet each day to scaffold student understanding of the curriculum text. Two parts review and one part preview, the worksheets proved invaluable in understanding that teacher's decisions to differentiate instruction. Each of these documents strengthened data corroboration in this research project (Bowen, 2009).

Teachers' instructional decisions were the focus of this study, and as such, I did not collect student work or assessments. All three participants stated they infrequently collected written artifacts of student learning, specifically the pages from the workbook, and instead

preferred informal oral assessments of student understanding. One participant acknowledged that written responses in the workbook were less important than information shared in the class discussions of the same content. Another teacher indicated she would prefer to collect more written student data to compare among grade levels teams, but admitted she infrequently collected work to review. During observations of instruction, I noticed all three teachers use the workbook as a vessel for scaffolding participation in discussions rather than a product for its own assessment. As an observer as participant, I had access to students' oral responses and teachers' oral evaluations of student responses. Collection of student workbook data could have provided insights, but it also could have created an incomplete picture of student learning by failing to capture the low-priority each teacher assigned to written work. In order to strengthen the validity of this study, I used field notes of the discussions to triangulate data during the analysis phase.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis allows the researcher to create meaning among the various sources of data by generating relationships and patterns among specific data points (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Through processes of induction, data analysis generates assertions which then requires the testing of the assertions' evidentiary warrant (Erickson, 1986). Erickson (1986) elaborated that the assertions resulting from data analysis must be triangulated, warranted by field notes, interviews, and site documents (p.148). Thorough data analysis ensures integrity of the research, confidence in claims posited, and stronger contributions to subsequent research (Erickson, 1986). The next section will discuss the process of data analysis in greater detail.

During the study, I conducted data analysis simultaneously with data collection, as reviewing observational and interview data brought forth new insights that could be addressed during further data collection (Fontana & Frey, 2005). As themes and patterns began to emerge, I

asked key participants questions about my initial findings so they could fill in holes of my description (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997). Interview questions based on my data analysis also allowed participants to fill in gaps of my knowledge and tell their own version of events observed (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

During data collection, I also devoted time to creating analytic memos to critically reflect on my observation notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). This allowed me to develop relationships between the particulars of each observation and the larger theoretical issues of this study. On four occasions, I also created audio "initial" analytic memos in my car in parking lots blocks away from the school sites (Emerson et al., 1995, p.143). By recording spoken notes, I captured the multitude of reflections inspired by interviews with each participant. The majority of data analysis occurred after data collection, but I also evaluated data during collection to sufficiently analyze all aspects of the data. Specifically, document analysis was conducted during data collection to shape subsequent interview questions during the semi-structured interviews (Bowen, 2009).

After spending time to reflectively meditate on the data, I began open-coding. Qualitative coding allows the researcher to "open up avenues of inquiry," (Emerson, et al., 1995, p.151). I assigned inferential codes to observation notes and interview transcripts. Glaser and Strauss (1967) cautioned against borrowing classification schemes from existing theories, as this "tends to hinder the generation of new categories," (p. 37). However, this study was steeply founded in differentiated instruction (both as a theory and a set of pedagogical strategies), and multicultural education. While I developed my own coding scheme, it was influenced by the key concepts of the theoretical frameworks (Stake, 2005).

Prior to data collection, I developed pre-codes of differentiated instruction, multicultural educational strategies, and literacy instruction strategies for data analysis (APPENDIX F-1). These codes were intended to guide data analysis, but they also served as an observation guide during classrooms observations, reminding me to check for various aspects of instruction. During formal data analysis, most codes were created through an open-coding scheme, as I assigned codes line-by-line to each piece of data (Emerson et al. 1995).

Following open-coding, I then analyzed data through analytical coding, grouping sets of codes into categories after interpretation and reflection (Richards, 2005 in Merriam, 2009). Each category was responsive to the research question, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and conceptually congruent (Merriam, 2009). Care was taken to understand which other categories a single category might contrast or overlap with (Emerson et al., 1995). This "primitive classification system," (Merriam, 2009, p. 180) consisted of 12 code categories. The process of analytic coding resulted in "a mixture of data reduction and data complication," (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 30). After assigning analytic codes, I created analytic memos for each analytic code. This process allowed me to evaluate the data, reconsider any assumptions or biases, and create connections among various points of data (Emerson et al., 1995). The analytic codes and memos signaled three emergent concepts: scaffolds to access curriculum content, the intentional development of the classroom community, and the reliance on traditional instructional methods in absence of scaffolds and community. These three concepts lent themselves to the development of thematic matrices. Each matrix included the assigned open-code, the corresponding interview or observation data, the assigned analytic code, and my analysis of the data point.

Data analysis was a cyclical process and did not end with the identification of global themes. Erickson (1986) noted that assertions alone lack consequential meaning; assertions must be evaluated for evidentiary warrant. To strengthen the validity of this study, I took care to provide substantial warrant for each claim from all data sources. After constructing the three major themes, I returned to the interview transcripts, observation write-ups, the coded transcripts and write-ups, and the matrices to re-read them all for evidentiary warrant. I analyzed the text and codes to ensure they did in fact support the assertions made by both themes, without contradiction and without ignoring consequential pieces of data. I compared interview transcripts, observation field notes, and supplementary curricular documents to triangulate the findings and ensure validity of this study.

Trustworthiness

This section will discuss the processes used to ensure trustworthiness of the research project. This study ensured trustworthiness and sustained credibility by developing early familiarity with the culture of participating teachers and by random sampling of informants (Shenton, 2004). First, I was not employed nor involved in any administration or teacher evaluation. However, I was familiar with the academic mission of the district, the demographics of the students and staff of the district, and the administrative leadership within the district. I was professionally and personally acquainted with the Executive Director of Primary Education, and teacher participants may have been concerned with the confidentiality of their interview responses or adherence to curriculum delivery. I took intentional action to mitigate those concerns, beginning with informed consent. Additionally, teachers were regularly reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation, the commitment to anonymity, and the expectation of confidentiality. None of the participants were pressured to participate by school administration or

directors in the district. All were willing participants. I explained to participants that the results of this study would be published in my dissertation, but only after the removal of all identifying information. Each of these steps was taken to reduce any potential risk to participants.

Second, this study demonstrated credibility in that I used a chain sampling of individuals through purposive sampling (Shenton, 2004). This may seem paradoxical. However, I selected teachers who were required to use the prescribed reading curriculum, all with similar populations of students of diverse cultural backgrounds. This demonstrated purposive sampling (Shenton, 2004). But, among the teachers who instructed with the Core Knowledge reading curriculum, participant selection occurred through chain sampling in which district insiders recommended specific teachers for the study. I did not intentionally select qualifying teachers based on certain characteristics, nor did I seek out specific teachers to study. Participants also had multiple opportunities to decline participation at every step of data collection, as one participant did, ensuring honesty among informants (Shenton, 2004).

I also sustained credibility through the triangulation of data. I used observations, document analysis, and participant interviews to ensure I captured events as they occurred with minimal researcher bias (Shenton, 2004). This process helped me match the teachers' professed pedagogical philosophies to their actual practice. Comparing the interview data with the observation data illuminated any paradoxes and contradictions, as well as confirmed emerging patterns. I used member checks to verify my findings by asking teachers about my data collection and emerging findings. This ensured the validity of my observations, interview transcripts, and analysis of relevant documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through these procedures, I maintained trustworthiness.

Subjectivity

Stake (1995) asserted, “Knowledge is constructed rather than discovered,” (p.99). He continues, “The researcher is the agent of new interpretation, new knowledge,” (p.99). While I was aware of my status as an insider to the research and field knowledge, I was also conscious of my position as a qualitative researcher. My role was to provide a new interpretation and construct new knowledge, but to do so from a position of reduced subjectivity.

Research begins from natural processes of inquiry, and as such, the products of research may be influenced by the beliefs or opinions of the researcher. The researcher may narrow the actions and relationships observed, or they may guide interviewees a certain direction based on their questions. Fontana and Frey (2005) argued that interviewing is not simply an impartial exchange of information, but rather a process for crafting a “contextually-bound and mutually created story,” (p. 696). Further, they claimed that interviews can never be neutral, that they will be “politically laden and used for or against the group studied,” (p. 697). When conducting interviews, I worked diligently to keep those words in mind. I was always aware that my subjects and I together created a story of the events in the classroom, and I was aware of my positionality as a researcher and theirs as a study participant. I was careful to record that mutually-constructed story in the words of my participants. I also remained aware of the impact of our mutually-constructed story would have on the group studied, the teachers, but I made sure this awareness did not affect the integrity of data collection or data analysis.

During data collection, I remained as neutral as is possible. While conducting interviews, for example, I tried to stay neutral by guiding participants to better articulate their experiences in their own words without intentionally influencing their reflections. I did this by asking questions like, “Can you say more about that?” or “And how do you go about doing that?” In asking open-ended, explorative questions, I attempted to create space for the participants to tell their story

with minimal influence from myself, the researcher. By balancing the roles of researcher and research participants, we actively constructed new knowledge based on the participants' thoughts and practices, and not my personal pedagogical philosophy.

During observations, I refrained from inserting my perspective or judging participants, despite my insider knowledge of teaching practices. I remained aware that my objective was to study instructional strategies or the effect on instruction in absence of strategies recommended by research. In moments when a teacher's behavior or demeaner surprised me, I noted the transaction of events in my field notes and then created analytic memos on a second document to clearly delineate the events as they transpired and my opinion of the events.

At times, it proved challenging to maintain neutrality during data collection. One teacher in particular surprised me with the comments she made during interviews and with her management strategies. She demonstrated hostility toward disruptive students and expressed trepidation while teaching her morning cohort. It was hard to watch students' express decreased confidence, even embarrassment, and I felt called to empathize with them. But I reminded myself of the interview data with this teacher when she described how conflicted she felt when developing relationships with students. I also reminded myself of the demands of her personal life, including balancing the expectations of work and home. Both the teacher and the students in this group were sympathetic. But my objective as a researcher was to capture enactments of teaching, and I worked hard to maintain neutrality by committing myself to documenting instructional exchanges verbatim, without inserting my judgment. Similarly, I used coding schemes and matrices that emphasized elements of instruction, not my personal reactions to instruction. I knew my role was to record data and analyze data, not to evaluate her teaching practices as an administrator might. My role was of a researcher, not an assessor.

Limitations

The results of this study provide insights for educators to integrate facets of differentiated instruction and multicultural education while using the Core Knowledge Sequence. However, this study is not without limitations. The following section will present the limitations of this study and the implications of each.

Selection of the Observed Unit of Instruction

Data collection occurred during a reading unit of the Core Knowledge Sequence, specifically a QWEST unit, which participants described as more challenging than a typical reading unit. This unit, according to participants, required more whole-class instruction and more teacher interpretation of the text. Observations showed that it offered fewer opportunities for student ownership over the content and learning process. Two of the three teachers stated that writing units tended to increase student autonomy and learning independence. However, they did express difficulty engaging students with the curriculum's poetry unit, another reading unit. This limitation occurred due to the participating school district's recommendations.

The impact of this limitation is that the findings of this study, the importance of integrating entry tasks and cultivating a caring classroom community, may have been observed in all three classrooms instead of just two during a different unit. The participant who utilized neither strategy may have better adapted her practice to accommodate students' needs during a writing unit. It is also possible that during a writing unit, the teachers utilized additional strategies of differentiated instruction that may have promoted student autonomy or delivered instruction and varying challenging levels. One participant referred to students' greater independence during writing units than reading units. Observations of a Core Knowledge Sequence writing unit may have elicited more strategies of differentiated instruction. Future

studies of differentiated instruction and the Core Knowledge Sequence may wish to target writing units to identify instructional strategies that benefit students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Such named instructional methods may then prove transferable to CKS reading units or the entire CKS social studies curriculum.

Semi-Structured Interviews.

The exclusive use of semi-structured interviews could have affected the collection of data. Although I used an interview protocol (APPENDIX D), follow-up questions and probes varied across teachers. Additionally, some interview questions debriefed the data collected during observations, which inherently produces a range of data in that the participants did not always directly adhere to the assigned curriculum. Further, two teachers reflected on the interview questions from the previous day and began the interview by sharing these reflections, thereby shaping the trajectory of the interviews. Those same teachers also generated spontaneous interviews (Schumacher, 1993), which increased the quantity of interview data collected from those participants.

Observational Limitations

Another limitation was my status as an observer as participant, as described in Chapter Three. This position inhibited me from asking immediate questions for clarification or probing teacher decisions in the moment. Although I raised these questions during debriefing interviews, the delay in time could have affected participant responses. Finally, being an observer as participant precluded me from asking students about their experiences with the teacher and curriculum. During observations, I listened to their comments to each other and in discussions, and I looked over their written responses while walking through the classroom. However, I did

not have the opportunity to directly question students about their experiences, which is addressed in greater detail below.

Lack of Student Interviews

The purpose of this study was to analyze the instructional strategies teachers use to differentiate instruction. It did not seek to explore students' experiences during such instruction. By design, this study did not interview students in participating classrooms. It did not ask them to describe their experiences with classroom communities or entry task activities. This design limited the findings of the study to participant-described and researcher-observed data. It is possible that students would describe the instructional strategies of entry tasks and development of classroom community differently than the researcher or the study participants. It is also possible that students in these classrooms may have identified additional methods their teachers used to challenge and engage them while using the Core Knowledge Sequence. Future studies of the intersection of the Core Knowledge Sequence and differentiated instruction may benefit from including student perspective on the instructional events in their classrooms.

Absence of Achievement Data

Another limitation of this study was that it did not collect student assessment data at the end of the instructional unit. The purpose of differentiating instruction is to increase engagement by integrating students' interests, encouraging autonomy over the learning process, and meeting students at their unique levels of readiness. The ultimate objective is still to reach teacher- or curriculum-determined instructional benchmarks. This study did not evaluate whether students who experienced differentiated instruction outperformed students in the traditional classroom on the same Core Knowledge assessment. The focus of the study was narrowed to identifying instructional strategies. Future studies may seek to compare assessment data across classrooms

with varying usage of entry task activities and varying degrees of supportive environments to determine the effect of differentiating instruction on student performance when using the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Lack of Member Checks

The final limitation of this study was the lack of member checks to strengthen validity. Nearly three years passed between data collection and the complete write-up of this dissertation. Returning to participants for member checking after such a significant time period created risks that could have affected the trustworthiness of this study. For instance, participants' memories of instruction may not have been as clear as the documented data of the field notes and interview transcripts. I weighed the potential insights to findings after three year against the potential perils of memories diminishing over time, and I opted not to return to participants for member checks.

Additionally, the findings presented a potentially unflattering portrait of one teacher, Maddie, while recommending the teaching strategies implemented by the two other participants. Maddie may have found this comparison unfair. She may have believed she was working hard to deliver the curriculum lessons as directed by the school district only to read this report and find her methods insufficient. In this study, her interview quotes and field notes of class discussions may depict a portrait of exasperation and frustration. Though all discussions and interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, it is possible she did not view herself expressing such emotions so strongly and may take offense with the case study findings.

Member checking data with only two of the three participants would have introduced new challenges to validity. Therefore, I made explicit efforts to ensure validity by triangulating the three data sources, field notes of observations, interview recordings and transcripts, and relevant curriculum documents. As previously stated, I did not collect student work. However,

all three participants used discussions as the primary source of assessment, and written transcripts of these discussions were carefully recorded in field notes. Analyzing those field notes in conjunction with interviews and curriculum documents increased the validity of this study, as Erickson (1986) argued multiple data sources will do.

The preceding sections discussed the design of the study, methods of data collection, and the process of data analysis used to answer the study's research question. The following chapter will present the findings of this study.

Findings

This section will present the data collected for this case study and is organized into three predominant findings: the inclusion of entry tasks to scaffold curricular engagement, the intentional development of classroom communities, and the reliance on traditional methods of instruction, including authoritarian classroom management. All names of people and places have been changed to pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. The findings are described below without evaluation or interpretation.

Entry Task Activities

The following section will present data regarding the instructional strategy of supplementing the Core Knowledge Sequence with learning experiences designed to scaffold entry to the curriculum activities. When the term, "entry task" is used, I am referring to teacher-generated curricular supplements that scaffolded student understanding of the curriculum. The entry tasks were not products of the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Accessing the Curriculum: Erin

I first collected data in Erin's classroom, which consisted of 11 female students and 14 male students. Five were African-American, three were Latino/a, four were Asian, and 13 were white. I arrived in her classroom before students entered, and she guided me to a small table in the back of the classroom with four chairs on one side and a single chair on the other side. From this seat, I observed two objectives on the screen in the front of the classroom: Students will interpret theme from *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* and Students will use context clues to determine a character's tone. Erin later informed me that neither of these objectives were from the curriculum; she created the supplementary objectives to practice transferable literacy skills.

During the first interview, Erin identified her entry task as her preferred method to differentiate instruction because it allowed her to activate students' background knowledge on the curriculum content. Erin explained her decision, saying, "I want to access and tap background knowledge of concepts that we're going to review during the lesson… so they can be successful." Erin added that she uses entry tasks "to differentiate and give more support." She explained that the entry task worksheets consisted of questions that reviewed previous lessons' topics and previewed the new lessons' concepts. Erin specifically stated that she tried to "bring in their experience with some fun kind of hook question like their experience with music." She prepared that question to scaffold students' understanding of iambic pentameter, and she was excited that students responded to her question with answers about beats and melody. Erin also anticipated the difficulty of tracking the many characters of Shakespeare's *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream,* and asked students how they kept track of characters in movies they watched. She explained, "I wanted to connect to an experience they've had before because this can be super overwhelming." Erin also felt that designing entry tasks that connected to students' lives also operated as an intrinsic motivator, based on her own experience with school. She explained, "The relation to their lives is the biggest motivator; it was the biggest motivator for me outside the classroom." In her view, connecting students' experiences to the Core Knowledge Sequence would help students invest in the curriculum's lessons.

In the first observation, students entered the classroom, quietly put away their backpacks, turned in homework, and picked up an entry task worksheet. While students began to work on their entry task, Erin walked around the room and pulled three students to the back table where I sat. As she did this, she narrated the class activities, saying, "I see Justin and Jackson working on

the entry task. Olivia is writing down today's agenda." Three students, Kate, Henry, and Israel sat down at the back table with their entry task worksheet, and Erin joined them.

While the rest of the class worked independently on the entry task, Erin pulled a small group of students for additional support and more instructional time. Later, Erin explained that she determined which students to include in the small group based on their performance on standardized assessments and subsequently "always kept [his] eyes on them and looked at their papers." She also invited students whom she witnessed struggling with the entry task during her first and second walk-throughs. Erin explained, "For instance, after my small group lesson, I realized there were two kids who were on, like, number one after 15 minutes of our warm-up. Somehow, I missed them in my second-round wave… so sometimes I'll bring over more, based on their progress." The small group lesson served as an opportunity to provide additional guidance for struggling students and a chance to assess all students' understanding.

Erin described the small group time during the entry task as an opportunity to provide equitable education by "giving students scaffolds and tools, sentence starters and more of my time, and other supports so they can come away successfully." She used the term *equitable* and noted that some students did not need as much support, but others needed "different techniques that are tailored to different students' needs." Erin explained that she used the entry task and small group lesson to individualize instruction, noting she "provides more examples, and defines language more." She continued,

> Typically for an entry task, those are already scaffolds for the whole group to help access and give them background knowledge about something. But I will often, with my lowest students, I'll take three or four of those questions that are crucial for our lesson that day and I'll try to define vocabulary and give more models and examples.

Erin elaborated, "It goes back to finding underserved populations." She paused before explaining her understanding of underserved populations.

> I guess I was speaking there to just the history of discrimination in the schooling system, how a lot of students of color and students of different cultures haven't been able to identify with curriculums, so they've been at a disadvantage because the content hasn't related as much to their lives, or it has a Eurocentric narrative. It's my goal to make the texts in my class as inclusive as possible and to welcome different cultures' experiences into the classroom as kind of a tool they can use to analyze things.

During the entry task activities, Erin worked with the small group and asked them to offer a meaning for the word, "tone." Henry suggested the sound of one's voice and Israel said someone's mood. Erin then asked, "What's your attitude toward waking up on a Monday morning to get ready for school?" Henry rolled his eyes while Israel growled and answered, "annoyed." The small group moved on to the next question, "When you watch a movie and a character is happy or sad, how do you know?" Israel answered, "Facial expressions," and Kate said, "If they run away from something." Erin replied, "Okay, so the way they respond to something. Go ahead and write those answers down."

After the small group students wrote down their answers, Erin guided them through question five of the worksheet that asked about their language experiences. She offered her own experience before asking students to share theirs:

> So an experience I've had, is my dad is dating a Peruvian woman, and she speaks Spanish. At potlucks, everyone speaks Spanish and I don't really understand it. It's kind of awkward. But I do notice when they're talking if they're angry, or if they're sassy, or if maybe they're just joking around. I could kind of tell their tone. Have any of you had an experience like that?

Kate answered, "My grandma was talking to her friend and her friend speaks French and I could tell if they were mad because her voice sounded grumpy."

When they finished discussing the questions on the entry task worksheet, Erin told the group, "I'm going to circle things I want you to share out loud in whole group; you can head back to your seat," and she circled items on each student's paper. From there, Erin engaged the whole class in a discussion about their answers from the entry task worksheet. Before she asked

for answers for the first question, she told students that he "cared more about the best effort than the right answer." After she asked each question, she accepted multiple answers and did not evaluate the responses. Occasionally, Erin rephrased answers to add technical literary terms to students' explanations, but she did not provide an evaluation. Twice during the entry task discussion of my first observation, Erin called on Henry and Israel to share the answers she circled during their small group discussion. After those students shared, Erin continued teaching and expressly switched to the required curriculum activities. The entry task worksheet and corresponding discussion lasted just under 30 minutes.

My next observation of Erin occurred the following day and paralleled the first observation's beginning routine: students entered the class, turned in homework and permission slips, and began working on the entry task assignment sheet. While students settled in, Erin pulled a group of three students to the small back table. This group included Kate from the day before, as well as Royce and Caden, who were new to the small group. While the class worked independently on the entry task worksheet, Erin walked the small group through questions like, "Is it easier to remember lyrics from a song or a book?" Kate said it was easier to remember words in a song, and she recited the lyrics from the Rihanna song she and her mother listened to on the way to school. Caden said, "It's easier to remember lyrics because if you're performing at a concert, you can't have a stand with the lyrics, so you have to memorize. But if you have a book, you can go back to it." Erin told the small group students to write down their responses while she walked through the class to silently review students' written responses.

In a subsequent interview, Erin described how she used the entry task as an assessment tool. She never collected the entry task worksheet and instead pre-assessed students through the oral share-outs and partner talks. While students worked independently on their entry task, she

explained that she walked through the classroom and monitored student work three times in case she missed a struggling student during her first or second walk through. After students finished writing their answers, she called on various students to share their responses during a whole class discussion, as described in the previous section. During the share-out, she considered it an opportunity to assess students and to learn together in a social constructivist format.

She demonstrated this pedagogical approach during the second observation when she went to the front of the class and asked the whole class, "Who can give a summary of the weekend from multiple characters' perspectives?" She called on James to provide a model for the question. James answered, "We had a barbecue, and my dad was sort of involved, my little brother didn't know about it, my mom was nervous about the food, and my older brother was excited." Erin thanked James for sharing and asked students to continue working. Then she returned to his small group.

Back in the small group, Erin asked Caden, Kate, and Royce the third question on the entry task form, saying, "'The course of love never did run smooth.' This is a metaphor, what do you think this line means, what does it mean about the topic love? Does it sound like it's saying something positive or negative?" Royce answered, "Something negative. It says never." Erin asked a follow up question, "Are there any movies or books you've seen where two people constantly can't be together even though they're falling in love? Write down the movie or story." With this prompting, Kate wrote down, "*Gilmore Girls* because Rory and Jess can't be together." Erin used the entry task as a vehicle to connect students' background knowledge of popular culture to similar themes and characters of the curriculum text.

Even when using the required curriculum for an entry task, Erin supplemented the activity with questions to scaffold the task. The curriculum asked students to write an advice

column response to a Shakespeare character who struggled with the conflict of the play. Before working on the activity, Erin asked about students' experiences with advice. As the class settled to work on the entry task, Kate, Israel, and Jasmine joined Erin at the back table for small group work. She asked the three students, "First thing I want you to think about, have you had any experience where a friend asked you for help?" She paused for them to think and offered a model, saying, "For instance, my sister wanted to know which job to apply for, so I talked to her and helped her decide which job might be best for her. And I had a friend, he wanted to know what to do over the weekend, so he came to me and asked me what to do. So when someone comes to you for advice, how do you know what tone to use?" Jasmine answered, "Calm because if someone asks you for help, you should avoid being panicked." Kate added, "I would be nice about it. Let's say I already went to college and then I would know what job to tell her to get." The curriculum activity did not ask students to consider the literary device of tone, but Erin explained during an interview that she intentionally made opportunities to teach students transferable skills while still scaffolding access to the curricular activities.

Erin continued the small group lesson by asking, "How do you know what to talk about, if they've given you their problems?" Israel replied, "What their situation is, and how to make it okay." Kate joined in, "What subject they're talking about and what they really need." Erin did not evaluate their replies. She then said, "I'm going to read the advice letter from Hermia aloud. I want you to think, 'What is her tone?' And I want you to do it by looking at specific words." While Erin explained their next task, Kate started to write down the answer for the previous question. Erin told her, "It's okay that we just shared it orally. I know you have some really good ideas you want to write down, but we talked about them and that's okay." Next, Erin read the letter and asked, "Is there a word that makes you think how she's feeling?" "My father is driving

me crazy!" Israel answered, "Crazy, like she's really angry." Jasmine responded, "Annoyed. She's not really anxious, but her dad's driving her crazy." Erin responded, "You have evidence to support it. Great!"

At this point, Erin opened the conversation to the whole class asked students to describe Hermia's tone. The discussion went as follows:

> Jayla: Scared, because if she doesn't marry him, she'll be killed in three days.
> Erin: Really great supportive evidence.
> Hannah: Confused, because she might take a risk.
> Chase: Questioning, because she's asking for advice.

Then the class moved on to the next question from the day's entry task worksheet. This question also served to scaffold the curriculum activity, the advice letter. Erin told students, "We haven't done friendly letters before, so I wanted to review the format." The class then analyzed the initial curriculum letter asking for advice. The supplemental entry task asked students to draw a squiggly line below the letter's greeting, to underline her closing sentence, and to circle her signature. After the whole class identified the components of the friendly letter, students worked independently for just under ten minutes on the curriculum activity while Erin monitored the room.

When students finished writing their letters, Erin asked students to read their letters to a neighbor and look for words to describe the letter's tone. But first, she asked Risa to read hers as a model. Erin then asked, "Who can tell me her tone?" Seven students raised their hands, and Erin told them, "Tell your neighbor real quick the tone of Risa's letter." Next, the class worked in partners, reading their letters and determining tone words. When they finished, students shared with the whole class the tones of their partners' letters, which included words like calming, encouraging, and caring. In the post-observation interview, Erin mentioned that the curriculum

content could not be modified, but she liked to alter the delivery of instruction to include as much partner work and small group work as possible.

Though she negotiated certain aspects of curriculum fidelity, Erin reliably delivered the majority of each required lesson. While guiding students through the lessons, I observed her integrate small learning experiences that scaffolded instruction and allowed students to "enter the tasks" of the curriculum.

Accessing the Curriculum: Jen

During one interview, Jen addressed the potential pressure to keep the brisk pace of the Core Knowledge Sequence. Keeping a regular pace allowed the fifth-grade team at Jen's school to compare assessment data across the three fifth grade classes. Jen said that each week, her team compared data of all fifth-grade students, though they "tend[ed] to focus more on [their] small group kids." The mission at her school was to know the small group students "by name and exactly where they are struggling."

Jen elaborated that her school was trying to compare more data with the other intermediate school in the district, but that did not happen as frequently as she would have liked. However, she and the other teachers emailed each other multiple times during the unit to give their opinion on the curriculum's lessons. She recalled conversations with teachers at the other school, saying, "Lesson 4.2 is ridiculous! How did your kids do? We'll take that out next year." Jen shared her perception of the curriculum pace, saying, "We are expected to be a day or two in sync with each other, and it's tough. There are days that you definitely need to slow down because you realize the students don't get it. It's over their head, or they're missing a piece."

During the year of data collection, her class consisted of 15 female and ten male students. Four students were Asian or of Middle Eastern descent, three were African-American, two were Latino/a, and 16 were white.

For each curriculum lesson, Jen said she reviewed the lessons prior to teaching them, determined the most important content, and considered how she would lead her students to those understandings. She explained, "The other day in planning, I was like, 'Gosh, they need to know this. Let me see what I can do, what pictures I can come up with." She elaborated that she created slideshows to "activate their knowledge; to help them review. I try to find little clips to bring in, to bring [the content] more to life so they can see it and not just hear it." For example, during the second observation, Jen prepared students for the curriculum questions pertaining to power and relationships. To do this, she showed a slide of Darth Vader from *Star Wars*, President Snow from *The Hunger Games,* and the Evil Queen from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. She asked the rhetorical question, "Would you say they have power in their roles?" Then, Jen asked, "What makes characters like those on the screen or Bottom or the ones we've talked about powerful?" Multiple students answered:

> Rachel: Money.
> Savannah: Authority.
> Jamari: Intelligence.
> Maya: Your relationship.
> Diego: They make the laws.
> Tyler: Their rank.
> Allie: He or she can get other characters to do what they want.
> Harper: Few people can tell them what to do.
> Jen: Which of those characters refuses to do what others says?
> Cara: President Snow.

In the subsequent interview, Jen explained her slide show with Darth Vader, President Snow, and the Evil Queen, saying, "With the characters [in the lesson] today, I felt like you need

to put it into their world. They need to see three characters, like Darth Vader, for them to understand. Giving them background makes it so much easier."

Similarly, Jen referred to the curriculum's activity about an advice column letter, saying, "Most of them… they don't even write those anymore! You know, there are little things you have to implement so that they understand [the curriculum.]"

Jen described another access point from the second observation. The curriculum activity asked students to categorize groups of characters from *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream*. In the curriculum, the answers included The Lovers, The Actors, and the Fairies. However, Jen expressed in a subsequent interview that students needed more support with the concept of categorizing, so she walked students through a categorizing activity to prepare them for the curriculum activity. The conversation occurred as follows:

> Jen: Let's look at our characters on the wall. They're divided by what I call, "categories." I'm going to do something I used to do with second graders. It's called, "I'm going on a picnic," and I'll tell you what you can bring. I'm going on a picnic and I'm going to take Doritos, who would like to go?
> Andy: I'm going on a picnic and I'm going to take… Doritos.
> Jen: I'm taking Doritos, so no, you can't.
> Savannah: I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking… sandwiches?
> Jen: Nope.
> Justin: I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking… Mountain Dew?
> Jen: Sorry, you can't go on my picnic.
> Cameron: I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking… Cheetos?
> Jen: Yes, you can go on my picnic, get over here

Cameron then stood up and joined Jen on the side of the classroom. Jen continued the activity and repeated her prompt, "I'm going on a picnic and…"

> Maya: I'm bringing chips…?
> Jen: No, you may not come.
> Lisa: I'm going on a picnic and I want to bring Pringles.
> Jen: Yes, she can come. [Lisa joined Cameron and Jen].
> Ahmad: I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking… Fritos!

Jen then asked the class, “Can he come on my picnic?” Nearly all the students shouted, “Yes!” Jen asked them, “So what’s my category?” Students answered in unison, “Chips!” She used an activity that listed specific types chips to demonstrate the concept of categorization. Jen repeated this classification activity with chocolate candies. Students who gave examples of chocolate candies, such as Snickers bars, Crunch bars, and Milky Way bars got to stand up and join Jen in the front of the classroom. Jen then instructed, “Now that we’re thinking about categories, let’s look at the characters on the wall. What can we label the first group?” Students then shared their ideas for category names. Jen asked students to defend their classification scheme with evidence from the text. She finished this activity as a whole-class lesson.

During the follow-up interview, Jen explained her categorizing activity about going on a picnic that helped prepare students to categorize the play’s characters.

> After having taught this for a year, kids don’t know what categories are. If I were to just say, ‘Okay, how could I- what group…,’ they’d be like, ‘I don’t know what you’re talking about.’ That failed last year. That’s why I try to do something so they understand what a category is, or how to categorize people.

Since she had taught the lesson to a prior group of students, Jen attempted to anticipate students’ confusion and reduce it through short activities.

During another observation, Jen scaffolded a curriculum activity that asked students to read single lines of text aloud to determine whether the line was written in verse. She let students practice their lines with a partner before pausing the group and turning a heartbeat sound on over the speakers. Jen explained that she turned on the heartbeat sound to help them read their lines to a beat. She asked students to recall the name of the heartbeat sound. Simon responded, “Iambic pentamenator [sic].” Jen replied, “Very close, iambic pentameter. Do you remember that phrase? It goes, “Ta tum, ta tum, ta tum, ta tum. And we practiced with this line: The COURSE of TRUE love NEV-er DID run SMOOTH.” With the heartbeat sound still playing as an auditory scaffold,

she asked students to complete the curriculum question of identifying whether their Shakespeare line was iambic pentameter or prose.

In that same lesson, Jen provided an entry task slideshow to support students in the curriculum task of identifying monologues, dialogues, and soliloquys in a given passage of text. Jen explained to students that before they began the activity, they needed to know three words. Her slideshow included the information, "Dialogue (dia = through; logue= speak)." Savannah commented, "[Dialogue] is like when three people are talking, and you have to put quotations. It's like a conversation." Jen changed the slide to one that read, "Monologue (mono = singular; logue= speak)." She then explained, "If you've been to the city and ridden the *mono*rail, it's only one. So a *mono*logue is…?" Students answered, "One speaker!" Lastly, Jen introduced the concept of soliloquy, and asked, "What do you think it means to be speaking alone?" Diego answered, "You'd be, like, the only one onstage, and you'd be acting by yourself." Jen then asked students to get out their "magnifying glasses" and determine which passages of text were dialogues, monologues, and soliloquies. The curriculum did not include a discussion of the three terms; it asked students to identify passages of text.

Sometimes, in lieu of slideshows or other supplementary activities, Jen asked students questions about curriculum concepts in application to their lives to help them enter the activity. Regarding cause and effect, Jen reported talking to students, saying, "When you go home and your mom's screaming and yelling, and she's throwing everything out of your bedroom, what's going on?" She stated that students responded, "She's mad because I didn't clean it." For Jen, these connections were not always intentional; she apologized for not explaining her process to me and said, "They just come naturally. I don't know how to explain that. It's not like… the curriculum doesn't have a lot of that, like tying it back to their lives. So it's just trying to figure

out how can we do that." Jen described frequently applying curriculum concepts to students' lives in effort to increase relevancy.

During the interviews, Jen also mentioned how she used the entry tasks to challenge her higher achievers but also support the struggling students. For the higher students, she asked them to give multiple answers from the text to support their claims about the slideshow questions (e.g. the similarities of Bottom and Oberon). For struggling students, Jen discussed intentionally pulling them aside and grouping them for support. "If I threw them with a partner, it's not fair for somebody who is successful. I need them to work a little harder, so I try to pull them aside and work with them. I won't pair [the struggling students] up with each other because they'd be lost." The students in her small group varied each day based on who Jen, through informal assessments, deemed most in need of support. Two students, Diego and Harper, worked in the small group during the first and third observations, but not during the third, demonstrating the flexible grouping of the class. Jen described the curriculum activities as being challenging, so she tried to support the lower performing students as much as she could, while still supporting the higher performing students as they tackled the curricular activities.

Transferable Literacy Skills: Erin

Through the entry task questions, Erin explicitly attempted to connect the background knowledge of culturally diverse children to the knowledge of the curriculum. She also wanted children with more mainstream backgrounds to use their experiences to connect to the curriculum activities. Erin explained that she used the entry task time to teach students transferable skills that they could apply in their future academic careers. She described her attempts to make the purpose of the curriculum's objectives relevant to students' lives. During lesson planning, she reported asking herself, "How can this help us in life? Or in a different level

of education?" Her intent was to help students see the objectives as "a tool they're being equipped with to make them successful in their future academic career."

For example, Erin discussed the importance of using context clues to identify a tone. e valued this skill so much that she intended to include a final assessment that supplemented the unit's prescribed assessment. In her view, identifying tone from context clues was "such a cool tool for when they're engaged with and encountering more difficult text every year." The second observation of the entry task mirrored this approach by emphasizing the importance of iambic pentameter facilitating actors' abilities to remember lines. Erin also valued the transferable skills of identifying character desire, conflict, and climax. While she regularly referred to these during the curriculum's lessons, she did not express an intention to assess students on those skills. Erin noted that she adhered to the curriculum's lessons and the assignments the grade level teams selected, however she also omitted non-essential activities in efforts to "save class time for things that help them access the content we're reading together."

Transferable Literacy Skills: Jen

Erin explicitly described her intention to teach transferable literacy skills such as analyzing literary devices within the confines of the Core Knowledge Sequence. Jen did not express such a commitment, but observations of instruction revealed her objective to teach students to defend claims with evidence from the text. During nearly every discussion, Jen accepted all student answers, provided they cited an aspect of the curriculum text. For example, during a discussion of which characters in Athens had the most power, Jen gave the instructions and added, "But you can't just give me a name. You have to prove it." Allie said, "Theseus because he's the Duke." Jen prompted her for more evidence from the text, and Allie continued, "Everyone bows down to him." Diego added, "He has control because he's a second step to the

king." Jen accepted two to four more responses without evaluating her students' answers, but instead prompting them for evidence when students failed to provide it. During the observation of this activity, I recorded that Jen "uses the [curriculum] workbook as a space to record their thinking, rather than a task to be completed."

During another observation, students entered the class and began working on a compare/contrast activity that Jen used to supplement the curriculum. It asked students how the actions of Oberon and Bottom were similar and instructed them to tell their neighbor. After five minutes, Jen invited students to share out their responses.

Tyler: Both are selfish and greedy.
Jen: Who can validate that as true?
Ahmad: One time he says he wants all the parts.

As with previous discussions, she did not evaluate students' responses. As the discussion continued, she asked two of the six students to find evidence from the text to support their answer.

During class discussions, it was not uncommon to hear Jen remind students, "And each of your interpretations can be correct if they're grounded in the text, if they're based on what we read." Some students internalized the necessity of supporting claims with evidence, while others needed reminding. This was not a skill emphasized in the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Intentional Community Development

The following section will present the second set of findings, teachers using the strategy of community development to promote engagement with the Core Knowledge Sequence. It is organized by theme and further arranged by demonstrative data from each participant.

A Caring and Respectful Classroom: Erin

Two participants in this study developed caring classroom communities to promote engagement with the curriculum and lessen the academic and social risks required to undertake the challenging tasks of the Core Knowledge Sequence. The first participant, Erin, did so by accepting multiple answers, intentionally grouping students, and making discussion participation equitable. Frequently during the interviews, Erin discussed how important it was for her to make students feel comfortable in the classroom. Erin strengthened classroom community by asking open-ended questions so students would not be discouraged by providing the incorrect answer during a discussion. Specifically, she said, "It would be pretty disheartening if there was just one right answer and if I were evaluating [each response.]" Erin also made students feel comfortable by providing spaces for students to "discover [their] thoughts in a safer setting, whether it's with a partner or on paper first, and then we can have a respectful, communal atmosphere where [they] can add onto each other." She summarized that she wanted all students to feel like they were part of the learning, rather than observing the higher achieving students make meaning for the whole class.

Erin also mentioned that she intentionally paired lower achieving students with higher achieving students, but not to provide the answers to curriculum questions. Erin told the partners they could discuss the steps to take while answering workbook questions, but not to explicitly give answers. She said, "I'll position them next to some lower students and if they're able to teach or talk them through it… it's really cute and empowering to see some higher-level students explain and talk through it."

Erin continued to describe her efforts to increase classroom community in that she gave students tools to monitor their participation in classroom discussions. Erin reflected on her practice and said, "I realized that my participation wasn't equitable, because even though I like

maximizing participation with partner talk, whole-class [discussion] still leans toward some students who are more confident, or students who find the content more accessible." Erin explained her efforts to rectify disproportionate participation. For quieter students, she provided "sticky notes to track their participation and we'll discuss it afterward to try to make them feel empowered." For the higher students, Erin asked them to monitor their participation by "tracking whether they were sharing in response to somebody else… or sharing out their partner's insights after a partner talk." Erin explained that the challenge for quieter students was to share in the discussion, but the challenge for students who frequently shared was to connect to other students' ideas.

Erin considered student comfort in situations beyond discussion participation and sharing ideas. During the final observation of Erin's class, the curriculum required two students to read an excerpt of the play titled, "Lover's Quarrel." Before the class read the text, Erin quietly asked Piper and James to be the actors and gave them time to prepare the tone of their lines. When she introduced the activity to the class, Erin told students, "Piper will be actor number one, and James will be actor number two. They're super courageous, let's give them a round of applause." James and Piper shared their tone words for the Lover's Quarrel, loving and angry, respectively, and then they began to read.

As the text became romantic, Piper and James became increasingly uncomfortable. Erin stopped them and said, "I have a new plan. There's power in numbers." She then divided the class in half to read the parts of Demetrius and Hermia in large groups, and students read the respective parts in unison for the remainder of the scene. The curriculum required repeated exposure to the text, so for the second read, Erin again changed the format of the read-aloud. She instructed, "How about you read it quietly in lower stakes with your partner. It doesn't matter the

gender; we're just acting here. I'm going to pair you off in groups of two. It's going to be really loud in here and I want you to practice with your partner. You wrote down the tones of the character's, so go ahead and read it aloud with your partner." Students then read the Lover's Quarrel a third time in partners.

After the class read the text three times, Erin asked students to reflect on what they learned while acting out the play. Students replied:

> Hannah: Sometimes it's scary.
> Jayla: Yeah, when I went to acting camp it was really scary when you had to act or sing.
> Jamal: It's hard to do.
> Delia: It's embarrassing.
> Royce: I'm not an extrovert.

Erin shared her own reflection:

> My number one thing as a teacher to make you feel comfortable so that's why I made those revisions. I want you to feel comfortable but if you're ever uncomfortable let me know. I'll be able to read your faces, poor Piper and James, but you can also let me know. I do want to challenge you to act though, in small groups, with low risk, but I'll make sure you're comfortable first.

Classroom community, to Erin, centered around students feeling comfortable to participate in classroom activities. After the observation with the curriculum's Lover's Quarrel activity, which she modified two times to reduce discomfort, Erin shared her thoughts about the activity. She explained, "I made kids really uncomfortable three times today, and I tried really quickly to change that! I just always want to make revisions to allow kids to maintain their dignity and to feel safe and comfortable so they can learn." She noted that even in her final iteration of the lesson's activities, many boys didn't feel comfortable reading the romantic lines to other boys. Erin reflected, "There should have been a talk about that beforehand and things addressed instead of just sending them off to do it. I want everyone to feel like they can act. I want to make that a lot more comfortable." When I concluded that interview, I asked Erin if

there was anything else she wanted me to know. She told me, “Just that I want my kids to be comfortable most of all, and you can’t be in a space of learning if you’re really uncomfortable.”

Erin explicitly stated her prioritization of student comfort during learning activities was connected to her own experiences in language arts classes. First, she expressed that a Shakespeare play could be intimidating to students because she remembered reading Shakespeare in high school and listening to very engaged students, thinking, “Oh they’re getting this. They’re understanding this. They love the language. I hate this; this is uncomfortable.” She also remembered reading Shakespeare plays aloud in high school and not feeling prepared. Erin recalled, “I’ve done so many Shakespeare units where I’ve had these English teachers that thought it was so fun because everyone was acting out a play, but really it was just terrifying. I hated being up in front of the classroom when I wasn’t given the supports of how to read, or what it meant.” Erin reported that she used her experiences of being uncomfortable with Shakespeare to inform her teaching. Specifically, she realized she could provide scaffolds for students when reading a Shakespeare play so that students would feel more at ease when acting a challenging play. Erin reflected that she fell short on the day of the Lover’s Quarrel, but she wanted to use that lesson to inform future conversations about acting and gender roles in society.

Additionally, Erin validated students’ thoughts and opinions by sharing authority over the process of knowledge construction. The third observation expressly demonstrated this. While Erin conducted the discussion with the entire class, one student, James, got up from his seat and began diagraming character relationships on the front whiteboard. Royce then joined James and the two continued diagraming. Erin directed the whole class discussion until James’ and Royce’s diagram became a distraction. At that point, Erin asked James to explain the diagram. James and Royce described the web of characters, which included arrows, hearts, angry squiggly lines, and

broken lines to demonstrate the characters' feelings about each other. James dictated his interpretation of the play's characters, their relationships, and which characters had the most power. After James and Royce explained diagram, the class applauded them and returned to the curriculum's predetermined discussion questions for the remainder of the class period.

After the observation, Erin described James' and Royce's drawing during the follow-up interview.

> The fact that James, who is a higher student, was able to do that and show how his mind works, it exposed that type of thinking to Royce. Even though that wasn't my decision, I was like, "Okay." So I just let this happen. The fact that [students] saw that's how James is thinking about the text can provide them insight, too.

Erin admitted that she hadn't intended nor anticipated visual contributions from students. But she sensed the value for student understanding in permitting the diagram, and thus ignored the disruption in management in order to make space for the social constructivist learning experience, while simultaneously signaling value in James' and Royce's reasoning processes.

A Caring and Respectful Classroom: Jen

Jen valued the classroom community so much that she referred to them as a "wolfpack." During interviews, Jen frequently used the term to describe her approach to building the classroom community. She stated, "We start the year off being a wolfpack. We know our pack sticks together through everything." Jen admitted it might be frustrating for some students who like to work on their own, but she described that some of her higher performing students felt proud when helping the lower performing students. Jen described:

> I don't like to put that pressure on them because I don't think it's right. But if I were to say, 'I need you to sit next to him and just tell him what page to go to,' it makes them feel respected. [They think] like, 'Wow, you're letting me be in charge of him?' And well, yeah, in simple ways. And they take to it, those little kids do. Being a team is important to me.

She also expressed that one of her biggest teaching challenges was introducing new students to the community because. “You’ve already established this community, this environment.” Jen continued reflecting on the classroom community and inadvertently shared her intention behind developing community:

> It’s also so different from elementary school, and it tends to be hard for a number of reasons. You have a whole new routine as far as you have to use cubbies, and you have homework, and you have to keep an agenda, and you really have to do your homework. It’s the first time you get grades. All of those things. And then on Day 1, “I’m supposed to go outside? To recess? And there’s no real playground? What am I supposed to do?”

Jen expressed her empathy for students’ struggles and shared, “So you will always see me at recess the entire first week of school getting kickball started and making sure that everybody has someone [to play with]. Nobody wants to be left alone.” In addition to recess, Jen explained how she developed community in the lunchroom. “I’ll go in during the first week and make sure everybody has someone to sit by and nobody’s left alone. And we always talk about that in class, like, ‘Oh! Today at lunch, I saw two people sitting by themselves!’ And tomorrow, we’ll make sure everybody has a friend to sit by. It’s never fun to feel alone. That’s big to me.” Jen described the importance she placed on classroom community and discussed how it extended beyond her classroom into the lunchroom and the playground.

Another strategy Jen used to build her classroom community was to establish clear routines and expectations for every task. She said, “We start on day one. So, when they come in in the morning, they know what they should be doing. When they come in from recess, they know what to do. They should be looking at the front board. They should be ready to go.” This information contrasted with the data about expectations derived from a different participant’s classroom, Maddie, so I asked the follow-up question, “And nobody gets up to get a drink of water?” Jen answered, “No, they should not be. Because they know during instruction, it is

instruction time. And we use hand signals. One is a bathroom, two is a drink of water, five is they need my help." Jen referred to these as, "silent interruptions." Again, I wanted to compare my observational data to that which I saw in Maddie's class, so I asked Jen, "And everybody has their workbook?" Jen responded, "Yes, always. In the other class, I have one where I keep his workbook up front in my cupboard. Honestly, it's just expectations… I just really have high expectations for them, and they usually rise to them." In establishing clear expectations for transitions and student interruptions, Jen reduced distractions so students could expend their energy on learning.

However, Jen did not have routines for discussion participation. She said, "Popsicle sticks and stuff, I don't do that." Instead, Jen explained, she intentionally monitored participation. For instance, "Today, kids were throwing the ball around and kept reminding them, 'Hey, make sure everybody has a turn.' I don't have a set system." I asked her to elaborate on her participation monitoring methods, specifically, "If you're looking for certain things, what might you be looking for?" Jen responded, "So, I'm looking for the kids that are just looking down quietly, the ones that get overlooked, that I know have the answer but are not sharing." Jen explained that she deliberately monitored students' written responses and used their answers to shape her whole-class discussions. I then recapped part of an observation where she called on a student, the student did not know the answer, and Jen asked the whole class, "Who can help him out?" I asked her to explain her response, and she reflected:

> We all support each other… I don't want kids to walk away feeling like they're a failure. And I don't want kids to walk away feeling like they're superior to everybody else, because we're all equals. And I think it's important to give them second chances, to not say, "Okay, I just beat you down, you didn't know it, moving on!" So, it's like, "Hey, I'll come back to you," or, "Hey, who can help you with that?" I just feel like that's really important, just for self-esteem.

Jen exercised this philosophy during discussions when she accepted all student responses to the curriculum questions, so long as the answers were supported by evidence from the text. She explained, "I want kids to see there's more than one way to answer it. I want them to walk away feeling like, 'Okay, I can give it a try." Jen continued that the Shakespeare unit lent itself to the multiple-answers approach. "Shakespeare is literally words on a page, and it had actors' names, but there was nothing else to it… Everybody has a different interpretation of it." Jen believed that the Shakespeare text and corresponding questions allowed all students to share their answers without judgment if they could point to a demonstrative quote from the text. She explicitly stated her opinion about students' responses, "As long as you can back it up, that is a right answer."

Jen recognized that not all teachers shared this perspective, and she attributed their hesitance to their management systems. She explained:

> Having a finite answer is sometimes easier to manage, opposed to… If you don't have that management piece down, then [students] can just go everywhere. Without being negative, there's just some people who don't know how to shut things down. So, I feel confident enough that I can keep [the discussion] open, and if it starts going in the wrong direction, I can bring it back or shut it down.

Jen believed that firm routines and systems of management freed her and the students to explore the curriculum content. Without interruptions like water breaks and with confident teacher management of discussion answers, students could authentically engage with the Core Knowledge lessons.

Opportunities for Social Justice Education: Erin

The Core Knowledge Sequence did not explicitly address issues of social justice or cultural competency. In both observational and interview data, Erin demonstrated a commitment to integrating social justice conversations to the required activities. During one observation,

students discussed Athenian law as depicted by *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream.* Erin then asked students a curriculum question, to evaluate whether they found that Athenian law fair. After students shared their opinions in partners, she asked for students' responses about the equality of the Athenian law. The transcript of that discussion is as follows:

> Piper: People should be able to choose their future and who they marry.
> Ariana: It's not fair; it's your life.
> Olivia: It also comes back to women's rights. If she's being forced into marriage, what else are they going to make her do?

Erin then deviated from the curricular questions and asked the class, "Adding onto that, who has the power in this scene?" James responded, "Theseus… he makes the law and you have to obey what he says." Erin continued this line of inquiry, and asked, "Who's another character who has power in this scene?" Alianna answered, "Egeus because he's trying to help Theseus and he's trying to get Hermia to listen to him." Jayla added, "He's her father and she has to listen to him." Erin paused the curriculum to consider not only whether a law was just, but also to address disparate power relations in the text.

In subsequent interviews, Erin described how she used the curriculum to introduce explorations of social justice issues, such as gender equality, fairness, and power relations. She expressed an appreciation of the curriculum's inclusion of authors of diverse cultures but noted that she had to supplement the discussion questions to critically interrogate power relations and equality. While reading the text excerpts of the curriculum, Erin described how she asked students if a particular scene was fair or if conflicts between characters were fair. Specifically, she asked, "Imagine yourselves in their footsteps," and then she provided space for authentic sharing. She intentionally reshaped questions to integrate students' experiences and encourage students to empathize with both sides.

Erin used this same strategy to discuss issues of power in the curriculum texts. She described one discussion that asked students to define power. She summarized, “While there were a lot of really cute, ‘Big muscles!’ answers, there was also, ‘The ability to make your own choices,’ and we honed in on that.” She continued, “That’s the lens with which we look at power now and it gets kids excited and feeling the injustice and palpable tensions of the text.”

Erin described a previous unit on Renaissance painters and explained how she supplemented the curriculum with discussion questions about power. The unit included nine male painters and one female painter, “And there wasn’t any content that explained it wasn’t because women were less capable, but they had less opportunity.” Erin worried it could be “a really terrible feeling and confusing for [his] students, like, ‘Why are only men achieving?’” She continued:

> So I took a lot of time from that unit and explained gender expectations at the time, and had [students] all have a women empathy experience where they imagined: this is the expectation, they’re going to be married off by the state and they don’t believe they should. Their parents don’t believe they should have an education but instead, it’s, “Do these tasks!” So I feel like there’s often times I have to add in.

Erin explained that she did not limit these conversations to the curriculum and instead attempted to apply analysis of power relations to students’ lives. When she asked students which characters possessed power, she said that she also “asked them how they could use this [analytic tool] in their lives.” Erin recapped that students had said they could use that tool to analyze the shows and movies they watched over the weekend. Erin reported supplementing the Core Knowledge Sequence with tools for power analysis and social injustice evaluation.

Erin also expressed missed opportunities to employ her commitment to a social justice pedagogy. After the previously described incident of the Lover’s Quarrel and assigning students male and female roles, I deviated from the semi-structured interview protocol. Specifically, I

asked her about gender roles, gender expression, and sexual orientation as those concepts arise in the fifth grade. Erin described a conversation about gender roles that quickly evolved to a discussion about gay rights. The discussion centered on women's rights and when a student shared a comment about gay rights, Erin reported, "I was really surprised to see some kids kind of shudder, or really close off right away. I even heard a few kids say, 'God says this isn't right, so it's not right.'" Erin then described the challenge of making sure all students felt comfortable in her classroom, regardless of their perspective or experience with gay rights. She stressed, "I've talked about *gay* not being a slur that's accepted in my class, and I try to normalize [gay] as much as possible by talking about two of my and my husband's best friends who are a gay couple." Erin elaborated on her attempts to be respectful of students' beliefs while maintaining a classroom of inclusion, saying:

> I want to be a lot better about having those discussions so that when things like this come up. I can give out the message that even if you don't agree with it right now, you need to respect these people and people with different beliefs. When that did come up, I wasn't really equipped. Even though I know my values, I want to teach equality and respect to all, I would love more [professional] training about those situations.

Erin repeated that she tried to make all students feel that their beliefs were respected. Simultaneously, she expressed feeling underprepared to create the fully inclusive classroom environment that she strove for.

Two-Way Pedagogy: Jen

In each interview, Jen expressed the importance she placed on having a deep understanding of each of her students. Reflecting on her practice, Jen shared, "I truly believe the more you get to know [students], the more you care about them, I feel like it makes me a much better teacher, when I know who they are, what they're about, their trials and struggles." To develop her knowledge of students, she utilized the homeroom class (of the same group of

students) to create artistic representations to students' backgrounds. She also used the curriculum's personal narrative unit to learn about students' lives. Jen added that she also did weekly check-ins every Monday, called a "Weekend Update," to give students time to share about themselves.

These activities allowed Jen to learn about her students and then adapt her instructional methods for different students' needs. For instance, she prepared students for whole class discussions based on her understanding of their preferred participation methods. One student, she described, was too overwhelmed if she called on him without previous notice, so during independent work time, Jen reported she often told him, "Hey, Connor, I'm going to have you share your answer today." Then, she gave him time to prepare his response individually before sharing it with the entire class. For Cara, a student Jen anticipated would join the highly capable program the following year, she explained, "Cara has everything done, and she doesn't want to share out because she's shy. So, I constantly go over to her and let her know that when her hand's not up, I'm calling on her." Jen elaborated that she only challenged Cara to participate because her workbook answers would contribute to the whole class's understanding of the play. To increase Cara's voice in the class, Jen used her papers as models, with her name removed, in order to keep her engaged in the class. Jen added, "If you know your students, it's easier to keep them engaged."

Jen enacted this philosophy with her student, Colton. She described him as, "Smarter than a whip," and elaborated that his 504 plan was for attention issues. To maintain his focus in one lesson, Jen deliberately assigned him the role of Puck. She said, "And you notice Puck only had one line, but it keeps him engaged because he has to listen the whole time waiting for his one line to come." During another curriculum activity, Jen selected Colton to be her assistant director

during a whole-class tableau activity. Jen felt that if she could assign him an integral role, and one that required standing, Colten would be more inclined to participate and refrain from off-task behavior. She frequently consulted him during the lesson, asking for example, “It’s probably important that we directors know these characters really well. Colten, what was Puck’s character trait?” Colten quickly answered, “Greedy or selfish.” She explained this decision, “When I see kids getting antsy, like Colton, he can come back and help me out [as the director]. I try to pay attention to them. It’s a long time for kids to try and sit.” Her choice to include an assistant director was based on Colton’s needs during the lesson.

Jen also expressed using her knowledge of students to monitor their understanding. During one interview, for example, she pointed to a student’s seat and recapped, “There are days when he is everywhere. Even today, he was drawing on his shoe, making a nice, fine line around it.” Jen continued, “But earlier, when I was side by side with him, I could tell he was participating. He gets it. He was doing well orally, that’s why I didn’t bring him to small group and have him join us today.” Jen assessed his understanding of the lesson despite his off-task behavior.

During one observation, Jen directly integrated her knowledge of students’ interests to make the curriculum relevant for them. The curriculum activity asked students to create modern pranks for the character Puck to commit. Jen asked students, “What sort of trouble might he cause? Again, it’s not going to be churning the butter. Today, what kind of real problems might he cause? Let me start. Maybe he takes your homework out of your bag every night.” Colten answered, “That would be great.” Savannah interrupted, “No, you’d get zeros!” Students continued:

Allie: Steal your treats.
Diego: He might delete an app off your phone.

Jamari: He might pull the fire alarm on purpose.
Jen: He might take down Andy's YouTube channel
Cameron: Drain the swimming pool.
Jen: Oh, because Cameron swims, so that would disrupt his life.
Lisa: He might move the basketball hoop.
Jen: Oh, Taylor plays basketball.
Ahmad: That would be goaltending.

With her knowledge of students' hobbies, Jen first made the connection to a student's YouTube channel, which invited other students to share connections between the curriculum and their hobbies, of which Jen also had prior knowledge. As students continued to work on this assignment, she checked in with Ahmad and asked, "Is dad home, or is he back out to sea?" Ahmad replied, "He's home." Jenn later explained that Ahmad's father was in the Navy. students worked on one assignment that benefited from her knowledge of their backgrounds, she continued to gather new information about her their lives.

Beyond instructional purposes, Jen emphasized how much she valued knowing her students, and the knowledge she shared of many of them indicated that. She described a conversation she had with Tyler. "He came to me and said, 'My head hurts so bad.' And so I said, 'Well what happened?' He said, 'Oh, I had to have staples put in. We were at home and my sister and I were messing around. And I fell and I hit the rocking chair.'" She explained that she affected his head injury might affect his performance in the class. Then, she elaborated and described how much she knew about him. She said, "Here's this awesome kid, and two weeks ago, his shoes were falling apart. He got new shoes on Tuesday and he was so excited for new shoes. And two weeks before that, he was like, 'Oh my gosh, Mrs. Ross, we got a new car! Finally! I don't have to take the bus everywhere!'" Jen indicated that during causal conversations before class started, this type of information, "just came up."

I asked Jen if students were comfortable sharing this information with her, and she described another experience that helped her develop a relationship with her students. Jen explained that a student, Maya, experienced anxiety. Jen acknowledged that her own son suffered from anxiety, so she already empathized with Maya. But one day, "Maya's mom made her sit and type me an email about how comfortable she is in my class, and how she wishes that all teachers would just give her a chance." Jen described a later conversation with Maya's mother where her mother said, "Maya's quirky. She'll ask you 1000 times about stuff, over and over until she feels confident, she understands it. [At home], she'll say, 'Mrs. Ross tells the funniest stories!' So we hear all your stories every night!" According to Jen, her relationship with Maya extended beyond the classroom and included Maya's mother. Jen reported a belief that developing these relationships with students made her a stronger and more empathetic teacher.

Traditional Instruction

This section discusses instruction using the Core Knowledge Sequence when teachers did not modify, supplement, or scaffold the required curricular learning experiences. Data revealed a reliance of traditional, teacher-directed instruction with little consideration or response to students' needs. Analysis of data demonstrated no strategies of differentiated instruction, as well as a hurried pace to complete all of the lesson's assigned activities.

Completion of Tasks: Maddie

Maddie was the final participant of the study and taught fifth grade at Ocean Heights Intermediate School. However, the first statement she gave in our first interview was in reference to her application for a position at the high school. She said, "I think I'm ready to move on. Fingers crossed, I hope something happens in my favor, but I understand if it doesn't." Maddie taught fifth grade during the inaugural year of the Core Knowledge curriculum adoption, the year

prior to data collection of this study. She often referred to her first student workbook to provide guidance for the lessons she taught during the year of data collection. Her classroom consisted of eight females and 18 males. Four students were Asian, five students were Latino/a, four students were African-American, and thirteen were white.

During the first interview, I sensed Maddie's interest in strictly adhering to the curriculum and asked if she felt pressure to teach every curriculum activity assigned to each lesson. Maddie noted that the curriculum was intended for 90-minute lessons, while their school consisted of 80-minute classes. Because of the time discrepancy, "We already have to trim out stuff here or there. But as far as pressure to get through everything, I mean I think so, to stay on pace with everyone. I try not to trim out too much, because then it loses its validity across schools and across the district." She continued reflecting about the lesson pacing discrepancies between Ocean Heights and Mountain View. "For whatever reason, [the teachers at Mountain View] just seem to go at a slower pace. We don't know why. Are they spending too much time with something? Are they spending too much time writing? And then what is their end product? Is it better than ours?" Despite the reported communication between the two intermediate schools, Maddie indicated the pace of teaching varied between the two schools. Maddie further reflected on the pacing question, saying, "I know a couple of the teachers [at Mountain View] have just gone at a slower pace. And I just wonder, do they have more class discussions? Do they let one lesson bleed into two days?"

As noted in the previous findings, Jen at Mountain View included many "entering the task" activities to supplement the curriculum. At Ocean Heights, Erin dedicated nearly 25 minutes each day to "entering the task" activities, and she sustained the same pace of lessons as

Maddie, though Maddie was intentionally a day ahead of Erin and the other language arts teacher at Ocean Heights.

Maddie described the challenge to sustain the brisk curriculum pacing across fifth grade classrooms, yet I observed that the first ten minutes of her class consisted of transitions rather than instruction. The first observation of Maddie's classroom began with students depositing their belongings in their classroom lockers. Then, they gradually lined up next to the lockers to walk to their math and science class. When all students were ready, the group walked to their math and science class while a new cohort of students walked into this classroom. The new group picked up their workbooks and settled into their seats. Maddie later explained that she and the math/science teacher agreed to trade their first cohort of students so they could end the school day with their homeroom cohorts. Over ten minutes passed from the first school bell to the time Maddie's language arts class began settling in with their Shakespeare workbooks.

When instruction began, the pressure of pacing was evident as Maddie quickly moved through the curriculum activities without defining a purpose for each activity or attempting to establish relevance to students' lives. The first observation began with an advice letter to a character in *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream.* Recall that Jen introduced this activity by showing her students copies of Dear Abby articles from the newspaper. Similarly, Erin guided students through the identification of letter features, such as a greeting and closing. In contrast, Maddie started by reading Titania's letter to the class, and paraphrased the main conflict of the advice letter, saying, "Should I give the boy to Oberon, or should I be firm and stand my ground?" Students began to consider the question and Maddie said to the whole class, "In your response to Titania, try to remember what we read last week, why she wants to care for the boy and why she feels responsible. If you're just doing the one paragraph, make sure you're at least writing five,

six, even seven sentences." Students began writing their responses while Maddie passed out the curriculum text. She did not pull up a small focus group of students for instruction. She did rephrase the entry task question for three separate students when they each raised their hands. In my field notes, I wrote, "Some students start whispering and get shushed by the teacher. About 40% of students are working on their entry task." She checked in with Paul, who told her, "I don't want to do this. I didn't sign up for this." Maddie encouraged him to, "Get to work." After a designated period of writing, Maddie called on four students to share their responses; three were white and one was Latino. After they shared their answers, Maddie said, "Okay, we are going to move on to the next thing," and then began to describe an activity about a different fairy, Puck.

This activity required students to analyze multiple images of the character. Before showing the pictures, she told students, "Notice the costume, the hair, the makeup, the body paint, the weird long fingers." Maddie shared four pictures before asking the class to share the adjectives they used to describe the character.

> Paul: Weird.
> Maddie: Ok, weird is an adjective and it can be used to describe Puck. Too much whispering during a class discussion.
> Andrea: For the second one, he had horns. He didn't have shoes on. He had ripped up pants.
> Maddie: Yeah, that one he definitely had a scowl. It looked more woodsy. His feet were dirty. Still way too many side conversations going on.
> Layla: It looked like a fawn with human feet.
> Maddie: It did look like half goat half human. I don't want to call the next student while we're still having side conversations.

Maddie accepted one more student response before directing the class to a video from the curriculum. After the video played, Maddie asked three students to give adjectives that described Puck. Next, she walked students through a graphic organizer in the workbook. Maddie sat in the front of the room with her workbook under the document camera while students followed along

in their own workbooks. She asked each question aloud and recorded a student's response for each question. My field notes include my reflection, "IRE format," in reference to Cazden's 1988 call-and-response style of discussion. An excerpt of that discussion is as follows:

> Maddie: For the character of Puck, what does he want? What's his goal in life?
> Monica: He likes to trick people.
> Maddie: Good, he likes to create chaos. But in regard to Oberon, what does he want to do?
> Kayla: Serve Oberon?
> Maddie: Yeah, he wants to serve Oberon; he wants to please Oberon.

Discussions in the IRE format were not unusual in Maddie's class. Student to student talk was infrequent, and Maddie extensively used the teacher manual to guide instruction. During the second observation, Maddie helped students through a workbook activity. Again, she sat in the front of the classroom with her workbook under the document camera. She asked students the workbook questions, they responded, and she wrote their answers in her workbook. The activity continued through five examples, and Maddie walked students through all but two as a whole class. For the last one as a whole class, she said, "Looking at my answer key, this one is really hard." Students finished the last two questions independently and Maddie announced, "All right, that should've been enough time to read those… Open your activity book to 8.2."

Her reliance on the answer key was evident in the third observation when students were tasked with creating summaries of scenes and sharing them aloud with the class. After students shared out their responses, she compared those to the summaries she'd written for each scene. For example, after Malik read his group's summary, Maddie showed her summary on the screen and said, "Okay, so you guys matched my summary pretty well." The rest of the groups read their summaries, and Maddie evaluated their answers based on her answers.

Maddie's interviews revealed the pressure she felt to complete the activities in the workbook, and this perceived pressure dictated her instructional style. In contrast, Jen used the

workbook as a discussion guide. In my field notes, I recorded my perception that, "It's like [Jen] uses the workbook as a place to record the thinking they're doing as a class rather than a task to be done." I did not observe instances of social constructivism, varied pacing or grouping, shared authority over knowledge, or connections to students' lives. Instead, classroom observations demonstrated multiple examples of traditional, teacher-directed whole-class instruction.

Resistance to Differentiated Instruction: Maddie

In the first interview, I asked Maddie how she adjusts instruction for her target group of students, or those who have been identified for intensive instruction within the whole-class setting. Maddie responded that she intentionally seats the lowest-performing 15% of her students near her desk, she re-reads the independent reading tasks to them, and she pares down assignments by asking them to answer a reduced number of questions. Maddie said that she didn't view it, "for lack of better words, as 'dumbing it down.' I'm just trying to give them a scaffold." She expressed that she gave students scaffolds to prevent them from feeling overwhelmed. She mentioned that she offers one-on-one instruction, but that she usually only found opportunities for that during writing units. Maddie said she attended to students with their hands up, or sometimes had a line of five students at her desk seeking individual instruction. Then she explained her frustration when students failed to understand her whole-class lessons before independent work:

> They don't glom on to the whole group instruction like they should, so then when it's time for them to write their own, it's like I'm having to do mini one-on-one lessons with each of them. Like, this is what we just went over, but here it is again. So I've explained to them, I was like, "Here's how public education works: the teacher teaches all the students at once, and then if you have more questions, we can do that." But I've told them, "Some of you guys are expecting to hog me for 10 minutes for you own mini-tutoring, one-on-one lesson. That's not how this works. We don't have the time for that, and we don't have the resources for that.

I asked Maddie if she had opportunities for small group instruction, and she explained that during writing units, on the first two days, she worked to get her target group of students started on the assignment. She explained, “I know that if I don’t steal them in the first 20 minutes, then that will be a wasted 20 minutes for them because they don’t know how to get started.” Maddie elaborated that she checked in with all students who had not begun the writing assignment, but her target group typically needed the most instruction. She did not reference teaching in small groups during reading units, such as the Shakespeare unit which I observed.

Next, I asked Maddie about her stronger students and the strategies she used to challenge their learning. Maddie replied, “Honestly, I think the curriculum is appropriately rigorous where my higher students don’t find it too easy. I don’t see them being bored with it… so I don’t find myself changing things too much for them, other than saying, ‘Give me another example,’” Maddie again referenced writing units in which she differentiated instruction for her higher-performing students. She said for those assignments, she asked the “top tier” students to extend their writing by including additional paragraphs. She did not discuss adjustments she made for higher-performing students in reading units.

During our first interview, I asked Maddie how she made learning relevant for students, a strategy advocated by the fields of differentiated instruction and multicultural education. Maddie answered, “We’re constantly reading the summaries and paraphrasing to them and trying to connect it back to their own lives.” In reference to *A Mid-Summer Night’s Dream*, she reflected, “I know this one isn’t the greatest because it has love triangles, and students are all like, ‘Ew! Love!’” She felt the themes of the play were too mature for students to relate. Maddie also explained how she tried to connect a previous reading unit about the ancient civilizations of Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs to students’ lives. She described talking about students’ modern lives

and the conveniences they experienced in comparison to the ancient civilizations. I asked a follow-up question of how she modifies instruction when she noticed students were not engaged. Maddie said, “To spark their engagement, I mainly just do a lot of pausing and asking, ‘Do we understand what’s going on?’ or again, asking questions that relate to their own life because this information is very new to them.” Maddie continued:

> I’ve always kind of struggled with that. With fifth graders, I can- um, you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink. I would say I have struggled if they don’t find it interesting. Like, okay? Do you want me to, like, sing and dance? To help make it interesting?

Maddie candidly expressed the challenges she encountered when connecting the Core Knowledge Sequence to students’ lives and interests.

The preceding section presented findings about classroom instruction when teachers did not employ strategies for differentiated instruction. The following section will share findings regarding classroom management when teachers do not use supplemental strategies to engage students with the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Authoritarian Management

This section discusses the effect on the learning environment when teacher did not employ strategies of differentiated instruction while using the Core Knowledge Sequence. Data revealed a lack of two-way pedagogy: the participant did not deliberately attempt to learn about her students’ identities or backgrounds, and thus was unable to make the curriculum particularly relevant to students’ lives. Additionally, the participant teacher described having weak connections to her students, and observational data revealed a hostile classroom community. Observations also showed students engaging in frequent and diverting disruptions, which the participant teacher described with frustration in subsequent interviews. An absence of a caring classroom community is not the sole cause of student disengagement with required reading

curricula, nor is this study claiming to demonstrate causation between the two. But both elements, an antagonistic community and student disengagement, were observed in one participant's classroom. Data will be presented below.

Absence of Two-Way Pedagogy and Caring Community: Maddie

Observations of Maddie's classroom did not reveal enactments of two-way pedagogy, so I addressed the issue during interviews. I asked her to describe the strategies she used to learn about students' identities and cultures, and how she attempts to build a classroom community. Maddie reported checking in with students on Monday mornings if they had mentioned upcoming weekend activities like a basketball tournament. She mentioned the class did many "ice breaking activities at the beginning of the year," as well as games of Heads Up, Seven-Up on rainy-day-recesses. When asked about strategies she used to make connections to students' families, Maddie reflected, "Honestly, that's an area I would love to improve upon." She continued that too frequently, her communication to families only happened to convey difficulties the student encountered in the class, specifically behavioral. She also shared that at the beginning of the school year, she intended to send a newsletter home to families about each unit, but the idea never materialized. These were the methods Maddie shared that she used to make connections to students' lives and develop relationships. When asked explicitly how she developed relationships with students, she replied, "Gosh, they say, 'You're their teacher, not their friend." She expressed an inherent distance between teachers and students based on their roles in the classroom.

Based on the theoretical framework of this study, which presumes making learning relevant can increase student engagement, even for those not motivated by extrinsic measures

like grades, I asked Maddie, “Do you find opportunities to connect to student experiences?” She replied:

> I think so. I mean, they’re masters of getting off track. Like, “Oh, I’ve heard that one word before so I’m going to share my life story about that one word.” They’re… what I’ve noticed these past few years, teaching fifth grade, they’re prone- they want to share their lives or, “This one time, this happened.” And I’m like, “Okay, where’s this going? Do I need to cut them off?” I always look at the time, and I reiterate to them, “I only got 80 minutes, and these lessons are jam packed so…”

I asked Maddie if the curriculum provided opportunities to learn about students’ social and cultural identities. In the second interview, she shared that the curriculum did not provide many questions that asked students to connect the content to a similar experience in their lives. In the third interview, however, she stated that students found connections to the content and shared them with the class. Some of her Middle Eastern students, for example, voiced connections to the Palestinian folklore of the curriculum and even interpreted the Arabic included in the course text. Overall, though, Maddie summarized, “Bringing their own culture into the classroom…. I don’t know that there is opportunity for that. Or it’s not something I’ve ever put much emphasis on.”

She also expressed genuine confusion in understanding students who were not as academically motivated as she had been as a student. Maddie explained, “I’ve struggled with the motivation piece because when I was the student, it was enough for me to just want good grades.” In a subsequent interview, Maddie addressed the disconnect again, saying, “But for some kids, like Malik and Garrett, it doesn’t kill them that they got an F. And I’m like, ‘Gosh, if that doesn’t motivate you to want to get your grade up, what will?’” Maddie also felt frustration with students’ “laziness,” and “opposition” to instruction, and expressed feeling sincerely confused “how to handle them.”

Maddie infrequently sought knowledge about her students and admitted that she shared little of her own identity and interests with this cohort. With so many disruptions and behavioral reminders, she believed students did not get to see her personality, which she indicated would engage students in the curriculum activities. She simulated her teaching of the morning cohort, saying, "If you're not going to follow the directions, then this is the teacher that you get right now. Because we just can't follow the simple directions or meet the expectations…." Maddie stated, "It's tough to have to start every school day with this group… but I've just got to get through the morning and then I can get to my afternoon class." Maddie felt that the demands of classroom management in the morning group interfered with her ability to share her personality with students.

Maddie described the challenges she faced in developing authentic relationships with over one third of the students in her morning cohort. For instance, she stated, "Their behavior's not the greatest so I have to be strict on them. And sometimes, it is a recipe for disaster with that group. Just with Malik and Paul… Like I said, they are my tough group." She expressed the tension she faced in this approach, saying:

> They've pushed the envelope. They know how far they've gotten with still no consequence, just reminder after reminder with sometimes pulling them aside or talking about it, and I still feel like it's going in one ear and out the other. And there's no real change from day to day, and their behavior is the same thing over and over again. I'm like, "What is it going to take to make this change?" I've beat myself up about that often, And I try to instill in them, "My job is to help you!" That's my primary title. Help. Students. Learn. So, when they don't take that help, then I feel defeated.

Multiple times in the interview, Maddie described feeling poorly for frequently disciplining certain students and affecting their affinity for school. She noted that some students have always had positive relationships with school. But others, "I can tell they've probably always been the one to be scolded or singled out. And in hindsight, I think, 'Ugh, I probably

shouldn't have said it like that because he's probably heard it enough.' Like, 'You need to stop talking,' or 'Why are you doing this?'" With that group of students, she noted that she struggled to build respectful relationships. She elaborated:

> Okay, I give you respect. I expect respect in return. But sometimes when I get on them, I'm not using the kindest of words. Like, "You need to stop talking!" I wouldn't like them to speak to me like that. So whenever that happens, I try to reflect and think, "Okay, try and find a little bit more grace.

Maddie expressed confusion, exasperation, and regret in her interactions with the students whose behavior challenged her most. She described a reliance on authoritarian methods of classroom management, but also an uncertainty if it was the most effective approach.

During the same interview that she considered the negative effects of her management style, Maddie continued to reflect on her most challenging students. She stated, "Those are the ones, I feel like, 'You need some authority in your life. Maybe you have gotten away with too much. You need that firm hand." Her interview statements revealed complicated and at times contradictory feelings about classroom management and community development.

*Lack of Community Generates Disruptions and Frustration: Mad*die

In her interviews, Maddie mentioned frequently asking students to sit down, which proved understandable. During a single observation, I observed Malik get up from his desk to get water in the back of the classroom every six to eight minutes, totaling over ten drinks of water during the single class, in addition to one bathroom trip. Other students like Garrett and Paul often met him at the water fountain. During one activity transition, I recorded that seven students went to the water fountain at one time, and that Malik and Eduardo got up twice in the single transition. Maddie did not verbally respond to these students nor correct their behavior. She either continued with instruction or prepared herself for the next activity. Once, two students met at the sink while Maddie sat with her workbook under the document camera, and she told them,

“Gentlemen at the sink, please hurry up; we’re right in the middle of a lesson. Unless you have radioactive toxic stuff on your hands, it probably can wait until the end of class. This is like three or four times now.” Notably, when Maddie reprimanded or redirected her students, it was always public, with the entire class as witnesses. I did not observe her quietly or privately encourage students to change their off-task behavior. During interviews, Maddie did not describe a management system for water or bathrooms breaks as Jen did, and observations of her classroom suggest if she had a system, it was not strictly enforced. I also did not notice a system of dismissal. The first observation ended with students independently completing the workbook questions. With only one minute of class remaining, students began packing their things, and Maddie told students, “I have not dismissed you yet!” Paul shouted, “Yeah, you turds!” Maddie shouted, “Paul!” The bell then rang, and students walked out to their next class.

Disruptions in the class consisted of more than the physical behaviors I observed. As Maddie stated in her interview, students frequently whispered to their neighbors during instruction, and Maddie again responded by telling either all students or just the offenders to quiet down. In the first observation, Maddie guided students through a curriculum activity that asked them to generate adjectives that described the fairy, Puck, based on pre-determined images. After presenting the first representation of Puck, she said, “Let me go back for a second. When I show the picture, of course we’re going to want to say something to our neighbors but take those words and put them on the sticky note instead. We can refrain from voicing out our thoughts.” Students wrote their answers quietly. But when she switched to the next picture of Puck, students whispered their thoughts to their neighbors. Maddie told the class, “Ok, we’re saying it more than we’re writing it, and the whole purpose is to write it on the sticky note.

During another activity that same day, Maddie asked three questions before she told the class, “Again I feel like I constantly have to speak over you guys, opening your books up and making extra noises. The classroom should still be quiet.” She paused and said, “This noise level right now where no one is saying anything extra, that’s what I would like to hear.” Andrea answered the workbook question, and Maddie told the whole class, “I’ll wait until you’re ready.” Calvin replied, “I’m ready!” Maddie then said, “No, you don’t tell me you’re ready. You show me you’re ready by looking at the screen or your book with your mouth closed.” Maddie continued with her questions.

Next, she directed the whole class to a workbook question that asked about the relationship between Titania and Oberon. Students started responded in mumbled voices, and Maddie interrupted them, “Oh my gosh, news flash! When you start talking at once, I can’t hear all of you. So, if you want your answer heard, you have to raise your hand.” After listening to students’ responses, she continued with directions for the next activity. She interrupted herself and said, “Gentlemen, I don’t know why we’re talking.” Paul explained, “Oh, Eduardo wasn’t talking.” Maddie replied, “I know; I can tell your voices. I was trying not to call you out specifically by just saying, ‘Gentlemen.’” As she explained this, students continued talking, and Maddie said loudly, “Calvin and Paul. Now I’m calling you out by name.” Garrett got up for water, Jamari watched him, and Paul had his head down on his desk.

Curriculum activities with movement proved equally tense for Maddie and the class. One activity required students to read the text out loud. Maddie read with the class and asked them to stomp their feet to the rhythm of iambic pentameter. When she introduced this task, she told students, “I’m lightly tapping my foot to emphasize the rhyme, please don’t stomp your foot right now. I like to give you a chance to do the right thing, but if we can’t handle the stomping,

we're not going to do it." Students successfully completed the task, but it is worth noting Maddie felt the need to introduce the assignment by reminding students how not to behave and a threat of consequences if they failed to comply.

Another curriculum activity required selected students to hold 8x11 cards representing various characters. As she introduced the task, she told students, "When you hold the cards, you're just going to hold them right in front of you. We're not going to shake them or make noise with them." She then called on four students to stand and hold character cards. Jamari began to shake his card, and Maddie reminded him, "We're not going to shake the cards." Four additional students stood on the side of the classroom and held character cards. Two boys, Eduardo and Faustino, spun their character cards while they waited on the next instruction. Maddie told them, "Gentlemen, I can easily find different students to hold those cards."

During this activity, eight students stood on the side of the room with character cards, the remaining students sat in their desks and reluctantly followed along, and Maddie drew a diagram on the whiteboard. In my field notes, I wrote, "Other students need a task while she's doing this activity. Some students are just walking around the classroom." During this time, Garrett dared Malik to ask me if I played *Pokémon Go* (I overheard Ricky tell Garrett, "Ask Malik; he'll do it!"). Malik left his desk in the front of the classroom, walked to my desk in the back of the classroom, and asked if I played *Pokémon Go*. I responded, "Is this what you're supposed to be doing right now? You should probably head back to your desk." Maddie was unaware of this interaction.

One class observation included a group project in which students worked in teams of five to rehearse and perform a selected scene. Maddie prepared students to work in their groups of five and released them to analyze the scene and begin acting it out. After five minutes, she asked

the class to bring down the noise level, saying, “I know it’s expected with group work to get a little loud but it’s a fine line between loud and too loud. The more time we take here, the less time we have for acting and the videos. This isn’t social time; this is time to analyze your scene.” In my field notes, I wrote, “All groups seem to be working on the workbook activity. She moves around and checks in with groups, translating and defining difficult words, overseeing the movement.” Immediately after I typed this observation, Maddie told the class, “No one should be yelling right now!” Then she visited a group and redirected, “The purpose of this time was to give you guys time to work on the questions in 11.1, not to make your costumes.” She paused the whole class and declared:

> Once again, I’m giving you guys a chance to do groupwork, and I’m wondering about our ability to focus. And the noise level! You guys are sitting right next to each, and you’re talking as loud as I am! Some of you are making costumes. It’s not the time to be doing that. I gave you a finite amount of time for this assignment. I’m confident that if you’d stayed a lot more focused during those ten minutes, we’d be a lot closer to being done. Take two more minutes in an appropriate noise level.

In my field notes, I reflected, “Her voice is calm, but her words are really punitive.” Students continued working on their scenes for a couple more minutes. I noted that students were “silly and most are engaged… they’re mostly doing what they should.” After students prepared their scenes, Maddie gave instructions for their performances, saying,

> We are going to do one read-through as an entire class. Gentlemen, please stop talking. I don’t know who it is but I’m hearing voices. We’re not going to be moving around and acting. We’re just going to read through the entire script, so this is one more chance to practice… If you don’t have a speaking part, this is an opportunity to listen; there’s no opportunity for a side conversation. If I feel like we’re not really paying attention, we’ll start over, but we should get through the whole scene in silence.

Students followed Maddie’s directions and read their lines. After students finished reading, the rest of the class clapped for the actors. Despite her warnings and trepidation, students successfully completed the performance activity.

Group projects proved particularly challenging for Maddie to manage, but all three observations of instruction revealed frequent disruptions and a teacher responding in a critical, frustrated manner. Instead of a caring classroom community, this group expressed hostility and an eagerness for the class period to end.

Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings of the previous chapter. Through data analysis, three themes emerged. The first theme is that entry tasks support access to challenging texts in the Core Knowledge Sequence. Notable findings include that entry tasks can supplement the Core Knowledge Sequence by teaching transferable reading skills, and two, differentiation with entry tasks requires strong professional judgment.

The second theme is that the intentional development of classroom communities supports student engagement in Core Knowledge Sequence activities. Important findings include: first, the utilization of a *two-way* pedagogy makes the Core Knowledge activities relevant to students' interests and needs, and second, firm establishment of classroom community allows students to explore risky ideas of social justice within the bounds of the Core Knowledge curriculum

The final theme is that a lack of "entering the task" activities can cause an overreliance on traditional modes of instruction, including a reliance on authoritarian management, which can distract from student engagement. In the next section, I will discuss each theme and include relevant patterns of data and connections to relevant literature.

Entry Tasks Grant Access to Challenging Core Knowledge Texts

Two of the three participant teachers relied on entry task activities to scaffold student access to the curriculum. Bransford (1999) noted that a learner's current knowledge should be emphasized because of the influence it has on their interpretation of new knowledge. Additionally, a learner's background knowledge will affect their ability to organize new ideas into meaningful patterns of concepts (Bransford, 1999). Jen and Erin recognized the importance of providing activities for students to retrieve their current knowledge so they could connect new curricular information to their existing schema.

Referring to Howe (1984) and Ormrod (1995), Gay (2000) argued that activating background knowledge or "instructional bridging" is even more critical for children of diverse cultural backgrounds stating, "It's the best starting point for the introduction of new knowledge," (p.149). Additionally, it helps students more easily learn new knowledge and retain that information longer (Gay, 2000, p.149). All learners will benefit by connecting new knowledge to their existing schema. But for children of color and children in poverty, Gay claimed, "Accepting the validity of these students'… prior experiences will help to reduce achievement trends," (p.25).

Through their entry tasks, Erin and Jen prepared students for the curriculum lessons, but also validated students' prior knowledge and experiences. Erin prepared students for the curriculum activity by asking them to reflect on their prior experiences with confusing language and tone inference. When the curriculum asked students to interpret Shakespeare's tone, they exhibited confidence in the challenging skill because they practiced it during the entry task. Scaffolding the curriculum through students' worlds helped them grow into experts before they had to apply the comprehension skill to a more challenging text.

Erin's entry task helped build students' confidence in accessing the challenging language of Shakespeare. The entry task question revealed students' previous, authentic ability to interpret unknown words through tone. Interpreting print may be different than oral language, but this entry task illuminated students' existing competence with the difficult academic skill of understanding a character's tone. Deci and Ryan (2000) argued that a learner's perceived competence affects their motivation to continue a task. Further, Gay (2000) summarized Howe (1984) and Ormrod (1995), saying, "Prior success breeds subsequent effort and success," (p.149). By building competence early through a low-risk entry task like a reflection, Erin

stressed her students' previous successes with a challenging task. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), Erin encouraged their intrinsic motivation for the subsequent curriculum activities.

These activities also allowed students to socially construct meaning, within the bounds of their zones of proximal development, in preparation for the curriculum assignments (Vygotsky, 1978). The teachers' entry tasks went beyond activating background knowledge by tapping into the social nature of meaning-making (Vygotsky, 1978). Alexander (2006) explained the features of dialogic teaching, an instructional strategy proven to support low-income students. Specifically, he discussed the importance of *reciprocal* teaching, or "learning based on teachers and learners listening to and learning from one another and considering a broad range of viewpoints," (Gorski, 2017, p.123). Making space for students to share their entry task answers every day supported Erin and Jen's students in constructing new knowledge. Students had multiple opportunities to challenge and learn from their peers' responses and reconsider their own understandings. Lastly, sharing answers allowed students to hear their peers' experiences and funds of knowledge, which in turn strengthened the classroom community (Moll et al., 1992). A small act like sharing responses proved to be an opportunity to integrate culturally responsive pedagogy in that it allowed teachers to tap into "the wide range of cultural knowledge, experiences… and perspectives" represented in the classroom (Gay, 2000, p. 31). Using entry tasks allowed teachers to supplement the direct instruction curriculum with opportunities for social constructivism and multicultural teaching strategies.

Transferable Reading Skills.

The Core Knowledge Sequence founder, E.D. Hirsch, has defended the deliberate exclusion of teaching transferable reading skills. As discussed in Chapter Two, Hirsch (1988) argued that reading comprehension beyond the primary grades requires students to quickly make

connections between text content and their existing schema. According to Hirsch (1988), comprehension strategies like asking questions and visualizing are unnecessary if students have requisite background knowledge: they will naturally ask questions or visualize text content if they understand the vocabulary and ideas of the text. Consequently, Hirsch (1988) argued against teaching transferable reading strategies.

However, two participants chose to supplement the Core Knowledge curriculum by teaching reading analysis skills to assist students' comprehension. One teacher created additional activities to practice the transferable analysis skill of identifying a character's tone by analyzing context clues. She anticipated creating a supplemental assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of his additional instruction. She defended her choice by citing students' need to analyze context clues in junior high and high school. She believed she was preparing students for future academic careers in a way that the required curriculum could not. Similarly, another participant taught the transferable academic skill of defending claims with evidence from the text. Whenever the curriculum discussion questions asked students to provide an answer, she required students to provide supporting evidence. Even when their answers seemed incorrect, she validated their responses so long as they could provide a quote from the curriculum text to support it. This academic skill was not outlined by the Core Knowledge Sequence, and neither was the skill of analyzing tone. These two teachers chose to integrate entry task activities to supplement the curriculum and allow students to practice transferable literary analysis skills.

Deliberately supplementing the curriculum with skills instruction is significant because of the inherent assertion that the curriculum was insufficient for the academic needs of these students. Erin subscribed to an equity pedagogy, a facet of social justice pedagogy. She believed that direct instruction of certain academic skills was equitable because it made the implicit

strategies used by higher performing students explicit to those who struggled. In other words, higher performing students organically utilized analytic skills like determining tone or defending claims with textual evidence. But lower-performing students needed to be explicitly taught how to use literary analysis skills, and they needed opportunities to practice those skills. The Core Knowledge curriculum does not support that. Rather than teach the curriculum exclusively, Erin and Jen found it more equitable to intervene and teach comprehension and analytical skills. Supplementing the curriculum with entry tasks created opportunities for these teachers to engage in social justice pedagogy.

Professional Judgement

The decision to deviate from the mandated Core Knowledge Sequence required teachers to examine their personal pedagogy and make adjustments when necessary. One teacher deliberately integrated more direct instruction models because she recognized how she had benefitted from models during her teacher preparation program. Sometimes the curriculum asked students to write responses to events in the text. To support students, this teacher often modeled how to write such a response, even going so far to write the specific steps on the board so struggling students precisely knew their next step. She believed struggling students could be overwhelmed by the curriculum task, so she chose to support their learning through additional models and explicitly named next steps. The teacher admitted her low performing students may not have needed those supports. But her commitment to an equity pedagogy inspired her to include such scaffolds in every lesson.

This teacher was transparent about receiving her teacher preparation at a university that strongly proclaimed its commitment to social justice pedagogy. This affected her perception of how her students coming from diverse cultural backgrounds would engage with the Core

Knowledge Sequence. Because she believed students of color experienced marginalization from the required curriculum, she sought opportunities to integrate their experiences, both to support their learning and promote feelings of inclusion. Gay (2000) argued educators should actively "incorporate content about ethnic and cultural diversity in regular school subjects… on a routine basis," (p.142). However, the Core Knowledge Sequence is frequently criticized as Eurocentric and accused of promoting the dominant cultural hegemony (Leistyna, 1999). With little control over the course content, Erin attempted to integrate students' cultures through entry tasks that provided opportunities for students to share their experiences. Erin evaluated the requirements of the curriculum, compared them to the needs of her students, and decided to deviate from the curriculum in order to support students' learning and sociocultural needs.

Ironically, some research indicates first-year teachers may appreciate firm curricula for the structure and guidance it can provide. Johnson (2004) quoted a teacher in her study who, in reference to a scripted curriculum, said, "Right now, being a first-year teacher, it's wonderful for me to have all these things in place for me," (p.132). Erin was a newer teacher and yet she chose to create curricular additions, the entry task worksheets, to support her students' learning needs. She trusted her professional judgment to make the curricular supplements that would best engage her students with a challenging required curriculum.

The teacher who included PowerPoints with discussion questions to supplement the curriculum indicated that her grade level team and the teachers in the other intermediate school did not use supplemental materials as she did. She reported her belief that her students of diverse cultural backgrounds did not automatically connect with the curriculum material. Instead, they needed scaffolds to help them understand the Shakespeare text. She provided these connections despite district pressure to keep pace with other fifth grade teachers. Each of these teachers made

professional judgements to supplement the curriculum, even when the district recommended strict pacing guidelines.

Classroom Community Supports Engagement

This theme summarized research findings that a supportive social climate enhanced student participation and engagement with curriculum activities from the Core Knowledge Sequence. Entry tasks scaffolded students' understanding of the curriculum, drawing on the *challenge* aspect of differentiated instruction. But classroom community addressed a second facet of differentiated instruction: *engagement*. Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbell (2008) argued that some children of diverse cultural backgrounds develop intrinsic motivation through interpersonal relationships, with teachers and students. During some observations, students in this study demonstrated a willingness to engage with the curriculum because the activities assigned by their teacher (and not the curriculum) required participation, such as small group discussions and partner talks. At other times, students undertook curriculum activities because their teacher knew about their identities, interests, and personalities, and he or she integrated those into regular instruction. Sometimes teachers expressed their own vulnerability, and one teacher extended her presence to the cafeteria and playground. Each of these teacher choices increased student trust in their instructor because the acts demonstrated teachers' humanity and care for students. The strategies to increase student engagement will be discussed below.

Bransford (1998) argued a positive social climate strengthens learning. Two of the three participant teachers intentionally developed caring classroom environments and helped students feel part of a "club" of learners, or "a community of influential people," (Smith, 1998, p.11). Smith (1998) argued one's identification with a club creates opportunities for learning because it allows the individual to imagine who they may become, such as historian or scientist. In this

project, the classrooms served as clubs, and students could view themselves as potential experts of Shakespeare.

Developing a welcoming classroom community is even more important for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In their framework for culturally responsive teaching, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) named "Establishing Inclusion" as the first pillar to meet the learning needs of children of diverse cultural backgrounds. They define this pillar as, "Creating a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another," (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p.18).

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) elaborated on the pillar of Inclusion by claiming students must feel comfortable to feel connected to the classroom community. Erin's actions indicated that she valued student comfort more than the activities required by the Core Knowledge Sequence. Her transparency demonstrated to students her respect for their feelings and comfort, and it revealed her own shortcomings as an instructor. Additionally, Erin's vulnerability potentially increased students' connectedness to their teacher because it showed them her willingness to forgo the curriculum for the safety and comfort of his students. Howard's 2001 study of teachers of racially and ethnically diverse children found that students perceived teachers as caring expressly when they revealed their own vulnerability. Though I did not collect student survey data, Howard's 2001 research suggested the culturally diverse students in Erin's class would have considered her a caring teacher. Erin's choices showed that learning involves risk-taking, but that she and other students would support one another without ridicule or judgment. Sustaining a respectful environment directly contributed to the development of the classroom community, which supported student engagement by lessening the risk of participation and encouraging active learning.

Two-Way Pedagogy

A *two-way pedagogy* requires teachers to learn about students' identities, backgrounds, and cultures. Teachers become students of their students, and use the information garnered to create relevant curriculum and personalized instruction. The studies of differentiated instruction in Chapter Two revealed the challenges teachers faced in implementing a two-way pedagogy when they lacked curricular autonomy. The teachers in this study faced even greater restrictions because of the firm nature of the Core Knowledge Sequence. However, two of the three teachers managed to integrate aspects of students' identities and interests despite the strict curriculum. The modifications were minor and did not affect the validity of the curriculum, yet the changes signaled to students the teachers' knowledge of their backgrounds. Minor inclusions of a student's family, culture, or hobby strengthened the classroom community, which Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) argued increases student engagement.

Peart and Campbell (1999) argued that effective teachers are caring teachers who know their students and develop relationships to enhance the learning process. In addition to knowing students' hobbies, one teacher expressed knowledge of her students' families and backgrounds. She often adapted student participation in curriculum activities based on students' current home situations. Knowledge of her students' lives allowed this teacher to adapt her instruction to support her students' social, emotional, and cultural needs.

Erin designed entry tasks to scaffold student understanding of the curricular tasks, but the questions revealed aspects of students' identities and cultures. Through the entry tasks, Erin learned students' activities, family structures, home language patterns, religious affiliations and families' perspectives on current events and popular culture topics. Two-way pedagogy facilitated Erin's connections to students' lives, and according to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg

(1995), even these simple references can increase investment in the classroom community for children of diverse cultural backgrounds. While the Core Knowledge Sequence, as adopted in the district of this study, cannot offer opportunities for authentic differentiated instruction, two teachers used the concept of a two-way pedagogy to engage their culturally diverse learners.

Transformative Multiculturalism

In Chapter Two, I described *transformative multiculturalism* as a pedagogical approach that challenges students to question the privileging of certain epistemologies and the representation of dominant knowledge in the curriculum (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004; Banks, 2009a). Transformative multiculturalism calls for multiple perspectives and experiences to challenge the dominant cultural hegemony of knowledge. In direct contrast, the Core Knowledge Sequence explicitly works to transmit a shared body of knowledge to promote cultural literacy. Because of this professed mission, the Core Knowledge curriculum did not include opportunities for transformative multiculturalism in its activities. However, the selection of curricular content encouraged one teacher to diverge from the curriculum to question the inequalities in representation. Erin's critical questioning of Renaissance gender roles was based in students' interest in the topic and their readiness as fifth graders to challenge curricular assumptions. This intersection of transformative multiculturalism and differentiated instruction proved possible because of the caring and safe classroom community this teacher had created.

Erin described frequently pausing curriculum discussions to ask if a given scene was fair or which character had the most power. This parallels the findings of Labadie, Mosely Wetzel, and Rogers's 2012 study that found culturally responsive teaching enacted through practices of critical literacy, such as critical questioning and counter-storytelling, each aspects of critical theory (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). With the Core Knowledge unit on Renaissance painters, Erin

paused the curriculum to guide student inquiry in the underrepresentation of female painters during that time period as well as the curriculum. They engaged in critical questioning by asking why the curriculum failed to provide an explanation on the lack of gender representation, such as the limited opportunities for women in society. Erin used the experience as an opportunity for counter-storytelling by reshaping the content to present the marginalized group's perspective.

By itself, the Core Knowledge Sequence does not support transformative multicultural education. It elects to privilege certain bodies of knowledge over others, teaching only "the network of information all competent readers possess," (Hirsch, 1988, p. 2). But skilled teachers with strong professional judgment can seek opportunities to practice critical multiculturalism through critical questioning and counter-storytelling. But these discussions can be uncomfortable for students for minoritized students and students who identify with the dominant culture. Investing in one's classroom community through vulnerability, risk-taking, caring, and genuine interest in students' lives can create an environment in which the challenging but rewarding conversations are possible, even within the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Traditional Models

Without scaffolds to access the curriculum content and activities that activated background knowledge, teachers may prioritize curriculum validity and strictly adhered to the instructional delivery recommended by the teacher guide. The term, "traditional instruction," as used in this dissertation includes but is not limited to: the reliance on the IRE discussion format (Cazden, 1988), a procedural rather than conceptual approach to instruction, and a commitment to curricular fidelity.

The depiction and label of traditional instruction should not create a binary concept of instruction: traditional and innovative. Delivering instruction, even with a scripted curriculum, is

more nuanced. It should instead be thought of as a continuum in which some teachers may fall more toward traditional, while others more land at the innovative end, and others still fall somewhere in the middle. Innovative instruction differs from the concept of traditional in that it involves more risk taking and confidence in one's decision to diverge from the mandated lessons. Whereas traditional discussions rely heavily on the IRE format, innovative instruction allows and encourages more student-to-student talk, without the insertion of a teacher's comments. It also leans toward a conceptual approach to instruction, even if construction of knowledge diverges from the lessons of the curriculum. Student understanding is prioritized over the fidelity of the curriculum.

In this study, one teacher preferred innovative instruction: she supported student-to-student talk, and she felt confident in her decision to eliminate curricular activities she deemed unnecessary. The activities in each lesson built upon each other to scaffold understanding, but this teacher used activities she created in order to build access to the curriculum. Another teacher relied heavily on traditional instruction, and that will be discussed below in more detail. But between these two points was the third participant, Jen. She valued the assigned curriculum, and though she supplemented its activities, she never eliminated lessons or condensed activities. Her discussions were neither IRE format nor student-to-student talk. When she posed the curriculum's discussion questions, she infrequently evaluated student responses; she only asked for textual evidence. But she did not encourage student-to-student talk. She asked the questions and then solicited four to five responses, responses that did not build upon each other but appeared more as a list of student answers. This teacher was concerned with a conceptual approach to teaching; she included supplemental activities to support student understanding. But the sequencing of instruction was also very procedural in that she did value completing each

curricular task. So, while it is tempting to label the acts of instruction as traditional or innovative, the reality is much more nuanced than that. Teachers are not simply this or that; they lean to certain categories of teaching, and it is possible those positions on the continuum change by learning context and aspects of the Language Arts discipline.

At the far end of the continuum, one teacher leaned heavily toward traditional instruction. Gay (2000) advocated adopting a culturally relevant pedagogical paradigm because "culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, and these in turn affect… how we learn," (p.9). However, perceived pressure to deliver the curriculum verbatim and a very real pressure to stay on curricular pace kept Maddie from modifying the curriculum to even include entry tasks. As a result, her students of diverse cultural backgrounds did not have opportunities to connect their existing knowledge to the new knowledge of the curriculum. Maddie frequently interpreted the curriculum questions and course content for students, and often provided the suggested answers as well. Students rarely had an opportunity to engage with the curriculum, and they certainly did not have moments to demonstrate how their cultures affected their thoughts, beliefs, and learning.

Maddie did not vary her instruction to integrate students' background knowledge. Nor did she "build bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences," (Gay 2000, p. 29). Instead, she delivered the arguably Eurocentric curriculum in a traditional fashion without designing opportunities to integrate students' cultures, and thus their existing knowledge and expertise.

Authoritarian Management and Disengagement

A well-established classroom community with norms of respect and caring supported student understanding of the curriculum and created opportunities for meaningful discussions of

social justice issues and roles in society. But the absence of caring, vulnerability, and interpersonal relationships may stunt engagement with the curriculum and prompt frustration. The next section discusses the consequences of failing to develop a supportive community. The final finding of this study was that in absence of a caring classroom community, management can become authoritarian, which can directly affect involvement in the curriculum activities.

Maddie's class had divisions: the learners and the disrupters, yet even the learners seemed indifferent to their teacher's admiration. The disrupters engaged in practices of "not-learning," or "the will to refuse knowledge," (Kohl, 1994). Kohl (1994) described the effects of not-learning, saying, "It tends to strengthen the will, clarify one's definition of self, reinforce self-discipline, and provide inner satisfaction," (p.6). The students who stole most of Maddie's attention regularly engaged in not-learning by interrupting, talking with their friends, getting frequent drinks of water, playing with toys, and telling jokes across the classroom. This study did not collect student survey data, but the students' repeated attempts at not-learning likely provided some satisfaction in that the same students engaged in the same interruptions during each of my observations.

Unfortunately, according to Kohl (1994), "Not learning can get one in trouble when it results in defiance," which is how Maddie perceived each transgression (p.6). But getting into trouble through interruptions can have affordances for the student. D'Amato's 1988 study of Hawaiian students found that in mainstream classrooms, the teacher controlled the learning environment; in culturally diverse classrooms, students controlled the environment and inhibited learning through disruptions and challenges to the teacher's authority. Maddie's students' disruptions never ceased, causing Maddie to become visibly upset. Students controlled the learning environment by talking back, yet Maddie engaged their backtalk instead of redirecting

or providing an appropriate punishment. Recall that when she told the "gentlemen" to stop talking, Paul clarified, "Eduardo wasn't talking." Instead of dismissing the comment, Maddie engaged and responded, "I know; I can tell your voices. I was trying not to call you out specifically by just saying, 'Gentlemen.' Calvin and Paul. Now I'm calling you out by name." This exchange exemplified student control of the learning environment because Paul's ability to anger the teacher interrupted the curriculum activity for every other student, and it strengthened the already adversarial relationship between her and Paul. Students did not have the opportunity to engage in the curriculum material because of these outbursts, nor could they develop a classroom community because the rift essentially forced students to choose sides between the not-learner Paul and the authority figure they already distrusted. Tomlinson (1999) argued that in positive learning environments, discipline is covert not overt, and that students only gain attention and power in positive ways. The argument between Paul and Maddie occurred in view of the entire class and gave him extremely negative attention, but it demonstrated his power over the teacher's emotions and her ability to teach the assigned lesson. Divisions in student-teacher relationships, as well as a significant group of not-learners inhibited the possibility of a caring, vulnerable classroom environment.

This particular teacher's actions toward her racially and ethnically diverse students provided enough justification for their reluctance in developing a community. But research by Howard (2010) and Gay (2000) complicate Maddie's individual behaviors because she was also a member of a group, white people, and she was tasked with teaching knowledge from the dominant culture, a Shakespeare play. Their research demonstrates that teachers who force the dominant culture on culturally diverse children can decrease student motivation by invalidating students' experiences and backgrounds. It can also challenge students' learning paradigms,

creating feelings of humiliation and marginalization. The students in Erin's and Jen's classes were nearly as culturally diverse as those in Maddie's class. But Jen and Erin reduced students' susceptibility to the potential cultural disconnect and the negative feelings by demonstrating caring, expressing vulnerability, and adhering to the established norms of their classrooms.

Many educators using a scripted curriculum may not be as visibly upset as the teacher of this study. However, management issues can impede the delivery of any curriculum, including a scripted curriculum. Whenever divisions are made between the learners and the disrupters, students must choose which role to enact in the classroom. At times, the social rewards of not-learning may be stronger than the academic rewards of participation. This makes it imperative for a teacher to develop a community of learners who care for one another and express vulnerability. In such a classroom, the teacher's instruction does not require students to choose their membership role. Students can contribute to discussions when comfortable or refrain in certain contexts and participate only in partner talks. Roles are fluid, and classroom management facilitates learning rather than impeding the delivery of lessons. Teachers, using any curriculum, should remain cognizant of the impact of their management on students' acquisition of knowledge.

Pattern Matching

This study contributed to the current body of knowledge in the fields of differentiated instruction in reading, multicultural education in reading, and implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence, as discussed in the literature review. The literature review revealed several facets of teaching that support differentiated instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds. Those included: making curricular materials relevant to students' lives and background knowledge (Adkins, 2012; Toppel, 2012; Delain, Pearson, & Anderson, 1985);

engaging in practices of critical literacy, such as counter-storytelling and critical questioning (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004); offering curriculum materials at the appropriate level of challenge for each student (Tomlinson, 1999); and providing students choice over the content, product, and process during reading instruction (Tomlinson, 1999). The literature review also raised questions about the role of teacher's professional judgment when differentiating instruction, specifically when using the SEM-R model (Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011; Reis & Boeve, 2009; Reis, McCoach, Coyne, Schreiber, Eckert, & Gubbins, 2007).

Regarding teachers who utilized the Core Knowledge Sequence, the literature review demonstrated that teachers who flexibly implemented the curriculum based on their professional judgment experienced the greatest success in challenging and engaging their students of varying academic stages of readiness and cultural backgrounds (Johnson et al., 2001; Brown, 2017). In contrast, teachers who firmly adhered to the curriculum guidelines expressed difficulty engaging culturally diverse students, specifically migrant students (See et al., 2017). Teachers in that study also admitted they lacked thorough knowledge of the curriculum content (See et al., 2017).

The following section will draw comparisons between the findings of this study and the predominant themes of studies reviewed in Chapter Two.

Themes Specific to CKS: Flexible Implementation and Professional Judgement

The review of literature specific to studies researching implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence yielded two predominant themes. First, some schools flexibly integrated the curriculum by adopting portions of the units (Brown, 2017; Johnson et al., 2001; Smith, 2001). When adopting the CKS curriculum, teachers were afforded autonomy over their decisions and utilized their professional judgement to determine which units best taught the

content and skills they deemed most necessary. The second theme that emerged was teachers' frustration with firm implementation of the curriculum (See et al., 2017).

First, the literature noted that schools which loosely integrated the curriculum afforded teachers autonomy in determining which units of study to implement (Brown, 2017; Johnson et al., 2001; Smith, 2001). As noted above, teachers in the 2001 Johnson et al. study selected units based on their own interests, students' ethnic backgrounds, and even sheer whim. The teachers in Brown's 2017 study described the curriculum as a "skeleton" to for unit planning. They selected a theme, content, and objectives, but adjusting and supplementing learning experiences when necessary (p.165).

In contrast, schools in the present study expected every fifth-grade class in the district to be within three lessons of each other. The teachers met with the district curriculum directors in the beginning of the school year and mapped out the curriculum scope and sequence. When one teacher outpaced the other five in the district, she confessed, "I actually started this unit a day early just because we prolonged starting this unit to let Mountain View catch up. For whatever reason, they just seem to go at a slower pace." This teacher expressed confusion at the varied paces of instruction within the district. She did not entertain the option of modifying the curriculum given the district's requirement of strict implementation. However, three of the studies in the literature review afforded opportunities for teachers to utilize their professional judgement, which arguably ranged in degree of professionalism, to determine curricular content. In this effect, the present study directly contrasted the results of three studies in the literature review.

However, the literature review of studies of literacy instruction noted interesting parallels. Valencia et. al (2006) found that teachers with greater pedagogical content knowledge

and more confidence adapted lessons from the core curricula. Similarly, the two teachers in this dissertation study who modified the curricular activities expressed more confidence in their knowledge of students' literacy needs. They recognized a gap between students' existing knowledge and the curricular materials. They trusted their evaluation of the learning discrepancy. Then they integrated scaffolds to support student learning. Conversely, the third participant demonstrated a lack of understanding of her students' abilities. She admitted she trusted the curriculum to deliver literacy lessons at the appropriate challenge level even if students lacked the background knowledge. Rather than trusting her own professional judgment, she deferred to the curriculum.

Themes Specific to Studies of the CKS: Firm Implementation

Teachers in See et al.'s 2017 study reported frustration with their school's strict adoption of the CKS curriculum. First, they described the lessons as "very structured," (See et al., 2017, p.377). Next, they noted the lack of differentiation for varying levels of academic readiness and the absence of modifications for children of culturally diverse backgrounds. Specifically, the teachers struggled to engage the high population of Romanian immigrants and highly capable students (See et al., p. 386). Many participants described the curriculum material as uninteresting.

Participants in this dissertation study did not evaluate the allure of the curriculum, but they did identify a disconnect with the content and students' lives and interests. One teacher expressly delivered the curricular activities and bemoaned students' lack of engagement. Two participants worked within the district guidelines of curricular adherence yet modified their instructional activities. These teachers did not express irritation with the strict requirements of the curriculum. However, their supplementary activities demonstrated a recognition of the

absence of differentiation for culturally diverse learners and those ranging in academic readiness, paralleling the participants in the See et al. study (2017).

In contrast, the third participant in the present study exhibited concerns that paralleled the findings of See et al., 2017. The students that challenged her most, in observational and interview data, were black and brown students, almost all male. She expressed exasperation in areas of participation, motivation, completion of assignments, and relationship development. Infrequently, she cited the strict nature of the curriculum as a cause of her dissatisfaction with their performance. More often, she attributed their minimal engagement as personal characteristics, which she simply could not understand. This teacher demonstrated similarities to the teachers in See et al. (2017) and their inability to engage culturally diverse students, but she did not acknowledge the inherent challenge of a Eurocentric curriculum.

The previous section compared the findings of this dissertation study to the results of studies described in the literature review, noting points of similarities and areas of divergence. The following section will discuss the significance of this study in its contributions to the fields of literature in differentiated instruction, multicultural education, and implementation of the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Transformative Multiculturalism

The review of literature in the field of multicultural education revealed the prevalence of transformative multicultural educational practices as avenues for challenging and engaging children of diverse cultural backgrounds. These methods included: adopting an equity pedagogy, engaging students in critical questioning of literature, and guiding students through counter-storytelling (Banks, 2009b; Labadie et al., 2012; Wies Long & Gove, 2004). Two of the three teachers in the present study adapted their instructional methods to facilitate knowledge

construction for their students of diverse cultural backgrounds (Banks, 2009b). These two participants utilized partner talks, small group discussions, open-ended questions, and suspended evaluation. Each of these practices reduced the teachers' position of the authority of knowledge and indicated their support of students' existing funds of knowledge (Tomlinson, 1999; Moll). They did this by intentionally developing a community of learners and an atmosphere of social constructivism (Moll et al., 1992).

During one observation, a student left his desk to create a character map in the middle of the teacher's instructional delivery. The teacher did not reprimand him for the management disruption and instead let the student finish diagramming character relations while he continued with the curriculum's discussion questions. When the student concluded, the participant teacher asked him to explain the character map to the entire class. This incident demonstrated the importance the teacher placed on student knowledge, expressly conveying to students their authority over content knowledge and the process of constructing knowledge.

In contrast, one participant relied on the initiation, response, evaluation (IRE) method of discussion (Cazden, 1988). Unlike the findings of Labadie et al., 2012; Wies Long & Gove, 2004, she did not engage in critical questioning or counter-storytelling. When she evaluated students' responses, she validated correct responses and dismissed alternative interpretations. In doing this, she promoted a single body of knowledge, the knowledge authenticated by the curriculum, which is a prominent criticism of Hirsch and his Core Knowledge Sequence (Freire, 1970). This cemented the control she and the curriculum had over knowledge. It also signaled to students the necessity of absorbing the knowledge of the dominant culture.

One of the three teachers engaged in practices of transformative multicultural education by asking students to question gender representation in the curriculum. Additionally, she

repeatedly asked students which of the texts' characters possessed power, encouraging students to consider the experiences of those without power and their vulnerability in each scene. This participant showed students how critical questioning could be a tool to analyze power in their daily lives. Such practices were consistent with Banks' 2009 description of multicultural education, specifically the tenets equity pedagogy and prejudice reduction, as well as Sleeter and Bernal's 2004 description of critical questioning. This participant's tactics also paralleled the practices observed by Labadie et al. (2012) and Wies Long and Gove (2004) in which the participant teachers integrated teacher activities to support the development of students' critical literacy abilities.

Another teacher in the present study asked students to analyze power relationships, as described in the previous section. However, she did not transfer the strategy of critical questioning to a tool for use in their daily lives. This limited her participation in transformative multiculturalism because she failed to engage her students in action and social change, as recommended by Hackman (2005). The third participant was not observed engaging in such instructional practices, nor did she describe attempting them.

Student Choice. The literature review demonstrated the theme of teachers offering students choice over the content, product, process, or environment of instruction (Reis et al., 2011; Reis & Boeve, 2009; Reis et al., 2007) This study did not observe any instances of student choice, nor did interviews describe opportunities for student choice. The curriculum decided the content of instruction. The instructional process was dictated by the curriculum materials. One teacher intended to supplement the curriculum with an additional assessment project, but she expected all students to complete the same test; they did not have choice over the product. Lastly, observations did not reveal the instructional environment being used flexibly based on

students' needs or interests. The Core Knowledge Sequence, as implemented in this study, did not allow for student choice.

***Appropriate Challenge Levels*.** Another theme that emerged from the literature review was the use of curricular content and the teaching of academic skills at the appropriate challenge level of each student. [Little et. al, 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis & Boeve, 2009; Pierce et al., 2007]. The SEM-R studies intentionally tailored curricular content to appropriately challenge students. Teachers in the present study did not have autonomy over the curriculum and subsequently varied in their approaches to teaching at students' challenge levels. Maddie believed the curriculum was challenging to students, and she did not need to differentiate instruction to support their access to its content.

The SEM-R studies allowed students to choose their method of engagement with the text (Little et al., 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007). Student choice gave learners the opportunity to engage in comprehension activities at their specific challenge levels. Two teachers in this study. Erin and Jen did not perceive they had the authority to modify curricular content or activities, however they supplemented the curriculum to reach students' readiness level. For instance, one participant scaffolded categorizing activities of the curriculum with an activity that classified various foods, as described in Chapter Four. Additionally, she reinforced students' comprehension by creating entry tasks that compared and contrasted characters' qualities. Unlike the SEM-R studies, students could not choose their method of engagement with the text. However, one teacher adapted the curriculum to meet students at their present challenge level.

Another teacher perceived the curriculum as outside students' zones of proximal development and created daily worksheets to supplement the curriculum (Vygotsky, 1978). Her

activities bridged the gap of the curriculum and students' readiness for instruction, thereby adapted the curriculum so it could be delivered at the appropriate challenge level for his students.

Pierce et al. (2007) reported teachers differentiating reading instruction based on assessment data and subsequently using that information to instruct children in sight words, picture vocabulary, or word efficiency. From previous instruction and assessment data, one teacher in this study determined students needed support in identifying tone based on context clues. District guidelines prohibited her from significantly altering the curriculum. Yet her worksheets asked students to consider the concept of character tone in their daily lives, such as relatives or tv shows. These activities met students at their challenge level with a specific literary device, tone. This teacher worked within the confines of the Core Knowledge Sequence to differentiate instruction and make the challenge of the curriculum appropriate for students' needs.

Implications

The implications of this study support the potential of supplementing the Core Knowledge Sequence with instructional strategies recommended by the fields of literature in differentiated instruction and multicultural education, even when the Core Knowledge Sequence is strictly implemented. Existing literature in differentiated instruction and multicultural education have outlined instructional approaches that are essentially in direct conflict with the principles of the Core Knowledge Sequence. This study provided qualitative evidence that teachers can incorporate aspects of differentiated instruction, to an extent, and multicultural education strategies despite expectations of firm adherence to the Core Knowledge Sequence lessons. This study found the tension between approaches was mitigated when teachers created supplemental entry tasks and maintained a caring, supportive classroom community.

Three integral conceptual frameworks created the theoretical framework of this study, specifically: the pedagogical approach of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 1999; Little et al., 2014; Reis et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2007), the pedagogical philosophies exemplified by multicultural education (Banks, 2009; Banks, 2009; Gay, 2000), and implementation of Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence.

Implications for the Core Knowledge Sequence

Hirsch (1988) argued locally developed curricula were "sparse, repetitious, and fragmented," (p.117). This study demonstrated how teachers could localize a prescribed curriculum by situating it in the experiences of their students without subjecting the curriculum to incoherence or repetition.

Hirsch also argued that developing students' cultural literacy is in fact social justice education because it allows students of color and students in poverty to access the body of

knowledge largely reserved for more socioeconomically advantaged students (Hirsch, 1988). However, Hirsch's critics accused him of perpetuating cultural imperialism by denying students of color opportunities to engage with texts representative of their experiences and expand the canon of literature (Freire, 1970).

The results of this study have shown that the Core Knowledge Sequence will typically sustain the dominant cultural hegemony of curricular content and instructional delivery. One teacher in this study expressly believed that was the intended purpose of the Core Knowledge Sequence. However, teachers who intentionally supplement the curricular sequence with culturally relevant content and learning experiences can potentially balance the tension of culturally responsive teaching and teaching to develop cultural literacy. Freire (1970) contended that a student's social and historical identity will determine their interpretation of knowledge. This study showed that teachers can design learning experiences based in students' backgrounds and identities to support their connection to knowledge privileged by the dominant culture.

This study also affirmed Leistyna's 1999 assertion that this type of curriculum marginalizes students' voices and experiences for the sake of attaining cultural literacy. Even when teachers worked to create culturally responsive learning experiences, the curriculum still dictated they teach knowledge privileged by the dominant culture, in the case the works of William Shakespeare.

Hirsch (2006) contended that reading comprehension requires students to make connections between their existing knowledge and domain-specific knowledge of the curriculum. The results of this study supported that claim, but with a caveat: students from minoritized cultures often require deliberate instructional scaffolds to make such connections in knowledge. Exposed to simply the existing curriculum, students in one subject's class struggled to

understand the Shakespeare text, resulting in overall disengagement. That teacher narrowly delivered the Core Knowledge lessons without entry task activities to bridge the gap between students' existing knowledge and the domain-specific knowledge necessary to engage in the assigned literary analysis. In contrast, two teachers of this study connected the curriculum to students' sociocultural schemas through entry task activities. The results of this study implied that minoritized students may benefit from schematic scaffolds to make the Core Knowledge Sequence relevant to their cultural knowledge and experiences. Teachers utilizing this curriculum should intentionally supplement the lessons' activities to increase curricular relevance. Without such scaffolds, teachers may experience student disengagement if they strictly adhere to the Core Knowledge Curriculum.

Implications for Multicultural Education

The field of multicultural education has advocated for personalizing learning for students of diverse cultural backgrounds and engaging in social constructivist practices that allow for multiple, often verbal methods of participation (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2010). Teachers have met these suggestions by integrating culturally responsive curricular content, such as texts that represent students' background experiences, or by adapting instructional methods to encourage multiple avenues of participation (Howard, 2010; Gay, 2000; Au & Kawakami, 1985; Au, 1980). Additionally, multicultural education studies revealed methods for engaging students in transformative multiculturalism. Studies examined in the literature review found teachers integrating such recommendations, but with significant autonomy. This study demonstrated that teachers can integrate the recommendations of multicultural education even when confined to an arguably Eurocentric curriculum, in its content and leaning activities. Teachers used multicultural teaching recommendations by engaging in communal discussions (Au, 1980),

connecting the curricular content to students' lives (Adkins, 2012), and using a caring, vulnerable classroom community to support engagement, regardless of curricular content (Howard, 2010). Teachers in this study also demonstrated the ability to undertake recommendations of transformative multiculturalism, such as critical questioning, a practice not specifically recommended by the Core Knowledge Curriculum (Labadie et al., 2012; Wies Long & Gove, 2012). This study also showed that in absence of these strategies, students learning through the Core Knowledge Sequence may disengage and create management issues for teachers, paralleling the findings of See et. al (2017), Au and Kawakami (1985), and Au 1980. The present study contributed to the literature in the field of multicultural education by describing the potential to use recommended strategies even when strictly utilizing a core reading curriculum.

This study also confirmed the possibility of engaging in practices of transformative multiculturalism even when tasked with delivering a curriculum described as "Eurocentric," (Leistyna, 1999). Using supplemental entry task activities allowed one participant to engage his students in critical questioning about power and privilege and to support students' in critical-questioning, practices associated with transformative multiculturalism. This study found that the Core Knowledge Curriculum offered minimal, if any, opportunities for transformative multiculturalism. But a mindful instructor with a stated commitment to social justice education inserted learning experiences to expand students' critical consciousnesses (Freire, 1970).

Implications for Differentiated Instruction

Regarding the field of differentiated instruction, this study has varied implications. This study first showed that it is possible to integrate some of the theoretical concepts of differentiated instruction outlined by Tomlinson (1999) while using a firm core reading program. However,

utilizing these strategies relied on a teacher's willingness to insert learning experiences outside those recommended by the curriculum. Literature in differentiated instruction has advocated a re-conceptualization of demonstrations of knowledge. Literature in this field has also recommended validating ways of knowing outside those privileged by traditional curricula (Tomlinson, 1999). Additionally, researchers of differentiated instruction have encouraged teachers to understand the unique backgrounds and identities of their students, and subsequently construct learning experiences that meet their students' distinct instructional needs.

One participant who delivered the curriculum exactly as prescribed did not recognize alternative forms of intelligence or strengths outside those privileged by the curriculum. In contrast, two participants created opportunities for students to share their knowledge beyond the specific content of the answers provided in the teacher's guide and in ways not specified by the curriculum. Those two teachers integrated students' knowledge through entry task activities. They also provided avenues for students to share their knowledge, such as brief partner talks, sustained peer discussions, representations on the classroom whiteboard. Observations of their instruction suggested the potential to replicate the suggestions Tomlinson (1999) provided of differentiated instruction even within the parameters of the Core Knowledge Sequence.

However, other facets of Tomlinson's 1999 description of differentiated instruction are elusive when using the Core Knowledge Sequence. For instance, she discussed the changing roles of the teacher and learner. She described the students assuming ownership over their learning while the teacher characterized themselves as growing in their own knowledge. Such roles and admissions of lack of knowledge were not possible when the teacher used a scripted curriculum that dictated discussion questions and acceptable answers. Students observed in this

study were very much under the direction of their teacher and teachers' guide. This structure greatly reduced opportunities for student ownership in learning.

Other recommendations of Tomlinson (1999) were not as definitive. For example, Tomlinson described the influence of student background and identity on cognition, stating, "Our experiences [and] culture" affect learning and understanding (p.10). Two of the teachers in this study acknowledged a disconnect between students' experiences and the required curriculum. They bridged this gap through entry task activities that supported access to the curriculum content by drawing on students' existing knowledge and experiences, as described in Chapter Four. By supplementing the curriculum with scaffolding activities, participants in this study demonstrated the potential to integrate aspects of differentiated instruction even when expected to strictly deliver the Core Knowledge Sequence.

The following section will introduce recommendations based on the results of this study. Recommendations will be divided into pedagogical suggestions for educational practitioners and future areas of inquiry for educational researchers.

Recommendations

Practice

This dissertation study asked what strategies teachers used to differentiate instruction for culturally diverse students when using the arguably Eurocentric literacy curriculum, the Core Knowledge Sequence. Findings reported in Chapter Four generated the following recommendations for pedagogical practice: first, teachers should integrate entry task learning experiences to help students access complex texts and assignments, and second, teachers should create a caring classroom community that will allow students to take risks when examining complicated texts.

These recommendations are unique within the field of literature on the Core Knowledge Sequence. Literature on this curriculum either investigates teacher efficacy during strict adoption of the curriculum or teachers' unit selection strategies when loosely implementing the curriculum (Brown, 2017; Johnson et. al, 2001; See et al., 2017). Supplementing the curriculum with entry tasks or discussion of the requisite social conditions for strict implementation is largely absent from the literature on the Core Knowledge Sequence. However, this study found two of the three teachers integrated instructional strategies recommended by the fields of multicultural education and differentiated instruction when using the Core Knowledge Sequence.

The recommendations discussed below are intended for teachers utilizing the Core Knowledge Sequence, though most literacy classrooms are likely to benefit from the instructional strategies.

Entering the Task Activities. Supplementing the required curriculum with teacher-created learning experiences can increase curricular relevance for students and identify a purpose for each curriculum assignment. Students, especially those of diverse cultural backgrounds, can benefit from activities that connect the curriculum content to experiences of their own lives (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2010). Two possibilities for entry task activities include increasing student talk and making connections to students' lives.

First, teachers can integrate partner talks while using the required curriculum questions. Teachers can present the assigned question, pause, ask students to discuss in partners, and then have students share answers as a whole class. When students can discuss their ideas in smaller, low-risk environments like a partner talk, they can either clarify early understandings or strengthen existing ideas. Such an activity increases participation for those who may not feel confident enough to initially express their thoughts. By listening to partner talks, teachers can

also assess student understanding and encourage those with critical insights to share out to the whole class.

Second, teachers can create entry task activities that facilitate connections between the curriculum and students' lives. The Core Knowledge Sequence has been criticized as largely representative of white, male, Christian, and heterosexual values and experiences, thereby exacerbating the marginalization of children of culturally diverse identities (Freire, 1970; Leistyna, 1999). With entry task activities, teachers can make the curriculum relevant to these students by pointing out commonalities between students' experiences and those of the characters in the texts. Through entry task activities, teachers in this study facilitated discussions on students' weekend events, had students reflect on the TV shows they watched and the songs they listened to, and encouraged students to analyze characters of popular culture. These activities occurred as discussions and written worksheets. Each of these learning experiences strengthened connections between students' identities and backgrounds and the themes of the required curriculum.

The curriculum did not necessarily provide opportunities for representation of students' experiences, a critical facet of multicultural education (Banks, 2009b). However, entry task activities such as those recommended above can establish the relevance to students' lives, likely increasing student engagement (Howard, 2010; Worthy et al., 2012). Such activities will also likely increase student ownership over learning with a curriculum that offers few opportunities for student authority over knowledge construction.

In absence of entry task activities, results of this study suggest teachers may experience a lack of participation, an increase of off-task behaviors, and an environment inconducive to

learning. Scaffolding activities can reduce the off-task behavior by meeting students at their appropriate challenge levels and engaging them with accessible content.

Establishing a Caring Classroom Community. A caring classroom community can support student engagement and challenge with the Core Knowledge Sequence. A community of learners can create a learning environment of social constructivism in which students are encouraged to take academic risks, share ideas, and make connections between new and existing knowledge (Gay, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Classroom communities have also been shown to increase participation because students may be more willing to complete unappealing learning tasks because they care about their teacher or classmates (Kohl, 1994; Noddings, 1992). Though learning experiences should theoretically be inherently motivating, principles established by the field of differentiated instruction are largely incompatible with the Core Knowledge Sequence. In absence of a curriculum that draws upon intrinsic motivation, teachers can create a classroom community that inspires student engagement through caring and reciprocal relationships (Noddings, 1992).

First, teachers can create an inclusive classroom community by promoting the competence of struggling learners. One participant in this study stated that about one third of students easily understood the curriculum material. She defined her job as helping the remaining two thirds of students feel confident with the curriculum. Teachers can promote competence in all students by a) delineating each step in a given curricular activity, b) utilizing small groups to teach or reteach challenging concepts, and c) rephrasing partner talk comments from a struggling student to the entire class or encouraging that student to share to the whole class discussion. When the teacher facilitates participation of the lower performing students in the curricular activities, their peers recognize them as legitimate members of the learning community. In this

way, the classroom community, representing all levels of readiness, engages students with the required curriculum.

Teachers can also facilitate a caring classroom community by demonstrating their knowledge of students' lives and identities. In this study, two participants learned about students' lives beyond the classroom through casual conversations or supplemental entry task worksheets. They then referred to this knowledge during required curricular activities, or they modified their instructional delivery based on their knowledge of their students. Intentionally learning about students' backgrounds and integrating this knowledge when possible can develop a classroom community, and a supportive classroom community can increase engagement with a prescribed literacy curriculum. All three participants noted the difficulty of the Hirsch curriculum. But only two teachers modified the instructional delivery expressly because of its difficulty. These two participants demonstrated the importance of classroom community, not just as a research-recommended best practice but as a deliberate means of alleviating the academic burden of the Core Knowledge Sequence. This study recommends that teachers using the Core Knowledge Sequence should seek opportunities to connect the curricular content to their knowledge of students' experiences. This strategy will help teachers appropriately adapt the challenge of the Core Knowledge Sequence for each student's level of academic readiness.

Without establishing a caring classroom community, the results of this study indicated teachers may anticipate a definitive line drawn between students willing to participate and those who will undertake "not-learning" activities (Kohl, 1994). Some students may be compelled to engage with the curriculum through motivators like inherent interest in curricular materials or an extrinsic desire to achieve strong grades and please their family. This study demonstrated that other students may simply disengage because of clearly defined boundaries between the learners

and the resistant learners. A cooperative classroom community may not influence students' intrinsic motivation, but it may support them as they take on the challenging texts and activities of the Core Knowledge Sequence. Such a community may increase inclusivity, lessen the academic risks of challenging academic tasks, and more equitably distribute the intellectual burden for students.

Research

The preceding section presented recommendations for practicing teachers to engage all students with the Core Knowledge Sequence. The following section will provide recommendations for future research in the fields of the Core Knowledge Sequence, multicultural education, and differentiated instruction.

Core Knowledge Sequence. The field of literature on the Core Knowledge Sequence would benefit from quantitative studies that measure student performance in classrooms that utilize the recommended strategies of including entry tasks and developing a caring classroom community and those that do not. Though the recommended instructional strategies may increase engagement, they may not be necessary if they have no discernable effect on student performance. Future research could include interventions utilizing the recommended strategies compared to control classrooms that deliver the Core Knowledge Sequence unamended. Such studies would determine the validity and necessity of integrating methods of differentiated instruction and multicultural education with the Core Knowledge Sequence.

Multicultural Education. Experts in the field of multicultural education have recommended integrating content representative of students' backgrounds and identities (Banks, 2009b; Gay, 2000), as well as adopting an equity pedagogy in which teachers adapt their curriculum and instruction for the unique needs of their students (Banks, 2009b; Gay, 2000).

Transformative multiculturalism has suggested teachers provide students with tools for critical analysis, such as counter-storytelling and critical questioning (Hackman, 2005; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004) and empowering students with tools to impact social change (Hackman, 2005). These recommendations can prove challenging for a prescriptive curriculum like the Core Knowledge Sequence. But they also introduce opportunities for future research.

First, research could identify the possibilities of supplementing the Core Knowledge Sequence with texts representative of students' cultural backgrounds. With firm adoption of the CKS, teachers in this study found few opportunities to draw upon students' funds of knowledge to make connections to the curricular texts (Moll, et al., 1992). But teachers could likely find moments to integrate students' identities through brief supplemental texts, such as images, videos, or short articles. Listing supplemental texts used in conjunction with the Core Knowledge Sequence could then inspire the work of current practicing teachers. Such a study could research teachers who currently supplement the curriculum while maintaining its validity. The suggested study could recruit teachers through purposive sampling.

Transformative multicultural education has advised giving students tools for critical analysis and tools to affect social change. Therefore, another line of inquiry could be the compatibility of these recommendations with the Eurocentric Core Knowledge Sequence (Hackman, 2005). A quantitative study could introduce entry task interventions based in critical race theory and methods of social justice pedagogy. Researchers could then measure student comprehension or student enjoyment of the curriculum. This study would benefit the field of multicultural education by evaluating the effectiveness of the entry task strategy for students of diverse cultural backgrounds when limited in curricular and instructional autonomy. Teacher preparation programs and currently practicing teachers could then directly draw upon the

findings to inform pedagogical practice. While universities may profess a commitment to social justice pedagogy, school districts may operate under traditional methods of instruction. Identifying and then teaching prospective teachers the intersection of the competing theories may increase their success in the classroom and decrease the tension they experience during instruction.

The previously discussed recommendations offer areas of inquiry that can guide future educational research projects to better understand the potential intersections of differentiated instruction, multicultural education, and The Core Knowledge Sequence.

Summary

This qualitative case study investigated the potential to differentiate instruction for children of diverse cultural backgrounds when using an arguably Eurocentric curriculum, the Core Knowledge Sequence. The study identified two strategies to engage and challenge culturally diverse children when using the Core Knowledge Sequence. First, teachers can create entry task activities to scaffold instruction, pre-assess student knowledge, and teach literacy skills. Second, the study found that teachers can create caring classroom communities. Classroom communities can support teachers in making the Core Knowledge Sequence relevant for students, as well as exploring contentious issues of social justice education, a feature frequently overlooked by the Core Knowledge Sequence. This study found that in absence of the previous strategies, teachers may rely on traditional models of instruction and management that can potentially marginalize students of color and students in poverty.

The results of this study suggest that teachers who must strictly implement the Core Knowledge Sequence should find avenues to integrate entry task activities that differentiate

instruction, and they should create caring classroom communities to support children of culturally diverse backgrounds.

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Appendix A: Selection Criteria for Literature Review

Appendix A-1: Differentiated Instruction

Inclusion	Exclusion
Empirical studies	Implementation guides; discussions of theory
Certificated, practicing teachers	Educators intentionally hired as instructional coaches; teacher candidates
Literacy in language arts classrooms	Discipline-specific literacy (e.g. math, science)
General education	Special education; Transitional bilingual education
United States	Other nations

Appendix A-2: Multicultural Education

Inclusion	Exclusion
Empirical studies	Implementation guides; discussions of theory
Certificated, practicing teachers	Educators intentionally hired as instructional coaches; teacher candidates
Literacy in language arts classrooms	Discipline-specific literacy (e.g. math, science)
General education	Special education; Transitional bilingual education
United States	Other nations

Appendix A-3: Literacy Instruction

Inclusion	Exclusion
Empirical studies	Implementation guides; discussions of theory
Certificated, practicing teachers	Educators intentionally hired as instructional coaches or reading specialists; teacher candidates
Literacy in language arts classrooms	Discipline-specific literacy (e.g. math, science)
General education	Special education (including Response to Intervention instruction); Transitional bilingual education
United States	Other nations
Studies of instructional methods	Studies of student motivation or efficacy

Appendix A-4: Core Knowledge Curriculum

Inclusion	Exclusion
Empirical studies	Essays and letters
Certificated, practicing teachers	Instructional coaches, reading specialists, or teacher candidates
Core Knowledge curriculum	

Language arts or social studies
General education
United States, Canada, or United Kingdom
Elementary schools

Other core reading programs
Special education

Selection Criteria for Literature Review

Appendix B: District Demographic Data 2016-2017

	District	School 1 (OHI)	School 2 (MVI)
Free & Reduced-Price Meals	36.6%	39.4%	36.5%
Asian	9.5%	8.8%	8.4%
Black/African American	9.1%	8.3%	10.7%
Hispanic/Latino	13.9%	15.6%	14.4%
Two or more races	16.7%	15.8%	17.4%
White	49.3%	50.2%	47.2%
Transitional Bilingual	5.6%	4.9%	4.8%
Special Education	11.5%	9.2%	9.9%

Appendix C: Data Collection Summary

	Minutes observed	Total pages of field notes	Minutes interviewed	Total pages of interview transcriptions
Erin	320	21	100	23
Jen	320	25	70	21
Maddie	240	16	70	24

Table of Data Collection

Appendix D: Teacher Interview Protocol

Topic: Surveying and naming the instructional practices that exhibit differentiation

Preamble: As you know, I'm a doctoral student at UW and am beginning a research study. I have a particular interest in the instructional methods teachers use when working with students of diverse needs, interests, and abilities. This study focuses on teacher planning and instructional choices regarding differentiating instruction in literacy. I am researching the strategies teachers use to engage students in reading. This information will hopefully help inform a growing body of literature about differentiating reading instruction.

Questions:

1. In your own terms, how do you define differentiated instruction?

2. Describe reading instruction in your classroom.

3. Describe the reading curriculum in your district.
    a. What are the constraints and affordances of your curriculum?
    b. How much autonomy do teachers have over the curriculum?
    c. How do students respond to this curriculum?

4. What student data do you use when planning reading instruction?
    a. To what extent does student data (quantitative and qualitative) inform your instructional planning? (*Probe:* can you describe an example of this?)

5. What influences the design of your reading curriculum and instruction?
    a. How does student interest, ability, and need factor into instructional planning?

6. How do you gain knowledge about students' backgrounds, identities, and cultures?
    a. How do you integrate students' backgrounds, identities, and cultures into your teaching practices?

7. What are the strategies you use to make reading and learning relevant for students? (*Probe:* can you describe an example of this?)
    a. What changes, if any, do you make when students are not engaged in the reading materials or assignments?

8. In what ways do students have opportunities for choice in the classroom, in either content, product, process, or environment?

9. Is there anything else you'd like me to know about reading instruction in your classroom?

Teacher Interview Protocol, Version 1 (7-18-2015)

Appendix E: Site Visit Observation Protocol

Before the observation

Check in with the research participant. Explain the purpose of the observation. Ask the teacher where they would like me to sit. Ask for copies of any relevant materials to be used (handouts, readings).

During the observation

Using the "t-chart" format attached, record a time-referenced running description of what I observe in the class, clearly separating my observations (what I see and hear), from whatever comments or ideas I have about what is taking place. Try to provide both a general description of the activity I am observing, and as detailed a record of the actual interactions as possible. In addition to the general description I am recording, pay particular attention to the following:

- *Modifications of content, product, process, or environment*
- *Curriculum and instruction*
- *Opportunity for student voice*

Protocol

Date:
Setting/event: (content area)
Observer:
*Participants:

Filesave: mm/dd/yyyy/participant

Time	Narrative description of what I see and hear	My reflections and questions

* After taking field notes, I will black out participants' names and replace them with pseudonyms. I will also black out names on any artifacts and documents. A document will connect the pseudonyms with participants, but it will be kept in a locked file separate from other data. Study data will be kept in a password-protected laptop.

Appendix F: Tables of Codes

Appendix F-1: Pre-codes

Pre-Code Group	Pre-Code
Differentiated Instruction	Interest
	Readiness
	Background
	Metacognition
	Self-assessment
	Conference
	Coaching
	Challenge
	Individualize
	Content
	Texts
	Assessment
	Assessment data
	Flexible
	Environment
	Enrichment
	Products
	Levels
Grouping	Flexible
	Skills-based
	Ability
Reading Pillars	Vocabulary (adjectives)
	Sight words
	Fluency
	Decoding
	Phoneme segmentation
	Phonemic awareness
	Word study
	Comprehension
	Code-focused
	Meaning-focused
	Phonics
Comprehension Strategies	Text connections
	Visualize
	Questioning
	Summarizing
	Prediction
Multicultural Strategies	Cooperation
	Experiences
	Relationships

	Critical questioning Cultural congruence Shared authority Knowledge authority Caring Rituals Warm demanders Connections to student lives Investment Social constructivism Constructing knowledge High expectations Cooperative learning Community of learners Task variability Negotiate meaning Management Motivation
Teacher Decisions	Student information Professional judgment Teacher decisions PCK
Multicultural literacy instruction	Critical discourse Critical literacy Guided reading Literature circles
Instruction	Guided practice Direct instruction Modeling Workshop model CRP (core reading program) Choral reading Teacher-directed
Cultural Considerations	Funds of knowledge Culturally insensitive Culturally ignorant Teacher control Participation Authority Communication style AAVE Home environment Student voice Identity Student families

Environment	Classroom libraries Posters Desks Messages

Appendix F-2: Emergent Codes and Analytic Codes

Analytic Code	Emergent Code
Differentiated instruction	Background Culture Metacognition Conference Coaching Challenge Extension Extra work Individualize Assessment Monitoring Feedback Informal assessment Self-assessment Assessment data Low-risk Growth over performance Access Previewing Scaffold Support Previewing Release of responsibility Entry task Choice Engagement Grouping Flexible Skills-based Ability Small group Intentional pairing Partners Whole class Independent practice
Comprehension strategies	Transferable skills Summarizing

	Prediction
	Literary terms (tone, theme, conflict, mood; cause and effect, character, adjectives, rhyme)
	Comprehension tools
	Literary tools
	Literary analysis
	  Cause and effect
	  Compare/contrast
	  Inference
	  Academic language
	Research
	  [writing: quotes; claims]
	Problem solving

Cultural considerations	Identity Student families Home environment ELL Mismatch

Multicultural strategies	Knowledge authority
	  Shared authority
	
	Investment
	  Purpose
	  Application/ relevance
	  Connections to student lives
	  Background knowledge
	  Funds of knowledge
	  Themes
	  Student voice
	High expectations
	Constructivism
	  Social constructivism
	  Constructing knowledge
	  Cooperative learning
	  Community of learners
	  Negotiate meaning
	Motivation
	Multicultural texts
	  Diverse authors
	Multiple answers

Teacher decisions	Professional judgment
	Teacher decisions
	  Prioritizing
	  supplement
	PCK
	reflection

Social justice education	Critical discourse Voices Critical literacy Multiple perspectives Empowerment Equity/ equity pedagogy Critical questioning Power Gender roles Gender expectations
Community	Teacher sharing Knowledge of students Background: religion Experiences Relationships Caring Encouragement Rituals Social supports Emotional supports Encouraging risk Class community Vulnerability Comfortable Inclusion Affirmation Sensitivity Empathizing Dignity
Instruction	Guided practice observation instruction interpretation work workbook Direct instruction Modeling Choral reading Test prep Backward design Curriculum [ACA CRP] Pacing Assignment Answer key Teacher control Investigation Release of responsibility

Environment	Classroom libraries
Management	Positive Verbal praise Validation Self-evaluation Talking Curbing talking Blurt out Side conversations Behavior Reminders Reprimanding Redirecting Behavior expectations Off task Off task: high performers Teacher frustration Management threat Disappointment Blaming students Disruption A toy Transition
Discussion	Share out Participation Partner talk Multiple answers Text evidence Student poll/vote Paraphrasing Teacher paraphrase Class contribution Teacher connection IRE (correction, affirmation) Student response Student answer Teacher question Answer Accepting Teacher evaluation Teacher correction Workbook question Teacher affirmation Student observation Teacher rephrase
Lack of	Transferable skills

Authority
Skills
Ownership
Challenge/extension
Purpose
Relevance

Appendix G: Tables of Data Analysis

Appendix G-1: Example Data Coding for Theme of Entry Tasks

Data Source	Data Example	Code Assigned
Erin field notes pg. 8; 3/21/17	Are there any movies or books you've seen where two people constantly can't be together even though they're falling in love?	Connections: background knowledge
Maddie interview transcript pg. 4, 3/27/17	I've… struggled with that. With fifth graders, I can- um, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.	Lack of engagement
Maddie interview transcript pg. 19, 3/30/17	I would say I have struggled if they don't find it interesting. Like, okay? Do you want me to, like, sing and dance? To help make it interesting?	Lack of engagement

Appendix G-2: Example Data Coding for Theme of Classroom Community

Data Source	Data Example	Code Assigned
Erin interview transcript pg. 14; 3/23/17	When I talked about the Renaissance, [the curriculum] was all men, and not having that discussion of why [the curriculum] was all men would've been inequitable because it wasn't addressing sexism and how women were disempowered back then by gender roles.	Critical literacy
Erin field notes pg. 19, 3/23/17	My number one thing as a teacher to make you feel comfortable so that's why I made those revisions. I want you to feel comfortable.	Caring: student comfort

Appendix G-3: Research Question #1 Results

Supplementing with Entry Task Activities	
Accessing the curriculum	Typically for an entry task, those are scaffolds for the whole group to help access and give them background knowledge. With my lowest students, I'll take three or four of those questions that are crucial for our lesson that day and I'll try to define vocabulary and give more models and examples (Erin, interview, March 24, 2017). There are little things you have to implement so that they understand [the curriculum], so that they have a better grasp of it (Jen, interview, March 28, 2017). With the characters [in the lesson] today, I felt like you need to put it into their world. They need to see three characters, like Darth Vader [and President Snow, the Evil Queen] for them to understand. Giving them background makes it so much easier (Jen, interview, March 28, 2017).
Transferable literacy skills	Have you ever watched a foreign movie, listened to people speaking another language, or heard somebody use words you didn't know the meaning of? However, you were still able to understand the tone (happy, sassy, angry, delighted, or excited)? If so, describe the experience (Document review from Erin, March 20, 2017). [Identifying tone from context clues was] such a cool tool for when they're engaged with and encountering more difficult text every year (Erin, interview, March 23, 2017). "And each of your interpretations can be correct if they're grounded in the text, if they're based on what we read," (Observation of Jen's classroom, March 30, 2017).

Intentional Development of Classroom Community	
A caring and respectful classroom	To her students, "My number one thing as a teacher to make you feel comfortable so that's why I made those revisions. I want you to feel comfortable but if you're ever uncomfortable let me know. I'll be able to read your faces, poor Piper and James, but you can also let me know. I do want to challenge you to act in small groups with low risk, but I'll make sure you're comfortable first," (Observation of Erin's classroom, March 23, 2017).

	It's scary to raise your hand. But often, when you get that idea out there, there's a train of confidence going through. If I can encourage them to be vulnerable and to raise that first hand, that's a huge step for them to be more receptive to the lesson later and to participate more (Erin, interview, March 24, 2017).
	We all support each other. I don't want kids to walk away feeling like they're a failure. And I don't want kids to walk away feeling like they're superior to everybody else, because we're all equals (Jen, interview, March 29, 2017).
Two-way pedagogy	I truly believe the more you get to know [students], the more you care about them, I feel like it makes me a much better teacher: when I know who they are, what they're about, their trials and struggles (Jen, interview, March 29, 2017).
	If you know your students, it's easier to keep them engaged (Jen, interview, March 29, 2017).
	And you notice Puck only had one line, but it keeps him engaged because he has to listen the whole time waiting for his one line to come (Jen, interview, March 29, 2017).
Opportunities for social justice	I made it about who possesses power as a character. The whole entry task was, "What is power?" And while there were a lot of really cute, "Big muscles!" answers, there was also the ability to make your own choices, which we honed in on that. That's the lens with which we look at power now, and it gets kids excited and feeling the injustice and the palpable tensions of scenes (Erin, interview, March 23, 2017).
	I took a lot of time from that unit and explained gender expectations at the time, and had [students] all have a women empathy experience where they imagined: this is the expectation, they're going to be married off by the state and they don't believe they should. Their parents don't believe they should have an education but instead, it's, "Do these tasks!" So I feel like there's often times I have to add in. (Erin, interview, March 23, 2017).
	When I talked about the Renaissance [the curriculum] was all men, and not having that discussion of why [the curriculum] was all men would've been inequitable because it wasn't addressing sexism and how women were disempowered back then by gender roles (Erin, interview, March 23, 2017).

Appendix G-4: Research Question #2 Results

	Reliance on Traditional Instruction
Completion of tasks	Three students read their letters aloud. "Okay, we are going to move onto the next thing," (Observation of Maddie's classroom, March 27, 2017). "All right, that should've been enough time to read those… Open your activity book to 8.2," (Observation of Maddie's classroom, March 27, 2017). She sits in front of the document camera and works through the workbook page on the board (Observation of Maddie's classroom, March 28, 2017).
Resistance to differentiated instruction	They don't glom on to the whole group instruction like they should, so then when it's time for them to write their own, it's like I'm having to do mini one-on-one lessons with each of them. Like, this is what we just went over, but here it is again (Maddie, interview, March 28, 2017). I've explained to them, "Here's how public education works: the teacher teaches all the students at once, and then if you have more questions, we can do that." But I've told them, "Some of you guys are expecting to hog me for 10 minutes for you own mini-tutoring, one-on-one lesson. That's not how this works. We don't have the time for that, and we don't have the resources for that. (Maddie, interview, March 28, 2017). I've always kind of struggled with that. With fifth graders, I can- um, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. I would say I have struggled if they don't find it interesting. Like, okay? Do you want me to, like, sing and dance? To help make it interesting? (Maddie, interview, March 27, 2017).
	Usage of Authoritarian Management
Lack of a caring classroom	They say, "You're their teacher, not their friend," (Maddie, interview, March 30, 2017). [Classroom community] normally just happens on rainy day recess where I let them play a quick game of Heads-Up 7up and I get to see them be friends. If it's happened, it hasn't been intentionally… I've never gone about it in that sense. At the beginning of the year, we try to do icebreakers because we have

	students coming from two different primary schools (Maddie, interview, March 30, 2017). I just struggle to build that relationship of respect. I'd like to always say, "Okay I give you respect. I expect respect in return." But sometimes when I get on them, I'm not using the kindest of words…I wouldn't like them to speak to me like that (Maddie, interview, March 30, 2017).
Student disruption and teacher frustration	"Gentlemen at the sink, please hurry up; we're right in the middle of a lesson. Unless you have radioactive toxic stuff on your hands, it probably can wait until the end of class. This is like three or four times now," (Observation of Maddie's classroom, March 28, 2017). Malik is up again (9:43); Garrett keeps turning around in his desk at the front of the room watching him… Malik is up again (9:48); now Garrett is [up] too… Malik is up again for water (9:54), now going to the bathroom… Malik is up (10:02) for water (so far he gets up every 6-8 minutes); Paul joins him (Observation of Maddie's classroom, March 27, 2017). Olivia is reading a magazine under her desk; Mina is playing with her pens… Mina is now blowing up a paper balloon. She's still answering all the questions asked to the whole class though (Observation of Maddie's classroom, March 28, 2017). "Oh my gosh, news flash! When you start talking at once, I can't hear all of you. So if you want your answer heard, you have to raise your hand," (Observation of Maddie's classroom, March 28, 2017).