‘RACE SPACE’ CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS THIRD SPACE: CULTIVATING RACIAL LITERACY, IDEOLOGICAL BECOMING, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING WITH/IN URBAN TEACHERS

by

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August 24, 2018

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University at Buffalo, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Learning and Instruction
Dedicated

To Black and Brown youth who refuse to conform to nonsense, may you show us the way.
Acknowledgements

I offer my ultimate gratitude to God, my Creator, for undergirding me throughout my doctoral program and the entire dissertation process. Thank you for nudging me in this direction, as I am forever changed for the better and for the work to be done. Nyandusi (Dus), my love, a long time ago you told me, “There is value in who you are” and that knowing this, you would support me in all of my goals. You have exceeded that promise and I appreciate you with all my heart. I must also thank my mother and my sister, my rocks. Thank you for your unconditional love and support always, I could never repay it. I would like to thank my father for always believing in me. Overall, I come from a village of folks so large that I cannot name them all here. Thank you for everything through the years. You know who you are.

Dr. Boyd, my adviser and mentor, thank you for your kindness and patience. Thank you for allowing me to shape my doctoral experience while cheering me on and supporting me along the way. Thank you for always listening to me during my challenges. Overall, thank you for your feedback, guidance, and support in completing my dissertation over the past five and a half years. I would also like to thank Mary B. McVee, my committee member and other mentor, who proclaimed, “You belong here!” as I sat doubtful in her office, one night after class during the first semester of my doctoral program. Thank you for granting me hours of your time over the past several years, and for assisting me in fleshing out ideas, arguments, and future plans. But most of all, thank you for welcoming me into your “nerd girl” circle. I will proudly wear this title. Thank you also to my committee members, Ryan Rish and Valerie Kinloch, as well. Your feedback and presence was invaluable.

I must express gratitude and love to my “sista-girls”: Gholnecsar Muhammad, Esther O. Ohito, Josephine Pham, Grace D. Player, Aja Reynolds, and Monica L. Ridgeway. Thank you
for your feedback, dialogue, and for the gathering of my tears throughout this process. Thank you for being fierce, unapologetic women of color. I would also like to thank my peers in my doctoral program: Kate Haq, Katarina Silvestri, and Kristen Pastore Capuana. Thank you for our many writing groups and “think tank” sessions. Finally, I would like to thank the teachers and students who participated in this research project. To the teachers, thank you for enthusiastically attending ‘race space’ CPD after long workdays. Thank you for allowing me into your classrooms, and into your worlds.
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ABSTRACT

Racial injustice in U.S. society cannot be separated from that which happens in U.S. classrooms. Indeed, many battles between white supremacy and antiracism are waged in the public school arena—such as, the whitewashing of slavery in textbooks, and the Supreme Court decision to ban Mexican American Studies in Arizona. Thus, this dissertation took into account teacher learning and classroom practice around race, racism, and social justice through professional development. Specifically, among teachers committed to social justice, this dissertation investigated the role professional development plays in shaping how their commitment translates into classroom practice. I designed ‘race space’ Critical Professional Development (CPD) (Kohli, Picower, Martinez, & Ortiz, 2015) to support in-service urban teachers in learning about race, racism, and what it means to engage in social justice teaching. I employ the term ‘race space’ to describe an aim to engender transformational, reflective, real talk and action around race and racism, through collective effort. With the theoretical groundings of critical race theory (CRT) in education, ideological becoming, and Third Space, I asked: What is the nature of ‘race space’ CPD? Specifically, among urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, how does a ‘race space’ CPD cultivate: a) racial literacy; b) social justice teaching, and; c) ideological becoming?

Methodologically, this research project consisted of an ethnographic case study of the ‘race space’ CPD. During the 2016-2017 academic year, three in-service, social justice-oriented public school teachers, who teach mostly students of color, participated in twelve ‘race space’ CPD sessions over the course of eight months. I facilitated the sessions, completed 1-2 classroom observations of each teacher every week, and interviewed teachers and two of their students.

Shay is a Black female Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and English Language Learners
(ELL) teacher. Josh, a white male sixth grade special education teacher, teaches in a self-contained classroom. Gigi, a white female secondary biology teacher, teaches in a nontraditional high school. Primary data sources included: a) audio and video of ‘race space’ CPD sessions and classroom interactions, b) field notes, c) teacher and student interviews, and d) pre- and post-questionnaires of teachers. I transcribed audio of ‘race space’ CPD sessions and teacher and student interviews. Employing descriptive and process coding, I analyzed 591 pages of session transcriptions for narratives and dialogic exchanges around racial literacy, social justice understandings, meaning-making around social justice teaching, classroom practice, curriculum planning, and social justice ideological becoming. I then conducted a critical discourse analysis of focal dialogic exchanges to understand collective and individual racial literacy cultivation, social justice ideological becoming, and social justice teaching engagements.

Data analysis revealed three major findings. First, ‘race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy by being responsive to the racial literacy teachers already displayed while providing support in responding to the racial consciousness of students of color. Second, ‘race space’ CPD cultivated social justice teaching among teachers through dialogic exchanges that pushed thoughtful and meaningful social justice curriculum planning that co-exists with the organic social justice teachable moments that arise. Third, ‘race space’ CPD cultivated social justice ideological becoming among teachers, through dialogic exchanges that advanced and critiqued the oppressive nature of school. Through the actualization of a Third Space within ‘race space’ CPD, participant and facilitator ways of knowing/acting were both welcomed and called into question, for the purposes of interrupting and revising their performances of the present. Implications include extended time and space in professional development initiatives for learning around race, racism, and social justice.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Personal Vignette: As Classroom Teacher Learning with Other Teachers

I am sitting in the school library with my teacher colleagues, school support staff, and administrators. We are getting ready to enter our race conversation for the third time this week. I sit uneasy, but hopeful; I really want the conversation to go somewhere today. Most of the white staff has been silent or hesitant to speak all week. Those who do speak rarely mention race. These deliberate silences shock me, considering I regularly witness—disparagingly—some of these same colleagues having side conversations about what they do not like about our students, parents, school, and administration. To be honest, the Black staff has not spoken much either this week. It seems as if we are waiting to hear what our white colleagues might say. The other Black teachers and I are already having these conversations anyway, but today we are in “mixed” company. After greeting some of the staff, Dr. Adams, our Black woman principal, stands in front of us, impeccably dressed, and in her reading glasses, with highlighted and underlined copies of literature in hand. We look up at her as we sit at tables with our readings sprawled out in front of us. She begins by asking us to share our thoughts on Lisa Delpit’s culture of power and Peggy McIntosh’s white privilege. All at once, an unsettling silence overshadows the room; even the crickets are mute.

After a few people finally speak, Mrs. Kedzierski, a white woman teacher, raises her hand to speak. She does not smile much while teaching and is merciless in her disciplining of Black students. Mrs. Kedzierski does not leave the impression that she enjoys working in our school. I am intrigued and apprehensive about what she is going to say. I even turn towards her. Staring straight at our principal, Mrs. Kedzierski slowly but passionately proclaims, “I grew up poor. I walked to school with holes in my shoes every day, so (tap with index finger) don’t (tap) you (tap) think (tap) that I don’t know what these kids are going through.” It is clear to me that Mrs. Kedzierski truly believes her experience of poverty means she can adequately relate to the Black population of our school. The rest of today’s talk is a daze. I am trying to wrap my head around the readings, and Mrs. Kedzierski’s statements, which are in complete contradiction. Mrs. Kedzierski’s statements are permeating my mind the most. To say the least, I never considered her one who “knew” the students. I am saddened by her self-exoneration, but somehow still glad she shared.¹

This vignette highlights my own experience of sitting through a mandatory professional development series on race as a middle school teacher committed to social justice. As a Black feminist pedagogue², my research considerations and concerns are rooted in a deep political

¹ Pseudonyms used throughout this entire vignette.
² See “Critical Race Theory” section in Chapter 2 for explanation of Black feminist pedagogues.
commitment and responsibility to communities of color (Henry, 2005). Thus, embedded throughout this dissertation are my own experiences and subjectivities as a Black woman with “outsider within” status (Collins, 1986), who self-identifies as a Black feminist pedagogue. On the one hand, I am within the institution of school as a former classroom teacher, and now as a teacher educator. On the other hand, as a Black woman, I am outside it, subject to interlocking oppression at any moment. I trust and draw upon my standpoint to understand schooling phenomena as Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins (1986) advised researchers over 30 years ago. Moreover, this research study is informed by my own endarkened feminist epistemology³ (Dillard, 2000, 2006, 2012) and counterstorytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012)⁴. These epistemologies and methodologies heed educational researcher Cynthia Dillard’s (2000) argument that:

…alternative epistemological truths are required if educational researchers and leaders are to be truly responsible, asking for new ways of looking into the reality of others that opens our own lives to view – and that makes us accountable to the people whom we study, and their interests and needs. (p. 662)

My intentional and strategic use of alternative epistemologies and methodologies is fueled by my desire to work for educational transformation in ways that hold me accountable to those researched.

The complicated “race talk” described in the opening vignette is the impetus behind this dissertation. Certainly, I commend Dr. Adams, as a Black principal of Black students and mostly white teachers embodying her own “outsider within” status, for addressing race head on. Although very personable, warm, and caring, I understood why she “ran a tight ship”, as

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³ See “Critical Race Theory” section in Chapter 2 for explanation of endarkened feminist epistemologies.
⁴ See “Critical Race Theory” section in Chapter 2 for explanation of counterstorytelling.
evidenced in her physical positioning, powerful presentation, and by how staff members felt the need to raise their hands to speak during this “race talk.” Some Black administrators feel the need to execute such leadership styles because their positions are under the threat of sabotage by white staff members (Dickar, 2008). If certain teachers felt comfortable enough to have contemptible side conversations about students, parents, the school, and the administration under Dr. Adams’ strict regime, I wonder how they would carry on if she loosened up. For engaging in deeper dialogue and understandings around race, I offer an extension to Dr. Adams’ bold initiative, and build from her courage and strength. As an alternative to similar, stifled attempts at examining race with teachers, I want to re-imagine schools as places where theory and research integrate into practice; where teachers can be vulnerable, reflect, and grow; where taboo topics, such as race and racism, are unpacked, discussed, acted upon, and transformed. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative study is to understand how to support teacher learning around race and racism, in ways that lead to better interactions with, and learning for, students of color.

Why Teachers Must Talk About Race

We must explicitly talk about race, because, contrary to what many believe based on the election of an African-American president, we do not live in a post-racial society (Marshall, 2009; Milner, 2015; Stovall, Lynn, Danley, & Martin, 2009). Certainly, teachers often have difficulty talking about race in academic settings (McVee & Boyd, 2016) and especially “in ‘mixed’ company” (Milner, 2015, p. 9). Even more concerning is when teachers like Mrs. Kedzierski conflate race with class, or assume that similar classed experiences negate unique racialized experiences. Building from Delgado and Stefancic’s (2012) notion of differential racialization, I define racialized experiences as the ways in which each racial group experiences the world differently, based on mainstream society’s shifting needs and perceptions of that
group. Conflating race with class flattens the distinctiveness of racialized experiences. White people, as the representative race of dominant culture, experience the world more favorably, regardless of their class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc. To put it succinctly, the marginalized experiences of working-class white students is not the same as the racialized experiences of people of color (Milner, 2015). It is important that white teachers, especially those from working-class backgrounds, recognize how they a) experience white privilege, b) operate in whiteness, and c) can be racist.

Given the current racialized state of students and faculty of color in urban schools (Dumas, 2014; Kohli, 2009; Yull, 2014); racial dialogue must be nurtured among teachers. Any critical observer of Mrs. Kedzierski’s interactions with Black students would attest to their marginalization. On a few occasions, I witnessed her screaming vilely at Black students as a disciplinary measure. It is highly unlikely that she would have liked a teacher to yell at her own children—or white students—in that way. However, given her claims during the “race talk”, Mrs. Kedzierski apparently did not believe that she exhibited racist behavior towards her students. According to Philip (2014), “…teachers who might benefit most from the creation of a space to critically reflect on their racial identity are the ones who are also least aware of the need” (p. 236). Mrs. Kedzierski’s self-exoneration released her from any responsibility to examine her racial identity, or her racist actions towards Black students.

Cochran-Smith (2000) argued that white teachers must “struggle to unlearn racism” (p. 186). Teachers are bombarded by stereotypical media images of people of color (Love, 2012), and white teachers, specifically, may consume race-less family histories and racist ideologies (Sleeter, 2008, 2011). What I remember the most about the “race talk” described above is the haunting silence of the white teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1996) as my Black principal attempted
to evoke dialogue around race. Race is often the pink elephant in the room, and the subject is avoided through colorblindness ideologies, resulting in forms of dysconscious racism (J. King, 1991). Still, like Baszile (2006), “…I have come to a greater understanding of my work as a commitment to helping others work against their own mis-education” (p. 89). I must work against “the kind of miseducation that produces teachers who are dysconscious—uncritical and unprepared to question white norms, white superiority, and white privilege” (J. King, 1991, p. 143).

The paradox of my sadness and disappointment in hearing Mrs. Kedzierski’s claims is that I was also relieved that she broke her silence, speaking explicitly about her disbelief in the existence of white privilege. If they are to have any impact, “race talks” should be transparent. It would have been helpful for us to “talk up and out” Mrs. Kedzierski’s experiences, in order to deepen our understanding of how race is constructed, and how racism operates. I believe that, had the time, structures, and norms been previously set up at my school for the “race talk”, we, as a staff, could have begun to raise our racial consciousness.

Significantly, this experience has caused me to take seriously my role as a critical scholar, researcher, and activist. To engage in racial and social justice research, one must have “robust hope” (McInerney, 2007), and the ability to dream of liberatory possibilities. With this in mind, I dream of a world where the educational experiences of marginalized students translate into their actual lives, in ways that prompt them/us, to transform the world. In order for this to happen, we need educators who are willing to take on this challenge by reimagining how they act in schools. In essence, we need educators who “do” school differently. Young (2011) asserts “How one continues to grapple with the paradox of one’s own perpetration and activism throughout one’s life journey is the true test of an antiracist pedagogue” (p. 1453). Such
educators embody a racialized understanding of literacy, classrooms, and school, center social justice in their instruction, and listen to the voices of urban youth of color.

**A Racialized Understanding of Literacy, Classrooms, and School**

A racialized understanding of literacy has never been more urgently needed. Literacy, as used in classrooms, often reproduces racial inequity (Boyd et al., 2006; Delpit, 1996; Ferdman, 1990; Willis, 2002); in fact, literacy has always been a racialized act. As such, literacy can be either liberating or oppressive (Harris, 1992). This is a problem rooted in a history of educational inequities. As Harris (1992) put it, “Education was not bestowed upon African Americans… [They] demanded, created, funded, and maintained educational institutions” (p. 276). Of course, communities of color have always been concerned about the literacy and educational experiences of their children (Au, Brown, & Calderón, 2016). Native American communities resisted the colonial curriculum imposed upon them and fought for tribal sovereignty (Au et al., 2016). Chinese American and Japanese American communities worried about their children’s transnational linguistic and cultural memories, never knowing when the U.S. would ask them to go back home (Au et al., 2016). Mexican Americans fought against U.S. curriculum violence that excluded their histories of stolen land (Au et al., 2016).

While many white educators who engaged in such racist practices believed that they were acting for social justice, the aftermath of their endeavors suggested otherwise. For example, in studying African American educational and literacy experiences at the Calhoun Colored School from 1892 to 1945, Willis (2002) found that, even with abundant literacy resources and good intentions on the part of the school founders and white teachers, Calhoun Colored School struggled to help Black students succeed in literacy. For these students, “access and opportunity for literacy were entangled in state politics, local customs, misappropriation of state funds, and
racism” (Willis, 2002, pp. 14-15). It becomes apparent that classrooms are not isolated entities; instead, they are heavily situated in histories of oppression and the prevailing racial climate (L. Grant, 1984). Furthermore, there is an education debt that is owed to communities of color when we consider historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral wrong-doings that have deprived them of equitable educational opportunities (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Racial Injustice in U. S. Society Reflected in Urban Public Schools

Racial injustice in U. S. society cannot be separated from what happens in U. S. classrooms. As Taliaferro-Baszile (2003) claimed, “The history of American racial ideology lingers like an invisible cloud in the classroom” (p. 32). Indeed, many battles between white supremacy and antiracism are waged in the public school arena—such as the whitewashing of slavery in Texas textbooks (Tan, 2015), and the Supreme Court decision to ban Mexican American Studies in Arizona (Strauss, 2017). Today, it is difficult to turn on the television, engage in social media, or read the newspaper without encountering the latest racially charged incident or racial injustice. As educators, we can turn a blind eye, but this avoidance does not mean that students and teachers are unaffected by what is happening around them. Moreover, the current racial climate in the United States (e.g., persecution of Muslims, police brutality, forced deportation of undocumented immigrants, de facto segregation) has prompted new social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter. At the same time, neoliberal efforts to standardize literacy and learning are proving unrelenting (Boyd, 2012, 2013; Mirra & Morrell, 2011). Emphasis on a so-called “achievement gap” and “standards” fuel policies (e.g., the closing of underperforming schools) which further marginalize Black and Brown students (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ravitch, 2013; Sanders, Stovall, & White, 2018). Indeed, these are contentious
times. These occurrences are significant to teachers, because what continues to happen in our nation cannot be separated from what happens in schools and in the classroom.

Urban teachers of mostly students of color must embody an understanding of the current racial climate as it relates to how race and racism operate in school, and must learn to teach for social justice. Teachers matter in this way to students, because classrooms are heavily situated in histories of oppression, American racial ideologies, and the present racial climate (Grant, 1984; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Taliaferro-Baszile, 2003). However difficult the task, racial and social justice learning needs to progress, given the current racialized state of teachers and students of color in urban schools. When we consider that in 2018, the majority of teachers in urban schools are white (McIntyre, 1997) middle-class (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2001) monolingual (Gomez, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2001) women (McIntyre, 1997; Zeichner, 1996) schooled in rural or suburban settings (Zeichner, 1996), while “the new majority” is increasingly more Black and Brown (Nieto, 2005), the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic dissonance is undeniable. As with Willis’s (2002) history of the Calhoun Colored School, in today’s classrooms “notions of the inheritability of intelligence that placed whites at the forefront and all others as inferior” (Willis, 2002, p. 13) exist. These problems are significant because what continues to happen in our nation cannot be separated from what happens in the classroom; social justice and classrooms are inextricably linked. Consequently, it is important that public school teachers, who teach mostly students of color, possess these understandings and are supported in enacting social justice teaching.

**Cultivating Social Justice Teaching**

There are many different interpretations of social justice teaching, and some of them lack criticality (Lalas, 2007) suggesting, perhaps, that the term “social justice” is often
misappropriated due to limited understanding. Social justice teaching as I understand it recognizes that educational politics are entrenched in the prevailing social climate (Anyon, 1981; Ayers, 2004; Banks, 1993, 2006; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Fine & Weis, 2003; Giroux, 1988; Grant & Sleeter, 2009; McLaren, 1995; Rist, 1970; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Armed with this awareness, social justice teaching does not impose patriarchal Eurocentric curricular norms onto students (Henry, 2005; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Instead, it “functions to cultivate students’ ability to question, deconstruct, and then reconstruct knowledge in the interest of emancipation” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 12). In essence, students critically analyze power relations/dynamics and social constructions for the purpose of acting to radically transform their realities (Christensen, 2000, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Leistyna, 2009; Oakes, Lipton, Anderson, & Stillman, 2012; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Social justice teaching boldly teaches, talks, and tackles “taboo” topics, such as, race, for the purpose of consciousness raising (Ayers & Ayers, 2014; Baldwin, 1963/1998; Collins, 1998).

Social justice discourse in education has been critiqued for marginalizing people of color, privileging dominant identities, and ignoring racism altogether (Agosto, 2010; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Social justice teaching, however, must be situated in the cultures, truth-telling histories, perspectives, specific oppressions, lived experiences, and realities of urban students of color (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Yosso, 2005). As such, it is culturally responsive (Gay, 2010), relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009, 2014), and sustaining (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). Foregrounded by relationship building, social justice teaching embodies intellectual rigor and flattens hierarchies. However, teachers must be supported in teaching in this manner, especially those who espouse social justice stances.
Supporting Teachers Committed to Social Justice

The good news is that some urban teachers believe that teaching is about social justice and social transformation (Kohli, 2009; Kohli et al., 2015; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Picower, 2011, 2015), and they often employ critical literacy approaches with their students (Jones & Enriquez, 2009). Nevertheless, the field is not well-informed about the ideological becoming of those teachers who espouse social justice stances—specifically, those who entered teaching to make a difference (Picower, 2011). Moreover, teacher education programs “can be productive or counterproductive to the development of ally identities for social justice” (Agosto, 2010, p. 508). In other words, teacher education programs do not always support social justice development in pre-service teachers, and even when they do, there are other problematic areas with which to contend. This is why I am intentional about specifically addressing race under the umbrella of social justice teaching. When teacher education students are not encouraged to disrupt dominant raced narratives, nor to learn from communities of color, there will be negative consequences for the students they teach.

Once teachers leave these programs, they need continued support in understanding what it means to teach for social justice. Freedman and Ball (2004) reminded teacher educators that “... we have to understand that we are responsible for an aspect of teaching that we don’t always consider – nurturing and guiding ideological becoming” (p. 30). Ideological becoming, in a Bakhtinian sense, conceptualizes how individuals develop worldviews or paradigms (Freedman & Ball, 2004). In-service teachers are often required to participate in traditional professional development (PD) initiatives that are unsuccessful in supporting the ideological becoming of new social justice educators (Kohli et al., 2015; Picower, 2011). These initiatives are seen as dumbing down teachers by training them to use “teacher proof” curriculum, and by not
encouraging them to be consciously aware of how the greater societal landscape connects to their classrooms (Kohli et al., 2015; McInerney, 2007). Even though “teaching is an intellectual and ethical enterprise” (Ayers & Ayers, 2014, p. 16), this PD does not support teachers in becoming public intellectuals (Mirra & Morrell, 2011).

Teachers who espouse social justice ideals need support and mentorship (Agosto, 2010; Merseth, Sommer, & Dickstein, 2008). At present, many teacher education programs do not adequately prepare preservice teachers to teach for social justice (Davila, 2011). As a field, we know even less about how teachers’ understandings of social justice are enacted through curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches, and social action (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Jones & Enriquez, 2009; Kohli et al., 2015; Picower, 2011, 2015). Davila (2011) points out that “It is through their day-to-day engagements and group conversations that teachers and students might collectively enact social justice in education...” (p. 15). Therefore, in order to study how teachers center social justice into their instruction, we must also observe them in the classroom.

**Listening and Responding to Students of Color**

While there is much research about good teachers of students of color (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009) and culturally appropriate and engaging ways to teach students of color (e.g., Gay, 2010; Tatum, 2005), we know very little about student perceptions of teachers and classroom practice. Moreover, very rarely do we study the best ways to listen and respond to the perceptions of students of color. Significantly, the perspectives of urban students of color are often silenced, ignored, overlooked, or excluded in schools and educational research (Ardizzone, 2006; Cook-Sather, 2002; Cushman, 2006; Howard, 2002; Nieto, 1994; Storz & Nestor, 2003), even though these students are most impacted by what happens in school (Nieto, 1994). Student perceptions must factor into our understanding of what strong social justice teaching looks like.
(Ardizzone, 2006; Cook-Sather, 2002; Haddix, Everson, & Hodge, 2015; Kinloch, 2009; Leistyna, 2009; Sands, Guzman, Stephens, & Boggs, 2007). Davila (2011) agreed, in writing “students have sophisticated interests and ideas, which not only deserve exploration but also provide the fodder to counter hegemonic narratives in teaching for social justice” (p. 32). As largely white middle class women teach students of color in urban areas, listening to student perspectives is essential. Additionally, teachers must be supported in responding to the perceptions of students of color in the most honoring ways, as they enact social justice teaching.

Many researchers (e.g., Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Kinloch, 2009) have documented the disappointing educative experiences of students of color, as told to them by the students themselves. Students are not oblivious, and they deeply perceive their marginalization. Dumas (2014) confirmed the following:

Marginalized groups suffer doubly in relation to schooling: First, the drudgery and futility of the school experience itself, and second, through the loss of hope for oneself individually, and for the group, collectively, in terms of improved social recognition and economic stability. (p. 8)

When students of color consistently experience low expectations, non-challenging curriculum, and hyper-surveillance in urban schools (Ayers & Ayers, 2014), they are more likely to lose hope for their futures. Moreover, transforming the oppressed state of their collective racial groups, or re-imagining their realities, may come to seem impossible. Students should not experience hopelessness as a direct result of their school experiences. Despite their best intentions and efforts, teachers cannot improve youth’s schooling and educative experiences without listening to their voices and allowing youth perspectives to guide their work. Before teachers can truly listen to urban students of color with the critical perspectives necessary to
improve schooling experiences and achieve racial justice, teachers must be supported to learn and grow.

**A Call for ‘Race Space’ Critical Professional Development**

Considering the need for racial learning among teachers, this research study interrogated teacher learning and classroom practice around race, racism, and social justice through professional development. My personal experience of sitting through the failed “race talk” described in the opening vignette, as a middle school teacher committed to social justice, was the key motivation behind this research project. While I would not consider the “race talk” at my school traditional PD, in that it was a bold and courageous attempt on my principal’s part to make us consciously aware of how the societal landscape connects to our classrooms, I do think that some components could have helped all of us have a more productive experience. Once we left the library that day, Erin, a white colleague on my grade level team, shared with me that she was silent because she was processing the fact that she was a part of the culture of power. She went on to say that it was ridiculous that there was not one Black student in the high school she attended. This suggests that she was grappling with her understanding of whiteness, and needed further support and time. The fact that we continued the conversation further shows that we “needed space to deeply interrogate [our] racial identit[ies] as teachers” (Philip, 2014, p. 237).

While researchers have studied racial literacy among K-12 students (e.g., Gardner, 2017; Philip, Olivares-Pasillas, & Rocha, 2016; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Vetter & Hungerford-Kressor, 2014) and teacher education students (e.g., Epstein & Gist, 2015; L. J. King, 2016; Mosley, 2010; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015; Skerrett, 2011), scant attention has been directed towards cultivating racial literacy among practicing teachers through teacher professional development.
Equally important, although researchers have studied ideological becoming among preservice and in-service teachers (e.g., Ball, 2009; Gomez, Lachuk, & Powell, 2015), an area which requires exploration is how teacher professional development can support ideological becoming around social justice. Moreover, researchers have given little theoretical attention to the relationship between actualizing a Third Space, ideological becoming, and racial literacy among teachers, within the context of teacher professional development. Previous research has investigated the formation of Third Space—from diverse theoretical interpretations—among youth (e.g., Gutiérrez, 2008; Idrus, 2015; Moje at al., 2004; Quigley, 2013), students in teacher education programs (e.g., Flessner, 2014; Hallman, 2012; Skerrett, 2010), and parents (e.g., Lewis, 2018; Turner, 2016). Thus, with the theoretical groundings of critical race theory (CRT) in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005), ideological becoming (Bakhtin, 1981; Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1928/1994; Freedman & Ball, 2004; Voloshinov, 1994), and Third Space (Bhabha, 2004), I designed ‘race space’ Critical Professional Development (CPD) (Kohli et al., 2015). This initiative aimed to support urban in-service teachers in learning about race, racism, and social justice teaching.

As shown in Figure 1, I employ the term ‘race space’ to describe an aim to engender transformational, reflective, real talk and action around race and racism, through collective effort. A ‘race space’ CPD is an ideological horizon—hopefully, like Third Space—in which teachers can “reconceive who they are and what they might accomplish” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 148) for racial and social justice, in the classroom and beyond (see Figure 1), through ideological products (e.g., critical texts) and ideological creation (e.g., dialogue). As Davila (2011) argued, “It is remiss to think that teachers independently develop insight and strategies to teach for social
justice without a structure for reflection, practice, and support” (p. 44). Contrary to understanding ‘race space’ as the relationship between a physical or geographic space and race (Neely & Samura, 2011), it is hoped that ‘race space’ CPD will actualize a Third Space (Bhabha, 2004) wherein teachers are supported to enact social justice teaching in classrooms.

**Figure 1. ‘Race Space’ CPD**

‘Race space’ CPD aims to disrupt dominant narratives and investigate racial histories and identities as they pertain to schooling (refer to Figure 1). Here, the understanding of whiteness as a social construct that benefits white people regardless of gender, class, ability, sexuality, etc. (Sullivan, 2014), is advanced. These benefits and privileges are maintained through white supremacy and white power movements (Sullivan, 2014). Some white teachers use various tools, such as emotionality, to protect white supremacy when learning about whiteness (Picower, 2009). For this reason, the emotionality of whiteness (Matias, 2016) is also unpacked in ‘race space’ CPD. However, at the same time, “the voice of people of color is [centered and] required for a deep understanding of the educational system” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 14). This means that the narratives and perspectives of people of color are used to understand racism in schools.
A ‘race space’ CPD, like Third Space, “attends to both vertical and horizontal forms of learning” about race “resulting in more robust and historicizing literacies” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149); thus, “creating a learning community, one that sustains dialogue to move beyond the superficial, ritualized conversation” (McVee, 2012, p. 3). This space aims to provide an open and honest discussion of how racialized individuals are living and being together, situated in a sociohistorical context by creating generative themes (Freire, 1970) around race. In a ‘race space’ CPD, it is hoped that traditional boundaries become blurred and taboo topics are allowed. A ‘race space’ CPD uses student perspectives and localized knowledge (McVee, 2012) to inform how race is discussed. The localized knowledges of all participants are examined in order to better understand how these knowledges inform their perspectives.

**Critical Professional Development (CPD): Background and Description**

Rita Kohli, Bree Picower, Antonio Nieves Martinez, and Natalia Ortiz developed CPD. They are social justice scholars, researchers, teacher educators, and activists. Each scholar is involved in one of the following grassroots organizations: The New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE), The People’s Education Movement (People’s Ed), and the Institute for Teachers of Color Committed to Racial Justice (ITOC). These organizations support the professional development of in-service teachers who are committed to social justice. While presenting on panel together about alternatives to PD, they noted the common themes across their programs, ultimately constructing a framework for CPD that centers the needs of social justice educators (Kohli et al., 2015). Sadly, Antonio passed away on Tuesday, July 11, 2017. Prior to his sudden death, we had many discussions about CPD and his insights informed my research design.
CPD operationalizes Freire’s (1970) notion of dialogic action, in that it is filled with dialogue, cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis among facilitators and participants. CPD comes from the people, in that there is no one expert prescribing what teachers should or should not be doing (Kohli et al., 2015). Instead, educators critically analyze their realities and take action accordingly (Kohli et al., 2015). CPD allows teachers to reflect on their racial positioning. I propose CPD via ‘race space’ as a way to support the ideological becoming of social justice oriented teachers. A CPD provides a structure which supports productive environments for unpacking race and racism.

**Teacher Reflection Framework for ‘Race Space’ CPD**

One of my biggest critiques of the “race talk” that took place at my school is that it lacked the space, time, and structures for reflecting on the readings. McVee and Boyd (2016) proposed a framework for teacher reflection which supports the purposes of a ‘race space’ CPD. The authors build from the work of literacy scholars Susan Florio-Ruane and Taffy Raphael on using the Book Club model with adult learners. In their framework, the Book Club model is employed to discuss “diversities...generally [referring] to mother tongue, economic standing, social class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion and culture, and various forms of literacy” (McVee & Boyd, 2016, p. 2). Teachers reflect on these diversities through reading, personal narrative, dialogic interaction, and multimodal response “to be better informed about the nexus between literacy, language, and culture” (McVee & Boyd, 2016, p. 3) and to become what Bruner (1990) calls their “possible selves.” The purpose of reflection in a ‘race space’ CPD is to inform teachers of the nexus between racial literacy, social justice ideological becoming, and social justice teaching. In this sense, ‘race space’ CPD extends McVee and Boyd’s (2016) teacher

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5 See “Racial Literacy” section in Chapter 2 for explanation.
6 See “Social Justice Ideological Becoming and Third Space” section in Chapter 2 for explanation.
reflection framework through its specific attention to, and articulation of, a social justice approach to teacher reflection within teacher professional development that is outside of formal classrooms in teacher education programs. A ‘race space’ CPD undergirds Freire’s (1970) notion of praxis; the recursive relationship between intellectual growth, reflection, and acting for social justice.

**The Reading List!: ‘Race Space’ CPD Reading Selection Process**

The reading list is arguably one of the most crucial components of a ‘race space’ CPD. Researchers often seek to understand how teachers learn about race and racism through the perspectives of solely white teachers, and white teachers with limited levels of racial literacy at that. Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, and Joseph (2005) found that the concerns and voices of white teachers are centered in most discussions and readings on race. Often the literature used to discuss race and racism in teacher education courses tell the story of one lone white teacher figuring out teaching and race while struggling under the “burden” of urban students of color. These white teacher centered narratives often highlight the humanity of white people, as one white teacher tries to navigate this “difficult” new terrain of being, living, and teaching in urban communities of color. Philip (2014) asserted that “Implicitly or explicitly, teacher education prioritizes white teachers’ self-examination of their deficit understandings of students of color [and teachers of color]...” (p. 236). Although white teachers make up the majority of the teaching force in many urban areas, their discussions of race and racism do not need to always center whiteness, a factor which further marginalizes people of color. Furthermore, Agosto (2010) claimed that this individual, or person, oriented justice does not call attention to social power, nor to the relationship building between dominant and oppressed groups, which is necessary to achieve true justice.
Brock et al. (2006) advised the careful selection of texts; these texts must be personal and provocative in their dealings with difference, and must challenge teachers to “rethink [their] ‘readings’ of children and their families” (p. 53). Thus, the reading list in a ‘race space’ CPD centers the narratives of communities of color and teachers of color. A ‘race space’ CPD for teachers who teach urban students of color fights against white privilege, in its tendency to “take back the center” (Wildman, 2005). In contrast, the literature selected is humanizing for both the teachers and the students represented, and “…draws from emotional strengths found inside urban communities of color and supports the pedagogical and emotional investment” (Matias & Liou, 2015, p. 601). Considering these points, I present several components of a beginning, and ever evolving, process for selecting readings for ‘race space’ CPD. Selected readings in ‘race space’ CPD:

- Call attention to the normalcy of whiteness in schools as a hegemonic structure
- Do not view urban students of color in terms of deficit
- Do not portray a “white savior”
- Do not focus solely on a white teacher’s grappling with difference through narrow lenses and narrow understandings of students of color. These understandings position students of color as objects instead of subjects (Montecinos, 2004) in white teachers’ journey to reconcile their inner turmoil of race and racism.
- Do not represent students of color as isolated entities in classrooms (having no interest in or deep study of their communities, families, or racial and cultural histories)

Essentially, students of color are not a means to an end in ‘race space’ CPD. Therefore, each reading must be selected with great care and consideration.
Exploring the Possibilities of ‘Race Space’ CPD

Although my research project proposed a particular model for supporting social justice educators in their teaching and fighting for racial equity, I recognize that professional development alone will not save our schools (Anyon, 1994). As scholars and academics who espouse social justice, we must simultaneously address the systems, structures, and politics of schooling that produce the treacherous conditions of urban schools and subpar educational experiences for urban students of color (Anyon, 1994; Nieto, 1994; Philip, 2012). That is to say, it is not my intention to place the weight of transforming urban education solely on the shoulders of teachers. Teachers do, however, have tremendous power. According to Lalas (2007), teachers “may not be able to transform the society’s fundamental inequities, but they can contribute in many practical ways by raising the level of social awareness of their students and guiding the curriculum for social justice instruction” (p. 5). In a word, teachers are able to shape curriculum and instruction in ways that allow students to critically read the world (Morrell, Dueñaz, Garcia, & López, 2013) and transform their realities (Leistyna, 2009). As we assist urban teachers, however, we cannot forget to listen to the voices of their students.

Despite my greatest intentions in proposing a ‘race space’ CPD, I recognize that “It is difficult to predict how people might react when their ways of knowing are called into question” (Davila, 2011, p. 32). In other words, I cannot simply implement a new model, but rather must, study its nature and influence on teachers and their students. Considering the issues discussed, this ethnographic case study explored the following broad question: what is the nature of ‘race space’ CPD? Specifically, among urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, I investigated how a ‘race space’ CPD cultivates (a) racial literacy, (b) social justice teaching, and
(c) ideological becoming. In the next chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework and literature review that informs this research inquiry.
CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter 1, I presented my rationale for creating and exploring ‘race space’ CPD with teachers committed to social justice. I begin this chapter by discussing the theoretical framework that undergirds this ethnographic case study of ‘race space’ CPD. Next, I detail my review of literature on teacher professional development situated in social justice frameworks; teachers learning about race and racism; teachers enacting social justice teaching; and listening to the voices of urban students of color.

Theoretical Framework

Daresh (1987) critiqued researchers of in-service teacher education for presenting their work as atheoretical, and called for “a theoretical conceptualization of effective staff development and inservice education” (Daresh, 1987, p. 10). Thus, this study of professional development for in-service teachers committed to social justice grows out of theories that help to illuminate inequities in society, and call for individuals to act for social justice to change them. Specifically, critical race theory (CRT) in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005), ideological becoming (Bakhtin, 1981; Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1928/1994; Freedman & Ball, 2004; Voloshinov, 1994), and Third Space (Bhabha, 2004) inform this work. In the following sections, I discuss how these theories foreground this research study.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Why CRT? In the previous chapter, I argued for teachers to (a) engage in deep dialogue about race, (b) interrogate their racial identities, and (c) seriously consider the perspectives of students of color while doing so. My arguments are used to support my rationale for the creation and study of ‘race space’ CPD. Critical race theory (CRT) in education offers a critical analysis
of racial oppression in society and in schools, which is necessary for understanding the nature of supporting teachers in their racial learning, and to act for social justice. Furthermore, CRT is important to this study because it articulates the racial understandings that teachers must possess in order to act for social justice. Equally important, discourses around social justice\(^7\) are often critiqued for being vague and undertheorized (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). Foregrounding notions of social justice in critical race theory is one way to avoid such critiques (Young, 2011).

**CRT’s historical background.** CRT was developed in the 1980s by legal scholars, Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, in response to the absence of race and the presence of colorblind ideologies in critical legal studies (Tate, 1997). In the 1990s, educational scholars Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate, IV expanded CRT to education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), to study how race plays out in schools and educational policy. It is important to note that CRT in education has been charged with exclusively focusing on Black students (Dumas & Ross, 2016). However, while Ladson-Billings and Tate are African American, and centered their early arguments for CRT in education on the state of African American students in U.S. schools, CRT is a theory of race and not a theory of blackness (Dumas & Ross, 2016). In fact, under the umbrella of CRT are race specific critical theories, such as LatCrit, AsianCrit, TribalCrit, WhiteCrit (Yosso, 2005), and BlackCrit (Dumas & Ross, 2016). Each of these theories understands the nuances of how race and racism uniquely affect each racialized group. Operationalizing CRT in ‘race space’ CPD means attending to and studying the race-specific critical theories of the teachers and students involved. However, whiteness and white privilege are studied in ‘race space’ CPD, in order to expose how schools perpetuate dominant cultural norms.

\(^7\) See “Social Justice Teaching” section in Chapter 1 for a description of social justice teaching.
**What is CRT?** Critical race theory (CRT) in education recognizes racism as a normal part of U. S. society; theorizes race as a social construction; prioritizes the distinctive racialized experiences of people of color in order to examine how race and racism operate; and challenges oppression for social justice and social transformation (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005). Counterstorytelling is one CRT technique used to center the racialized experiences of people of color, in an effort to disrupt dominant narratives. Counterstorytelling describes attempts to “cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 159). Challenging deficit thinking, single stories, and dominant narratives through counterstorytelling is critical race theory in praxis and anti-racist practice (Stovall et al., 2009; Yamamoto, 1997).

Operating from CRT, I embed my own counternarratives throughout this dissertation; this functions to center my experiences as a racialized person. My use of narratives and vignettes is not only to provide a counter-story, however. This strategy allows me to use my standpoint and experiences of being both Black and woman, as “outsider within” (Collins, 1986), to better understand the nature of ‘race space’ CPD. Moreover, CRT also recognizes the intersectionality of race and other forms of oppression (e.g., gender, class, sexuality, etc.), and how these intersections further complicate how individuals experience the world (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Endarkened feminist epistemologies affirm the subjectivities of the intersectionality that I, and others, experience.

*Embodying endarkened feminist epistemologies as a Black Feminist Pedagogue:*

**Theorizing “I” subjectivities within CRT.** Grounded in Black feminism and intersectionality, Cynthia Dillard (Nana Mansa II of Mpeasem, Ghana, West Africa) termed and conceptualized
endarkened feminist epistemology (Dillard, 2000, 2006, 2012) “to construct stories on educational transformation as raced, gendered, and cultural embodied work” (Evans-Winters & Love, 2015, p. 1). In essence, researchers interested in educational transformation understand how their “I” subjectivities will inform and make/hinder the possibility of accomplishing social justice. Dillard’s (2000) endarkened feminist epistemology articulates:

…how reality is known when based in the historical roots of Black feminist thought, embodying a distinguishable difference in cultural standpoint, located in the intersection/overlap of the culturally constructed socializations of race, gender, and other identities and the historical and contemporary contexts of oppressions and resistance for African-American women. (p. 662)

Theoretically, endarkened feminist epistemology offers a way of understanding how participants are experiencing reality, individually and collectively, that centers traditions in Black women’s ways of knowing. The ever-present and historical experiences of Black women, as an intersectional marginalized group, can shed light on the nuances, complexity, and intricacies of people as they learn within the context of ‘race space’ CPD. Furthermore, situating endarkened feminist epistemology in CRT interrogates the theoretical implications of the relationship between I-researcher and them-researched in studies of race in education.

As a Black feminist pedagogue embodying endarkened feminist epistemology, I am compelled to labor for the good of my community, others, and myself (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1994). My standpoint of the nuances of my reality helps me to humanize—and empathize with—the complexity in which others experience their realities. Black feminist pedagogues operate from their whole beings, from their hearts and spirits, from a place of love, and in community with others (Dillard, 2000, 2012; hooks, 1994). Black feminist pedagogues work for the good of

**Racial literacy: Extending CRT.** Similar to Black feminist pedagogues, the call to action for critical race theorists is very real. Kohli (2009) argued that, “When teachers do not actively challenge racism, often unknowingly, they are condoning it” (p. 244). Certainly, employing CRT is not just about theorizing: it is about working towards racial justice in ways that improve the educative experiences of students of color. Accordingly, racial literacy is one way to extend CRT and act for racial justice in schools. Racially literate teachers possess “deepened personal understandings of how race shapes choice (or lack thereof) made about housing, education, and health care” (Mosley & Rogers, 2011, p. 305). By assessing the shortcomings of Brown v. Board of Education, critical race theorist and legal scholar, Lani Guinier (2004), formulated the concept of racial literacy, or the act of “read[ing] race in its psychological, interpersonal, and structural dimensions” (p. 366). Guinier argued that racial liberalism, which “emphasized the corrosive effect of individual prejudice and the importance of interracial contact in promoting tolerance” (Guinier, 2004, p. 95), led many to believe that the Brown decision would accomplish racial progress. Racial liberalism ignores the existence of structural racism, or “the normalized and legitimized range of policies, practices, and attitudes that routinely produce cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color, especially Black people” (Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America at Brown University, 2018). For people of color, such policies, practices, and attitudes manifest in housing, schooling, jobs, health care, and incarceration. Racial literacy considers how the relationship between power, agency, and the intersectionality of race, class, gender, geography, and other factors, shape the lives of racialized people (Guinier, 2004).
The normalization of structural racism is also evident through racial microaggressions, or “everyday forms of racism” that “are systemically mediated by institutionalized racism (i.e. structures and processes), and guided by ideologies of white supremacy that justify the superiority of a dominant group (whites) over non-dominant groups (People of Color)” (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015, p. 297). The superiority of white people in society, as a dominant group, is visible through the privileges and benefits that white individuals receive simply for possessing whiteness, which is better known as the concept of whiteness as property (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In contrast to Guinier’s definition of racial literacy, Twine (2004) considers a racially literate person to be one who merges a complex awareness of racism and “everyday forms of racism” as part of a larger system, with anti-racist action and resistance. Both Guinier’s and Twine’s articulation of racial literacy inform this dissertation.

Racial literacy is important to this ethnographic study of ‘race space’ CPD, because it describes how embodying and enacting CRT could look. Racial literacy offers an extension to CRT that can be used to understand teacher racial learning within ‘race space’ CPD. Racial literacy is “opening and sustaining dialog about race and the racist acts we witness in our school and home communities, and society writ-large” (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015, p. 60). In essence, racial literacy requires a deep understanding of structural racism and a willingness to discuss these understandings (Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015; Skerrett, 2011).

Racial literacy is acting for racial justice. Ladson-Billings (1998) warned that “…CRT in education is likely to become the ‘darling’ of the radical left, continue to generate scholarly papers and debate, and never penetrate the classrooms and daily experiences of students of color” (p. 22). In other words, we must be in constant critical race praxis, where we actively work towards antiracist practices for students of color (Stovall, 2011; Stovall et al., 2009). This
research study heeds Ladson-Billings’ warning in its involvement with actual teachers who teach students of color. One way to engender social justice and antiracism in education is to support the racial literacy cultivation and social justice ideological becoming of in-service teachers through ‘race space’ CPD as Third Space.

**Social Justice Ideological Becoming**

Ideological becoming is important to this study of ‘race space’ CPD, with teachers committed to social justice, because it attends to mindset shifts and learning within and through individuals. Ideological becoming conceptualizes how individuals develop worldviews or paradigms (Freedman & Ball, 2004). This becoming occurs as individuals consume various ideological products within a given ideological horizon (Bakhtin, 1981; Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1928/1994; Voloshinov, 1994). Specifically, one’s ideological becoming is contingent upon their rejection or embracing (Ball, 2009) of ideological products which cause cognitive dissonance. Social justice ideological becoming occurs as individuals consume various ideological products around larger social justice understandings, and enact social justice teaching. For example, teachers must understand that classrooms are heavily situated in histories of oppression, American racial ideologies, and the present social climate.

Social justice ideological becoming is evident when teachers are able to make connections between the state of schools and the historical/political contexts in which they exist. More than simply making these connections, social justice ideological becoming is apparent in teacher reflection around how they are implicated in educational equity/inequity, and how they act for social justice. A ‘race space’ CPD is an ideological horizon—like Third Space—in which teachers can “reconceive who they are and what they might accomplish” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 148) for racial justice, in the classroom and beyond, through ideological products (e.g., critical
texts used in book club) and ideological creation (e.g., dialogue). When a Third Space is actualized, social justice ideological becoming is possible.

**Third Space Theory**

Third Space theory was adopted because I found it crucial to my inquiry into the actual “nature” of ‘race space’ CPD. As Figure 2 indicates, the notion of a Third Space allowed me to imagine a space where the processes of racial literacy cultivation, and social justice ideological becoming around critical race theory and social justice understandings, are able to emanate. Moreover, Third Space wrestles with the “beyond” of individuals, “in order [for them] to return in a spirit of revision and reconstruction, to the political conditions of the present” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 4). Thus, as shown in Figure 2, teachers are urged to use the processes cultivated in ‘race space’ CPD to inform their enactment of social justice teaching in classrooms and activism for racial and social justice. Figure 2 also shows how endarkened feminist epistemologies are employed to interpret these processes, and the Third Space itself.

**Figure 2. Theoretical Synergy for Exploring ‘Race Space’ CPD’s Nature**
Third Space theory calls attention to the need for an ‘inbetween’ space for teachers with a shared identity of being committed to social justice, where their multiple funds of knowledge (Moje et al., 2004; Moll et al., 1992) are affirmed, and where problematic ideologies can be unearthed and challenged. Teachers exist in a first space of their worlds, families, and communities, and they also exist in a second space of the institution of school. The first and second spaces of teachers’ lives have particular utterances. According to Bakhtin (1994), “The utterance is filled with dialogic overtones, and they must be taken into account in order to understand fully the style of the utterance” (p. 86). The utterances that arise in Third Space, through deep dialogue, are only comprehensible when considering how various ideological products from first space and second space imprint them.

On the one hand, both first space and second space engender localized knowledges that are beautifully distinctive, and that are essential to understanding the mosaic which is the world. On the other hand, both spaces engender ideologies that, if left unquestioned, can contradict one’s commitment to social justice. These spaces are often presented as binaries (Moje et al., 2004). However, as teachers come together to learn, Third Space makes visible a hybrid of first space and second space, an ‘inbetween,’ “political space for…a social imaginary” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 361) where teacher-teacher and teacher-facilitator dynamics are examined. As Moje and colleagues (2004) advised, I employ the terms first space and second space not for the purposes of prioritizing one over the other, but to show how these spaces interact, and are reconstructed, to actualize a Third Space.

**Actualizing Third Space.** A Third Space actualizes when people come together through trust, mutual respect, and support, in order to “dwell ‘in the beyond’” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 10) and engage in sustained deep dialogue. A rich interactional matrix constituted by a range of
languages and embodied practices, sustained dialogue and dialogic action, and vulnerable examinations of self, occurs in the “beyond.” Moreover, a Third Space is actualized when the ideological products of students of color signify from the periphery of teachers, schools, and whiteness, and all other authorized power (Bhabha, 2004). Third Space, like CRT, privileges the historically displaced (Bhabha, 2004), for the purposes of meaning-making.

The actualization of Third Space is also contingent upon what actors (e.g., teachers) actually do in the ‘in-between’ and the ideological creations which emerge there. Still, there is a recursive relationship between emerging ideological creations and preexisting ideological products. Furthermore, the interaction amid various ideological products that enter this ‘in-between’ advances its ambivalence. A Third Space causes displacement, or perceptual and cognitive anxiety (Bhabha, 2004), as one’s ways of knowing/acting are both welcomed and called into question.

**Third Space for possible selves in the “here and now.”** Bruner’s (1990) notion of “possible selves”, or how individuals could be/act as a consequence of meaning-making, is conceivable when a Third Space for social justice ideological becoming is actualized. ‘Race space’ CPD is intended to be “a space of intervention in the here and now” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 10). Here, individuals engage in meaning-making for the purposes of acting in the present of their first and second spaces. Specifically, Third Space acts as “a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 10). In the case of in-service urban teachers committed to social justice, this ‘inbetween’ allows them to reflect, dialog, reimagine, create, and prepare for their performance of politics (Bhabha, 2004) in the present; that is, how they teach and interact with students of color in schools, and how they act for racial and social justice in the world. According to Bhabha (2004), “These ‘inbetween’
spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (p. 2). In essence, Third Space allows teachers to work together towards their “possible selves” in ways that can shape a more socially just world and more just educative experiences for students of color.

The remainder of this chapter is a review of literature focusing on the following topics: a) teacher professional development situated in social justice frameworks; b) teachers learning about race and racism; c) supporting teachers committed to social justice to enact social justice teaching; and d) listening to the perceptions of students of color.

**Review of Research Studies**

**Teacher Professional Development Situated in Social Justice Frameworks**

This literature review includes 49 research studies of professional development for urban in-service K-12 teachers of mostly students of color (from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) in the U.S. Studies where the majority of teacher participants taught in rural and/or suburban contexts to mostly white students were excluded. Broadly defining professional development, this review includes graduate courses, workshops, and trainings for practicing teachers. However, only studies of professional development situated in various social justice and equity goals were included. For example, some of the professional development initiatives represented hoped to improve the educational and schooling experiences of students of color by advancing culturally relevant approaches among teachers. Excluded are studies of professional development that taught content area knowledge, or teaching strategies apart from a social justice framework.
The high concentration of research on social justice oriented professional development published in the 2000s is worth noting. In the 1980s and 1990s—on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement—educational scholars worked to advance multicultural education, anti-racist teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and critical pedagogy in response to schools becoming more Black and Brown, while the teaching force remained white (Nieto, 1994). This groundwork paved the way for this dissertation inquiry, as well as for other, similar studies. Considering the time it takes various frameworks to popularize and implement, it follows then that there would be few studies of teacher professional development situated in social justice frameworks in the 1990s (and none in the 1980s), although such PD may have previously existed. It is equally important that much of the literature reviewed are studies of PD offered outside of traditional district mandated PD, involving voluntary participation. What follows is a brief historical background of the contention between teachers being in control of their professional learning and district mandates.

**A brief historical background of professional development.** Since the late 1800s—prior to “staff development” and “professional development” mandates—there existed practicing teachers who assumed responsibility for continuing their own education (Powell, Berliner, & Casanova, 1992). These teachers created study groups in order to learn more about effective classroom practice. There is a long history of teachers seeking and shaping their own professional development (Powell et al., 1992). In light of current professional development mandates, it seems that educational policymakers have forgotten this history. Staff development, a 1980s buzzword, was the result of educational reformers’ concerns regarding the knowledge and skill base of teachers and education professionals at the school-wide level, taking into consideration the ever-changing requirements for teachers (Powell et al., 1992). Districts began
to control the professional development their staff received. This control contributed to the narrow intellectual development that teachers underwent through district mandated PD (Borko, 2004; Little, 1989, 1993; Powell et al., 1992). According to Little (1989), “Teachers' opportunities for intellectual growth and career advancement are bound closely to the conceptions of teaching and professional development held by districts” (p. 168). Further, bureaucratic control of professional development “denies the growth of a professional culture” (Powell et al., 1992, p. 282) among teachers.

**Professional development teachers desire.** Teachers know the type of professional development that they need, and their perspectives should help to shape the professional development that they receive (Abu El-Haj, 2003; Irby, Hall, & Hill, 2013; L. L. Johnson, Sieben, & Buxton, 2018; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Lee, 2004; Powell et al., 1992; Wager & Foote, 2013; Yost & Vogel, 2007). Moreover, teachers should have autonomy and choice in the professional development that they receive (Little, 1989; Powell et al., 1992). Skerrett, Warrington, and Williamson (2018) found that equity-oriented urban teachers sought out professional development opportunities outside of formal teacher education programs. They made a distinction between professional development and professional learning. They “wished for, and sought out, professional learning spaces within and outside their schools to develop and strengthen their practices of social justice oriented teaching” (Skerrett et al., 2018, p. 126). Teachers found that some formal professional learning spaces supported their identities, and some did not. For this reason, some teachers initiated alternative learning spaces within their schools.

Relatedly, Navarro (2018) described how teachers committed to social justice sustained themselves in the current neoliberal accountability-driven climate of schools, through a teacher
inquiry group. He interviewed 25 participants and found that they engaged in a “community of transformative praxis” (p. 1) where teachers worked together to develop their social justice teaching, as well as social justice processes. In a similar fashion, Pour-Khorshid (2016) described how the H.E.L.L.A. Educators of Color study group validated the *collective testimonio* of teacher participants who shared their plight, in working within a system that both ignores and devalues their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Significantly, a growing amount of research indicates that teachers also want opportunities to learn from, listen to, and talk to other teachers (C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009; Lee et al., 2008; Levin, Smith, & Strickland, 2003; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Picower, 2011; Powell et al., 1992). Such opportunities are contingent on how PD is organized. Through study groups where teachers read and responded to multicultural literature, Levin et al. (2003) found that teachers were able to engage in a more critical dialogue than that of the professional development that they typically engaged in. In these contexts, participants reported that they benefited from the content and related personalized discussions. Similarly, the teachers in Kinloch and Dixon’s (2018) Bringing Learning to Life (BLTL) study appreciated that they were free to think through challenging ideas during their professional development. Kinloch and Dixon (2018) conducted a critical ethnography of urban teachers participating in the BLTL professional development initiative to understand how PD that considers teacher-identified learning needs is publicly engaged and centers social justice. Through a qualitative analysis of teacher interviews and observations, the researchers found that teachers wanted PD to be teacher-centered and engaging. The design of ‘race space’ CPD provides teachers with opportunities to

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8 This acronym is a play on the word “hella”, a conversational descriptor commonly used in the Bay Area of California. Here it stands for Healing, Empowerment, Love, Liberation, and Action (Pour-Khorshid, 2016).
engage in dialogue, learn from one another, and shape sessions, as the research described above suggests.

**Professional development that creates particular spaces.** PD that is a collaboration between university-based educators and school-based educators acts as a “mediating...social space” between the two contexts (L. L. Johnson et al., 2018, p. 175). In the literature on such collaborations, the need for collaborative spaces to examine and explore issues and strategies for improving practice is a recurring theme (Abu El-Haj, 2003; C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Navarro, 2018; Picower, 2011; Shockley & Banks, 2011). Pour-Khorshid (2016) described H.E.L.L.A. as a space teachers of color “needed and...cannot get within institutions”, a space where they shared their “fears and tears” (p. 30). Specifically, teachers want spaces for professional dialogue and learning (Scanlan, 2010; Skerrett et al., 2018). For example, Picower (2011) designed and researched the Social Justice Critical Inquiry Project, to understand how to support new teachers committed to social justice. Over the course of 1-2 years, twelve teachers participated in the project, meeting on a bi-weekly basis to complete various activities (e.g., responding to readings, creating social justice curriculum, and listening to guest speakers). She found that teachers created a collaborative space where participation was expected of everyone. With no one person positioned as “expert”, teachers were able to learn from one another. Picower found that teachers supported each other in challenging oppressive school structures, and other such aspects. Moreover, the space welcomed differing views, tensions, and discussion of “taboo” topics.

With respect to inviting tension, Necochea and Cline (2008) conducted an exploratory study of dialogue among 500 binational educators residing in the Tijuana/San Diego region (that is, the U.S.-Mexico border), as they participated in six Border Pedagogy “Cafés” over four years.
The researchers found that Cafés created space for bilingual, bicultural, and binational conversations that “allowed a collective wisdom and creativity [among]…teachers to emerge” (Necochea & Cline, 2008, p. 246). Although the teachers were honest, open, and listened to others during dialogic exchanges, Border Pedagogy Cafés welcomed dialogic messiness and tension. Other scholars have observed the importance of creating dialogic spaces within PD (Kinloch & Dixon, 2017), where facilitators make space for political grappling and examining policies which have detrimental consequences for students of color (Molle, 2013).

Some studies promote creating a “safe” space within professional development for teacher vulnerability (Navarro, 2018), and teacher exploration of “attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, and biases about racial and cultural issues” (Shockley & Banks, 2011, p. 224). In the context of professional development on topics of social justice, especially among interracial groups, the key questions are for whom is such space “safe”, and is “safe” space sustainable? Shockley and Banks (2011) acknowledged that even when a “safe” space exists, teachers might hide their beliefs and blame prevailing injustices on an ambiguous society. Thus, as scholars have argued, teachers need space for self-reflection around social justice understandings (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Ball, 2009; DeMulder, Stribling, & Day, 2014; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Navarro, 2018). To this end, Mirra and Morrell (2011) advocate for PD spaces which highlight youth voices, while fighting for educational reform.

In line with this dissertation, scholars are beginning to devote more attention to PD spaces created specifically for teachers committed to social justice (Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Navarro, 2018; Picower, 2011; Pour-Khorshid, 2016). These spaces are often teacher-led (Navarro, 2018) and described as anti-hierarchal (Pour-Khorshid, 2016). They also aim to cultivate solidarity and unity among participants by centering teachers’ needs and experiences
(Navarro, 2018; Necochea & Cline, 2008; Pour-Khorshid, 2016, In Press). According to Kinloch and Dixon (2017), “creating spaces in which teachers can story—or exchange, critique and reflect on—feelings of marginalization and racism, and other oppressions is central to creating and enacting liberatory forms of …education” (p. 342). In order to support social justice oriented teachers, PD should be conducted in intimate (Navarro, 2018), humanizing spaces (Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Pour-Khorshid, In Press) where teachers can problematize their experiences of marginalization and isolation in schools.

Pour-Khorshid (In Press) described the particular importance of using professional development to create sacred spaces of healing for teachers of color committed to social justice. By creating and facilitating a racial affinity group, Pour-Khorshid centered the needs and experiences of twelve teachers of color in ways that prompted their healing, a necessity given the oppressive and racist schooling environments in which they worked. Furthermore, Pour-Khorshid (2016) claimed that “In our space, our lived experiences carry power, they inform our perspectives when we feel tensions with oppressive educational practices, curricula, standards, and reforms and they remind us of why they are poisonous to our collective spirit” (p. 30). In order to teach for social justice, teachers need learning spaces which protect and preserve their spirits.

Some researchers propose methods and strategies that are useful for creating particular spaces. Skerrett et al. (2018) found the strategy of allowing teachers to share their concerns at the beginning of sessions to be useful for creating productive spaces. Equally important, Pour-Khorshid’s (2016) purposeful use of collective testimonio and an “ethic of collective self-care…open[ed] up a space for healing and love” (p. 20). Both Skerrett et al. (2018) and Pour-Khorshid (2016) recognized how PD which centers the overall wellness of teachers creates
humanizing spaces which are productive for learning. Research studies have also explored how the use of artistic expression can create spaces where teachers feel comfortable sharing their perspectives on social justice. For example, Catalano and Leonard (2016) demonstrated how dance created a trusting shared space of embodied connections between participants, in ways that were conducive to social justice discussions. Furthermore, Shockley and Banks (2011) suggested that a “safe” space for expressing views develops when teachers create art and share their personal connections to it.

Overall, there has been few investigations around the theorization and actualization of particular spaces in the context of teacher professional development. While Baily and Katradis (2016) mentioned that, through trust, a “third space” was created in a graduate program course for practicing teachers, the researchers do not theorize third space. It is important to theorize, as does this dissertation, how PD can actualize a Third Space.

Professional development offering classroom support. In order to be effective, professional development must acknowledge and consider the realities of professional practice (Anyon, 1994; Irby et al., 2013; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018). Moreover, teachers who want to teach through various social justice frameworks want explicit support in classroom implementation (Irby et al., 2013; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018). Anyon (1994) reported that “the promise of in-classroom support” is what attracted urban public school teachers to her professional development on cooperative learning (p. 18). Additionally, teachers want PD that offers coaching on the content they are learning (Batt, 2010), and support in creating content area instructional units (C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009; Lee, 2004; Lee, Hart, Cuevas, & Enders, 2004). Therefore, PD designers should spend more attention on methods and strategies that support teachers to enact what they are learning (Irby et al., 2013).
In fact, Batt (2010) contended that “Just as students need guided practice to become adept at newly acquired skills, teachers benefit substantially from cognitive coaching while they strive to apply new instructional strategies in the midst of multiple demands on their time” (p. 1005). In making this claim, Batt urges PD facilitators to take responsibility for supporting the learning processes of teachers. Through a mixed-method analysis, Batt (2010) discovered that, while teachers expressed a commitment to the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) after participating in a PD, implementation required cognitive coaching. She argued that professional development must allow time for cognitive coaching on PD content in order for implementation to occur. Specifically, teachers who did not have a background in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) “benefited from one-on-one direct (re)teaching of second language acquisition principles and additional demonstrations of SIOP strategies” (Batt, 2010, p. 1004). Similarly, Picower (2011) reported that when PD time and space was granted for social justice curriculum planning, teachers provided each other with feedback on their units and tried out new ideas. In line with these findings, this dissertation explores how professional development can support teachers’ enactment of social justice teaching.

In addition to providing cognitive coaching (Batt, 2010), and time for curriculum planning (Picower, 2011), there are varying approaches to classroom support via professional development which teachers find valuable. For instance, research revealed that teachers appreciated observing each other teach (C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009), master teachers (Foster, 2004), and modelled teaching by facilitators (Yost & Vogel, 2007). Overwhelmingly, the teacher participants in the Lee et al. (2008) study considered the provision of supplies to implement teaching strategies, as offered by the intervention, to be a strength. Moreover, the teachers were able to conduct the science experiments themselves during PD before leading their students
through them (Lee et al., 2008). However, there are times when facilitators provided classroom support by way of modelling, materials, and resources, and teachers either did not take up such opportunities or did not follow through on their part of the work (A. J. Rodriguez, Zozakiewicz, & Yerrick, 2005).

**Studies of teacher change via professional development.** In order for teacher change to occur, teachers need to experience “displacement spaces” that evoke “troubling insights” about themselves, unearthing their biases towards students of color (Brock et al., 2006, p. 45). Such experiences during professional development assist in transforming teacher perspectives and understandings. Even so, some teachers do not enact their new perspectives and understandings. DeMulder, Ndura-Ouédraogo, and Stribling (2009) observed that “while increasing attention is being paid to diversity issues in education, teacher professional development programs are rarely designed to move teachers through a process that transforms their practice for the common good” (p. 44). What follows is a discussion of mixed results on examinations of whether or not participating in various social justice oriented professional development initiatives led to teacher change in perspectives, understanding, classroom practice, and/or social action. This dissertation study logically follows these patterns of inquiry by exploring the degree to which ‘race space’ Critical Professional Development make racial literacy, ideological becoming, and social justice teaching possible with/in urban teachers.

**Changes in perspectives or understanding.** A number of studies have shown changes in teacher perspectives or understanding around social justice ideals after their participation in a professional development series. For example, Ball (2000) found that the U.S. teachers moved from seeing literacy as a neutral form of communication to viewing it as a critical engagement with reading, writing, and thinking, after taking her course on using literacy to meet the needs of
culturally and linguistically diverse students. The organization of activities in the course supported teachers’ evolving understandings of literacy. Ball (2000) argued that teachers must “be given an abundance of opportunities to struggle with theory”, and practice through reflection (p. 507).

In contrast, Abu El-Haj (2003) analyzed archival and ethnographic data from one urban teacher network, spanning 24 years, to explore how teachers’ attention to the particular, within structural inequities, promotes equitable educational practices for all children, and “make visible” (p. 819) the tensions in doing so. While the majority of participants were white middle class women, teachers of color and white men have also participated in the teacher network at times. Similar to this dissertation, many of the teacher participants were committed to social justice. During sessions, teachers employed a process called The Descriptive Review of the Child to inquire about particular children through detailed complex descriptions and student work analysis, in efforts to not only improve interactions with those children, but to resist the oppressive function of classrooms and schools overall. Abu El-Haj (2003) concluded that teachers exemplified equitable education by honoring and attending to the complexities of individual children. Teachers focused on the strengths and capabilities of individual children, instead of viewing them through deficit lenses. Moreover, by attending to children’s strong work in other mediums, teachers were able to brainstorm ways to improve instructional strategies and curriculum, in an effort to improve student success in more mainstream mediums. However, teachers still recognized the “balancing act” that was necessary: allowing students to work in ways that they valued, while helping them to be successful in school.

Other studies also reported changes in deficit thinking and myths. For example, Foster (2004) demonstrated that observing master teachers shifted participants’ deficit thinking about
the learning abilities of students of color. Foster classified “master” teachers according to their ability to use the students’ cultures, identities, and backgrounds to inform their teaching. Even more, participants were able to question and discuss the practices observed. Similarly, de la Luz Reyes and Garza (2005) discovered that teachers on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border found that their participation in binational exchanges via border pedagogies helped them to debunk the myths they held about each other. In a sense, these teachers crossed both physical and ideological borders.

In order to debunk myths about immigration and bilingual language acquisition, DeMulder et al. (2014) conducted a course on immigration with 57 practicing teachers enrolled in a master’s program called “Initiatives in Educational Transformation” (IET). During the course, teachers unpacked current immigration issues in the United States, and considered how these issues would impact the immigrant students, families, and communities at their schools. The researchers analyzed the written responses of teachers, and found that most teachers were receptive to the curriculum offered, in ways that lead to critical personal reflection and changed behavior. Some reported feeling an increased empathy for the issues that immigrants faced. However, some teachers used emotions to resist the curriculum and distance themselves from it. Still, many teachers were making the transformation to becoming critical educators.

Additionally, researchers have explored how various tools can facilitate changes in social justice and racial understandings. For instance, Catalano and Leonard (2016) explored how dance can support K-12 practicing teachers in their understandings of democratic education, and prepare them to take on social justice in schools and with their students. The researchers analyzed the interviews of six teachers who participated in the weeklong workshop. First, teachers engaged in a series of warm-up exercises that used movement as a way to respond to
readings on democratic ideals. Then, they read the personal stories of immigrants, and
choreographed a 5-10-minute dance based on this story. Much like teachers in the DeMulder et
al. (2014) study, participants reported that they developed increased empathy and appreciation
for immigrants because of this experience, and furthermore that, they believed the empathy they
developed through this workshop would enhance their teaching. Teachers also began to
recognize the discrimination and injustice that immigrants experienced. In like manner,
Pennington and Brock (2012) found that supporting white teachers through creating critical
autoethnographies resulted in those teachers interrogating their white identities, and connecting
this interrogation to their work in classrooms. Pennington, a white teacher educator, also
employed personal storytelling to model unpacking white racial identity for white teachers
(Pennington & Brock, 2012).

Ultimately, teacher change takes time. Shockley and Banks (2011) observed that 60
practicing K-12 teachers denied that they held biases upon beginning a 2-year master’s program
which centered on social justice. However, through critical reflection around white privilege and
the creation of democratic classrooms, teachers began to acknowledge their biases, and were
willing to work to deconstruct their privilege by the second year. In a similar fashion,
Pennington, Brock, and Ndura (2012) conducted a multimodal analysis of a privilege checklist,
counternarratives, and a privilege walk, during a yearlong professional development, to examine
whiteness and how white teachers care for students of color. The researchers found that these
events helped teachers gain a deeper understanding of whiteness and white privilege.

In sharp contrast with the research discussed above, some studies revealed that, despite
the greatest efforts and intentions of PD organizers, sometimes teacher transformation does not
happen. For example, although Levin et al. (2003) intended for teachers in both study groups on
multicultural literature to develop ethical respect, their objectives were not fully achieved. They defined ethical respect as “the manner in which readers are engaged with the authors of and the characters in a text” (p. 264) and understand it to be “contingent upon the reader’s ability or willingness to hold certain assumptions” (p. 265). Participants in one study group included four Black women, one Black man, three white women, three white men, and one Latinx woman. Participants in the other study group were all white women. At times, teachers’ ingrained biases, discomfort, and inability to connect with character experiences that were drastically different from their own hindered the development of ethical respect. For example, it was difficult for some white teachers to have ethical respect for African American authors and characters due to deeply-held prejudice. Interestingly, however, teachers were more likely to develop ethical respect for Cambodians and Jews.

Notably, by analyzing the online discussions of the 58 participating teachers, Baily and Katradis (2016) found that they went back and forth each week on a continuum of either avoiding or embracing their roles and responsibilities in addressing social justice understandings with students. Specifically, they were unsure as to whose “job” (i.e., that of the parents, or teachers) it was to address such understandings. Consistent with the findings of other studies (e.g., Kelly & Brooks, 2009), Baily and Katradis (2016) revealed that some teachers used the notion of childhood innocence to evade engaging in truth-telling and teaching about social justice understandings. Additionally, some teachers felt unprepared, or were unwilling, to teach children about race. Moreover, teachers did not know or acknowledge the power and privilege that they held in schools, in order to act on behalf of students and in the interest of social justice. In like manner, some studies found that, even after receiving training on anti-racism, some teachers still failed to acknowledge how they perpetuate racism in schools, in ways that harm
students of color (Hyland, 2005; Young, 2011). In particular, Young (2011) discovered that teachers fell on a continuum of recognizing their role in, and acting against, racism.

Some researchers collaborate with urban school districts to provide social justice oriented professional development for teachers. Without question, such collaborations further complicate the possibility of teacher change in social justice understandings. As a case and point, Young (2010) facilitated inquiry group meetings with six teachers and two administrators committed to social justice, in one urban school district serving mostly students of color, “to discuss, apply, and assess the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy in their practice” (Young, 2010, p. 248). While teachers understood the relationship aspect of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), they did not include sociopolitical consciousness in their understanding of CRP. Furthermore, while participants believed that it was important to connect students’ learning experiences to their cultures, their definition of CRP did not include cultural competence. Specifically, teachers “continued to have difficulty conceptualizing culturally relevant pedagogy as a three-pronged tool, where the promotion of the students’ academic success and critical consciousness is inseparable from that of cultural competence” (Young, 2010, p. 257).

Vaught and Castagno (2008) found that, while awareness of racial understandings increased among teachers in two large urban districts, after they received a yearlong anti-bias in-service training, they did not develop empathy for students from non-dominant groups. Moreover, teachers reinvented what it meant to be racist, in ways that were contrary to the frameworks presented during the training. The researchers maintained that the districts overall were unwilling to address the prevalent structural racism, and instead blamed individual teachers, and pathology among teachers, for the subpar education that students of color were experiencing. Assuredly, an unwillingness to change on the districts’ part stifled teacher change.
Changes in classroom practice and social action. A review of literature illustrates that some teachers change their classroom practice and social action by implementing what they learned during professional development. In certain cases, teachers developed a more critical approach to curriculum (DeMulder et al., 2009; DeMulder et al., 2014; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005). For example, through the creation of a collaborative space within the Social Justice Critical Inquiry Project, teachers improved their enactment of social justice teaching in their classrooms (Picower, 2011). Furthermore, teachers learned how to become social justice leaders in their unique contexts. Similarly, other studies reported that teachers took on more leadership roles in acting for change in schools after participating in professional development (DeMulder et al., 2009; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005; Picower, 2011).

Some studies specifically discuss how professional development shaped the classroom practice of teacher participants. To illustrate, Foster (2004) indicated that teachers were more likely to change their practice by observing a master teacher of urban students of color experiencing the working-class. These teachers build upon students’ racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. In comparison, Pradl (2002) researched the Puente High School Project, which fuses teacher training with the implementation of an English program for Mexican American and Latinx students. The project conceives of writing as a process wherein knowledge is negotiated. Taking a staff development approach, all Puente staff members participate in the training, and receive materials on this intervention. This method resulted in teachers implementing their learning into their actual classroom practice. As teachers implemented their learning, Pradl (2002) observed students engaging in inquiry and risk-taking, as well as sharing their writing. Moreover, students reported the inclusion of Mexican American and Latinx literature in their English classes was one of the most important aspects of the class.
In their study of 53 urban elementary teachers of English Language Learners participating in a 3-year professional development on inquiry-based science and literacy instruction, while teachers did not drastically change their practice, Lee (2004) did observe them incorporating their students’ language and culture into their instruction. In another study, Lee et al. (2008) received feedback from mostly teachers of color on the first year of a five-year professional development intervention to expand teacher knowledge, beliefs, and practices in teaching science and math to English Language Learners in urban schools. The teachers reported that the intervention influenced their science instruction and student learning. In particular, some teachers began to present science vocabulary in different languages.

Some teachers are adamant that it would be excessively challenging to engage in social justice teaching in their schooling contexts, as promoted during professional development (DeMulder et al., 2009; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005; Young, 2010). Based on the studies reviewed, it is difficult to determine whether these teachers really could not do this work in their schools, whether they are afraid to, or if they simply did not want to. Strikingly, Young (2010) found that district pressures to improve test scores hindered teacher application of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). While the district expressed a desire for CRP, they required teachers to use scripted curriculum that compromised their ability to do so. Additionally, Young (2010) found that there were tensions between using CRP only for teachable moments, as opposed to infusing it into core content areas. Moreover, some participants’ equated their social activism with their actual practice (Young, 2011). In contrast with Young’s (2010) findings, Picower (2015) found that while teachers did begin to engage in social justice teaching as a result of participating in a social justice critical inquiry group, they used various excuses for not engaging
in social action—a central goal of the group—and did not lead their students to do so. In essence, they did not see themselves as crucial to acting for change, in the interest of social justice.

Undoubtedly, it is important that the entire school is on board, and helps to implement anti-racist training, in order for it to be successful (Scanlan, 2010). Indeed, principal support is a powerful factor in such initiatives. Scanlan (2010) studied how teacher leaders and school administrators pursued social justice after participating in antiracism training. This school served racially, classed, and linguistically marginalized students. Unfortunately, this training did not translate into changes in classroom practice at the school. Moreover, the school spent a significant amount of time training teachers on a new discipline program, in order to meet their social justice goal of creating a more positive school climate. Focusing on discipline in a school that serves mostly students of color, while claiming to promote anti-racist practices, is paradoxical. In fact, many scholars (e.g., Annamma et al, 2016; Ayers & Ayers, 2014; Giroux, 2003; Morris, 2016) have commented on schools’ preoccupation with hyper-disciplining and hyper-surveilling students of color, as opposed to humanization and critical pedagogies.

A. J. Rodriguez et al. (2005) explored the relationship between prompted praxis and teachers of culturally diverse learners, in navigating challenges in implementing their learning during the first year of the Integrating Instructional Technology Into Science Education (I²TechSciE), a three year intervention and professional development project. Although participants’ social justice ideological commitments aligned with those of the project designers, teachers were sluggish in changing their classroom practice. This finding was surprising to facilitators, considering that teachers reported they found the professional development useful and relevant. Furthermore, teachers had expressed how engaged students were in the sporadic instances where they implemented their learning. Subsequently, the researchers led teachers
through a prompted praxis for reflecting on how their stated goals and beliefs did not align with their actions. They also used “prompted praxis” to encourage teachers to make their lessons more culturally relevant. As a result, one teacher was more prepared to teach one science lesson with the support of facilitators. Similarly, Sleeter (1997) found that, while teachers learned about cultural differences in students through multicultural professional development, few implemented their learning in general or content specific ways. A. J. Rodriguez et al. (2005) argued for having processes in place to manage challenges arising in professional development.

*Changes in perspectives, understanding, classroom practice, and social action.* Several studies of social justice oriented professional development are concerned with changes in perspectives or understandings, as well as classroom practice among teacher participants. Some teachers change their perspectives, understandings, and classroom practice after participating in professional development, and some experience limited change. For example, C. C. Johnson and Marx (2009) found that teachers’ science instruction improved after participating in the Transformative Professional Development (TPD) program. Teachers engaged in book study groups around supporting ELL students, as well as receiving instruction on the Spanish language, and support in developing science units. In addition to improvements in science instruction, the researchers found that deficit thinking about Latinx students specifically, and English Language Learners in general, decreased. Thus, the classroom environment and school climate became more positive. C. C. Johnson and Marx (2009) concluded that developing a sense of community among participants is a necessity for teacher transformation via PD.

Relationally, DeMulder et al. (2009) analyzed written feedback from practicing teachers after their participation in a 2-year professional development master’s program which promoted social justice activism as a way to welcome the increasing numbers of Black and Brown people
in U.S. schools and communities. Teachers reported having limited experiences with diverse
groups, and no models of teachers discussing race and diversity prior to this program. The
program’s curriculum helped teachers to reexamine their classroom practice and relationships
with students. These teachers wanted to implement what they learned in their classrooms.
Specifically, they wanted to be more sensitive to the needs of their students, and act on behalf of
a common good.

Teachers benefit from having opportunities to problematize their beliefs, experiences, and
classroom practice. To illustrate, Glazier (2005) conducted a yearlong professional development
for high school English teachers which required them to conduct a discourse analysis of their
own teaching as they learned about multicultural literature. Teacher participants studied their
own discourse patterns as they taught culturally and economically diverse students, in order to
discern which subjects they privileged in discussions. Glazier (2005) showed how this
professional development assisted the two white female teachers highlighted in her article to
discern what and whom they privileged in their classrooms. The discourse analysis exercise led
one teacher to change her pedagogy and curriculum, in order to support the learning of all of her
students. Considering teaching mandates that require teachers to teach and include multicultural
literature, Glazier (2005) calls for more opportunities for teacher reflexivity around the bias and
experiences brought to multicultural literature, if they are ever to support students in developing
diversity understandings.

Some researchers have explored teacher changes in perceptions, understandings, and
classroom practice, specifically among teachers of color. For example, Lee (2004) conducted a
3-year professional development on instructional congruence in science and literacy instruction
for English Language Learners (ELL), with six Cuban American teachers who immigrated to the
U. S. as children. Initially, these teachers did not incorporate the language and culture of their Latinx students into their science and literacy instruction, nor did they believe it was beneficial to do so. Instead, they believed students needed to master the English language in order to be successful in academic disciplines. Over time, teachers revealed that their parents and society ingrained such beliefs in them as children. The existence of these beliefs shows how teachers of color may have difficulty negotiating their academic and cultural identities. However, by participating in this PD, and sharing their experiences, the teachers began to believe that incorporating their students’ language and culture was important and crucial to their success. Lee (2004) even observed teachers enacting their new beliefs in order to meet the needs of their students. However, the teachers soon observed the mismatch between the students’ culture and state sanctioned science and literacy curriculum. As a result, they “struggled to negotiate areas of incompatibility and bridge cultural views with science disciplines” (Lee, 2004, p. 85).

In contrast, Ball (2009) inquired into teacher internalization of professional development, in ways that made their knowledge generative as they taught in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Both of the teachers of color highlighted in her article experienced strict rigid schooling as children, and that experience shaped the way they taught. However, Ball (2009) observed generative change happening among them through in-the-moment pedagogical changes made as they listened to students. These teachers began applying what they had learn about diversity and instructional approaches employed by Ball during professional development. This generativity changed their perspectives of, and practice with, diverse students. For instance, these teachers began to organize forums outside of traditional classroom activities to engage their students, and transformed curriculum to include opportunities for students to include their
cultural knowledge. In essence, this professional development influenced them, theoretically and pedagogically.

As previously discussed, teachers need to be supported by their administrators in order for change that is in the interest of social justice to occur (Scanlan, 2010; Young, 2010). For example, Lawrence (2005) interviewed seven teachers one year after they completed an antiracist multicultural professional development course, in order to discover the extent to which their perceptions and classroom practice had changed. Participants in schools that were supportive of the ideas presented in the training revealed that it was easier to implement multicultural practices. Participants who did not have support from administrators found it difficult to implement changes, and felt isolated in doing so. Still, all participants reported that they had made changes to their classroom practice, and described how their behavior outside of the classroom changed. In essence, even when teachers did not receive support from their schools, they engaged in social action in society to act for change.

Equally important, Mirra and Morrell (2011) analyzed data from the Council of Youth Research across twelve years (1999-2011), in order to understand how to support the development of civic agents among urban teachers of mostly students of color. Morrell is one of the co-founders, and Mirra had been a coordinator and active participant since 2008. The researchers also inquired into how teachers enact their learning in urban classrooms. Mirra and Morrell (2011) found that a collective identity formed among teacher participants that worked to support urban students, and a connection between teachers and students developed. Teachers also developed an engaged identity, where they felt responsible for enacting social change in their local contexts. While some teachers received resistance from their schools, teachers conducted civically engaged projects with their students, reflecting what they learned from the council.
Nevertheless, teachers need support in dismantling oppressive systems (Razfar, 2011). Through a teacher education master’s program for practicing teachers, a cohort of seven urban teachers created action research projects over two years for the purpose of “directly improving the conditions of their own communities of practice…[in order to] make transformative educational practices a reality” (Razfar, 2011, p. 40). By implementing their learning from coursework and engaging in action research, Razfar (2011) found that teachers began to collaboratively develop solutions, change their identities to ones that aligned with their students, change their classroom practices in ways that changed attitudes towards writing of those students who were English Language Learners. Moreover, these teachers “engaged in theorizing and developed a range of methodological tools through mutual engagement and collaboration with colleagues, teacher-education faculty, and community stake-holders to manage the challenges and uncertainties of their everyday practices” (Razfar, 2011, p. 40). In essence, these teachers reflectively theorized themselves into making changes in their specific contexts.

In a like manner, Phillips and Hollingsworth (2005) inquired into the development of literacy expertise, understandings of school inequities, and leadership/activist skills, among a cohort of 24 practicing teachers enrolled in a 2-year master’s program “with an emphasis in Literacy Across the Curriculum for an Equitable Society” (p. 86). The teachers engaged in action research projects at their schools, and fourteen of them changed their equity projects from classroom focused to a school-wide focus. Thus, they changed their focus from curriculum to activism. An analysis of survey data revealed that over 90% of teachers began to see literacy as an issue of equity, instead of simply reading and writing, by the end of the program. Many teachers reported taking a more critical approach to their literacy instruction. However, some teachers did not change their beliefs about literacy and inequity.
Sadly, some teachers display limited growth in perspectives, understandings, classroom practice, and social action, after participating in social justice oriented professional development. To demonstrate, Sleeter (1992) found that white teachers from working-class backgrounds tend to have—and hold onto—very conservative perspectives, even though they have firsthand experience of how social stratification works in the United States. This finding is from an examination of a 2-year ethnographic study of 30 (26 white, 3 Black, and 1 Mexican American) first to sixth grade teachers of mostly students of color who participated in a professional development series on multicultural education. Although white teachers were receptive to what they had learned in the program, the program’s impact on their classroom teaching was limited. For example, only half of the teachers attempted to incorporate multicultural education, and even when they did, it was incorporated in sporadic ways. Additionally, Sleeter (1992) found mixed results in terms of teacher changes in perspectives and understandings. The teachers who showed interest in the program developed complex perspectives on multicultural education. In contrast, others took on either a conservative or a humanistic perspective of multicultural education. Moreover, few teachers changed their perspectives on racial inequality, thus ignoring race altogether and instead blaming societal inequities on poverty.

Wager and Foote (2013) explored how the contextualized experiences of thirteen teachers influenced their identity development as they participated in a yearlong mathematics and equity focused professional development. The researchers also explored how this identity development informed their decisions to enact their learning. By the end of the yearlong program, teachers began to bring equity issues into their mathematics classrooms, and recognized that pullout programs were inequitable. However, some teachers did not extend these conversations to include changes they could make to provide all students with equal access to mathematics
instruction. Other teachers believed that acting for equity and teaching mathematics from a multicultural perspective went hand-in-hand. These teachers realized the importance of drawing on students’ backgrounds, and ensuring that students had equal access to mathematics instruction. Overall, all teachers developed stronger identities as equitable mathematics educators in different ways.

**On professional development facilitators.** It is important that professional development facilitators “struggle along” (Shockley & Banks, 2011, p. 228) with teachers as they learn what it means to teach for social justice. DeMulder et al. (2014) acknowledged that “It is evident that we did not always get it ‘right,’ but we learned from the experience, not only about our teachers but also about ourselves and the ways we could effectively communicate our passion for equity” (p. 60). Professional development is just as much about reflection among facilitators as it is for participants. In fact, facilitators do struggle. For example, Levin et al. (2003) pondered over whether being challenged by facilitators to explore bias would have led to further development of ethical respect among teachers. In a similar fashion, Wager and Foote (2013) reflected on whether teachers may have further developed their understandings of equitable mathematics in schools and other contexts, had they (as facilitators) built upon the teachers’ prior knowledge and experiences.

As a facilitator of a professional development series on incorporating hip-hop into teaching, Decoteau J. Irby conducted a self-study of his assumptions, as a hip-hop pedagogue, about teachers who are unfamiliar with hip-hop culture, and their desire to teach from a hip-hop culturally relevant perspective (Irby et al., 2013). Irby and his research team analyzed workshop content, approaches, and participant perspectives, in a dialogic manner, in order to provide critical feedback. Through this analysis method, Irby found that the teachers did not need to be
convinced that incorporating hip-hop into teaching was important; what they needed, and wanted, were specific ways in which to incorporate hip-hop into their classroom practice. Teachers who attend social justice focused trainings by choice often already realize and acknowledge the merits of such frameworks. As a result, Irby modified the workshops to meet the needs of the participants. He modeled what hip-hop teaching should look like in the classroom. Moreover, “the workshops became more focused on helping teachers articulate what they already knew so that they could build from and on pre-existing knowledge to interrogate their privileges” (Irby et al., 2013, p. 11). Overall, Irby et al. (2013) stressed the importance of facilitators not making assumptions about teacher knowledge and investment in certain social justice frameworks.

Certainly, the field of teacher professional development needs more research on facilitators, facilitation processes, and the politics and ideologies advanced by facilitators (Molle, 2013). DeMulder et al. (2014) discussed the difficulty of encountering resistance from practicing teachers around critical reflection, when facilitating PD. Some of the teacher participants in this study were not receptive to facilitators challenging “truths” about people from non-dominant groups. It was difficult for the facilitators to discern “how far [they] could/should challenge them without losing them” (DeMulder et al., 2014, p. 60). DeMulder et al. (2014) admitted that, “We struggled to identify the best way to value all voices particularly when some of those voices violated the human rights of others” (DeMulder et al., 2014, p. 57).

Similarly, Molle (2013) explored the process of facilitating professional development for teachers of ELL students, and found that the facilitator played a crucial role in creating spaces for political discussions. In particular, the facilitator encouraged differing views, challenged problematic arguments, and tried to build upon lines of agreement among participants. Molle’s
(2013) discourse analysis of interaction revealed that the facilitator challenged teachers’ negative perceptions of ELL students by offering more affirming views. Moreover, the facilitator placed the responsibility on educators to support students, instead of blaming ELL students as individuals. These facilitation methods helped teachers to advocate on behalf of ELL students, and supported teacher learning. Thus, the facilitator cultivated a generative learning environment.

A. J. Rodriguez et al. (2005) described the difficulties of managing the frustrations of facilitators when working with teachers who did act with a sense of urgency regarding improving their classroom practice when teaching students of color. One of their greatest frustrations sprang from when teachers did not follow through on acting towards the professional goals that they themselves articulated at the beginning of the project. Comparatively, L. L. Johnson et al. (2018) found their collaborative professional development design process with university and school-based educators to be filled with tensions, due to differing agendas, perspectives, and needs. The researchers argued that university professors who facilitate professional development should “be concerned not only with school-based educators’ intellectual development and learning but also their own…they need to bring reflexivity to their work in solving problems of local practice together with school-based educators” (L. L. Johnson et al., 2018, p. 176). The university-based educators quickly realized that they did not understand the schooling constraints of teachers.

Considering all of the larger issues at one school, Anyon (1994) described feeling helpless as a facilitator; the lack of strong support from the administration, and other organizational issues, led Anyon to feel pessimistic about the impact her PD had on teachers. Indeed, prevailing structural issues made it difficult for teachers to implement what they had learned in that PD. Thus, Anyon (1994) called for structural changes to be accompanied by
educational reform in order to positively affect urban schools, because “as institutions in a city deteriorate, so do its schools” (Anyon, 1994, p. 29). Consistent with the research discussed in this section, the dissertation study makes transparent the politics and ideologies I advanced, as the facilitator of ‘race space’ CPD.

**Summary of research on teacher professional development situated in social justice frameworks.** Teachers should have autonomy and choice in the professional development that they receive (Little, 1989; Powell et al., 1992). Studies of teacher professional development have revealed that teachers articulate the type of professional development that they require (Abu El-Haj, 2003; Irby et al., 2013; L. L. Johnson et al., 2018; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Powell et al., 1992). These studies argued that teacher perspectives should help to shape professional development. Teachers want professional development that is humanizing, and value the expertise that they bring into the space (Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Necochea & Cline, 2008; Picower, 2011; Pour-Khorshid, 2016, In Press; Wager & Foote, 2013). Additionally, teachers want PD which offers coaching on the content they are learning (Batt, 2010), and support in creating content area instructional units (C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009; Lee, 2004; Lee et al., 2004). Ultimately, teacher professional development must acknowledge, and take into consideration, the realities of professional practice, if it is to be effective (Anyon, 1994; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Pour-Khorshid, 2016, In Press).

In the vein of this dissertation, scholars are beginning to devote more attention to PD spaces created specifically for teachers committed to social justice (Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Navarro, 2018; Picower, 2011; Pour-Khorshid, 2016). A recurrent theme in the literature is the need for collaborative spaces for teachers to examine and explore issues and strategies for improving practice (Abu El-Haj, 2003; C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018;
Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Navarro, 2018; Picower, 2011; Shockley & Banks, 2011). Teachers need space for self-reflection around social justice understandings (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Ball, 2009; DeMulder et al., 2014; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Navarro, 2018) and so do facilitators (DeMulder et al., 2014; Shockley & Banks, 2011). Embedded within some studies of professional development are the trepidations, frustrations, and reflections of facilitators (Anyon, 1994; DeMulder et al., 2014; Levin et al., 2003; A. J. Rodriguez et al., 2005; Wager & Foote, 2013). However, some researchers make a point of examining themselves as facilitators (Irby et al., 2013), and others analyzed facilitation processes (L. L. Johnson et al., 2018; Molle, 2013).

A number of studies have shown changes in teacher perspectives or understanding around social justice ideals, following their participation in a professional development series (Abu El-Haj, 2003; Ball, 2000; Catalano & Leonard, 2016; DeMulder et al., 2014; Foster, 2004; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Pennington et al., 2012; Shockley & Banks, 2011). However, some studies revealed that, despite the greatest efforts and intentions of PD organizers, teachers do not change their perspectives (Levin et al., 2003). Moreover, some teachers fall on a continuum of understanding (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Young, 2011), or develop partial understandings (Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Young, 2010).

Nevertheless, a review of literature illustrates that some teachers change their classroom practice and social action by implementing what they learned during professional development. In some cases, teachers developed a more critical approach to curriculum (DeMulder et al., 2009; DeMulder et al., 2014; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005). Other studies reported that teachers took on more leadership roles in acting for change within schools after participating in professional development (DeMulder et al., 2009; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005; Picower, 2011).
Some researchers found that particular social justice oriented professional development initiatives shaped the classroom practice of teacher participants (Foster, 2004; Lee et al., 2004; Pradl, 2002). However, in contrast, some teachers were adamant that it would be challenging to engage in social justice teaching in their schooling contexts, as promoted during professional development (DeMulder et al., 2009; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005; Young, 2010). Strikingly, several studies of social justice oriented professional development regard changes in perspectives or understandings, as well as classroom practice, among teacher participants. Some teachers changed their perspectives, understandings, and classroom practice after participating in professional development (Ball, 2009; DeMulder et al., 2009; Glazier, 2005; C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009; Lawrence, 2005; Lee, 2004; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005; Razfar, 2011), and some experienced limited changes (Sleeter, 1992; Wager & Foote, 2013).

‘Race space’ CPD aims to provide teachers with opportunities to engage in dialogue, learn from one another, and shape sessions, as suggested by the research discussed. This dissertation study logically follows the patterns of inquiry of previous research on teacher change via social justice oriented professional development, by exploring the degree to which ‘race space’ CPD make racial literacy, ideological becoming, and social justice teaching possible with/in urban teachers. Overall, there has been little investigations around the theorization and actualization of particular spaces in the context of teacher professional development. It is important to theorize around how PD can actualize a Third Space, as this dissertation does.

Adhering the admonishment of previous scholars to make transparent my politics (and experiences) as a facilitator of ‘race space’ CPD, in the next section, I employ endarkened feminist epistemologies in order to better understand the intricacies of teachers learning about
As a precursor to my review of literature on teachers learning about race, I share a personal narrative of one troublesome encounter with “the unexamined whiteness” (Picower, 2009) of teacher education programs that I experienced during my doctoral program.

**Personal Narrative: As Doctoral Student Learning with Peers**

I am sitting in the second to last session of my doctoral seminar. Our professor tasked each student to present a “dialogue without borders” on a topic of our choice. Sheena, a white woman international student, begins her presentation by asking us to work with a partner and to choose two of five videos to analyze. I decide to work with my good friend, David, a white man. While laughing and joking, I play one of the videos Sheena selected on my laptop. Immediately, I see two Black girl adolescents fist-fighting on a street corner that resembles the ones from my childhood neighborhood, while other Black girls cheer them on. My laughing and joking ceases as I tell David, “I’m not watching this”, and close the video. I reluctantly play the next video. In the second video, a white newscaster is reporting a fight that erupted at a local high school in Memphis, TN, and carried over into the streets. The video transitions from the newscaster to a large crowd of Black and Brown youth running frantically towards the fight. I look at David and ask, “Wait a minute, are all of these ... videos of Black and Brown students... fighting?” As David looks at the laptop, I exclaim, “I’m not doing this!”

My heart is pounding and racing, my palms are sweating, and I am devastated. I cannot speak. I mean, I cannot utter one single word. I am so distraught. I push away from the table, press my body back into the chair as far as I can, and gaze at the floor. My body is communicating what my mouth cannot. As I gaze down, I am holding back tears. I pull out my cell phone and write this post: “I am sitting in class and one of my classmates is currently doing a presentation where we have to analyze different videos of Black [and Brown students] fighting and explain how we can get them to engage in dialogue. My heart is pounding and racing, my palms are sweating, and I am devastated. I cannot speak. I mean, I cannot utter one single word. I am so distraught. I push away from the table, press my body back into the chair as far as I can, and gaze at the floor. My body is communicating what my mouth cannot. As I gaze down, I am holding back tears. I pull out my cell phone and write this post: “I am sitting in class and one of my classmates is currently doing a presentation where we have to analyze different videos of Black [and Brown students] fighting and explain how we can get them to engage in dialogue. My heart is pounding and racing, my palms are sweating, and I am devastated. I cannot speak. I mean, I cannot utter one single word. I am so distraught. I push away from the table, press my body back into the chair as far as I can, and gaze at the floor. My body is communicating what my mouth cannot. As I gaze down, I am holding back tears. I pull out my cell phone and write this post: “I am sitting in class and one of my classmates is currently doing a presentation where we have to analyze different videos of Black [and Brown students] fighting and explain how we can get them to engage in dialogue. My hands are shaking as I type this post. I am not making this up. This person will have a PhD and teach future teachers. 😞 I cannot say anything because if I do I will have to ask God for forgiveness.” Within seconds, “like” and “comment” notifications pop up on my phone. Family and friends (including other peers in the class) respond to my post with empathy, concern, questions, disbelief, prayers, frustration, and calls for me to speak up. In class, however, my professor and my peers say nothing. I leave as soon as class ends without saying anything to anyone. At home, I craft a response that challenged the lack of humanity represented in Sheena’s class presentation, situating it in Chimamanda Adichie’s “danger of a single story” and Bakhtin’s notion of ideological becoming.

It is the last day of class and my turn to present. My body is heavy as I sit at a table in the front of the room. Once seated, I look out into a sea of white faces, with the exception of two Asian students. Sheena is sitting on the right side of the room. I look straight ahead and then down at my script... my script with
every point prepared for my counter argument, every word I selected with great care. I begin reading, “In her book Sister Outsider, Audre Lorde wrote ‘I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.’ Very Bakhtinian, I think.” I continue reading in a low but passionate tone, periodically looking up from my script at no one in particular.

My talk challenges the single story of students of color as well as the advancement of racist ideologies within Sheena’s presentation. I have to pause to take in deep breaths, because I feel like I am suffocating from the thickness in the room, and I continue. I discuss the errors with her argument that we need to get “them” to engage in dialogue. I end my presentation with Adichie’s closing line “When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise”, and say “Now let’s engage in a dialogue without borders.”

As I walk back to my seat, Sheena disrupts the silence and is defensive. Her eyes never meet mine as she stubbornly contends that she “was only trying to show conflict.” I try to engage in a dialogue with her, to reason with her, yet she feels I am attacking her. She wouldn’t even look me in the eyes. My professor enters the exchange, assuring me that I need not worry because Sheena “didn’t mean it that way.” [Inner thought: I took a risk by presenting my response to a traumatic event, and he is being dismissive.] He then carps “Tiffany, why didn’t you say anything during Sheena’s presentation? This is a dialogue.” [Inner thought: I am being blamed...Really?] With tears slowly streaming down my face, I babble that I couldn’t at the time. Other peers chime in about the negative portrayal of Black and Brown youth in the videos. However, Sheena’s voice of denial fills the dialogue. When class is over, I overhear one peer saying “I wish we didn’t have to end the class on such a negative note.” With this, I contemplate whether it was even worth it to speak up, since many of the people around me appear to be oblivious.

**Teachers Learning about Race and Racism**

When it is deemed acceptable to show dehumanizing videos of urban youth of color in a room full of educators, and no one questions it—as if these representations are “normal”—we are in a dangerous state of affairs. Sure, some of my peers expressed their discomfort with the videos of Black youth fighting on social media, but they were silent in class, and in class is precisely where their voices were needed, to speak out against a racist representation. With disregard and defensiveness, Sheena responded to my challenge of the single story she presented. Moreover, the professor prioritized preserving Sheena’s comfort over holding her accountable.
for her racist perspectives. A warm, sweet, and engaging instructor by nature, in this instance, my professor missed monumental opportunities to have a real “dialogue without borders.” The irony of teaching a course on dialogue and difference while being unable to engage in either, when the time presents itself, is quite profound. In contrast, my endarkened feminist epistemologies not only helped me read Sheena’s presentation as racist, but also prompted me to action.

Certainly, this was not my first time witnessing how race and racism operate, but it is a clear illustration of how teacher education programs maintain and protect whiteness (Haddix, 2016; Picower, 2009). It is no wonder that teachers have difficulty discussing, and challenging, racism and whiteness (Glazier, 2003; Sleeter, 1992). Prior to becoming practicing teachers who participate in professional development, some preservice teachers learn about race and racism as undergraduate students in teacher education programs. To the same extent, some in-service teachers learn about race and racism while completing master’s programs in fulfillment of their professional teacher certifications. Thus, my brief literature review on teachers learning about race and racism includes in-service and preservice teachers in teacher education programs and professional development initiatives. Significantly, the racial identity and experiences of each interlocutor complicates racial dialogue and learning. Thus, this section discusses recurrent themes in the literature reviewed, on white teachers learning about race, racial learning in racially mixed groups, the experiential racial learning of teachers of color in schools, and studies of racial literacy development among teachers. An examination of research on teachers learning about race and racism, along with studies on racial literacy development, informs this dissertation’s exploration of racial literacy development among urban in-service teachers within the context of ‘race space’ CPD.
White teachers protecting whiteness, white supremacy, and perpetuating racism. In contrast with much of the literature on white teachers studying race which characterize them as resistant (e.g., Hyland, 2005; Sleeter, 1992) and hesitant to discuss race head on (e.g., Glazier, 2003), Picower (2009) argued that, instead, these teachers are protective of white supremacy, and employ the following tools to do so: emotionality, ideology, and performance. I would describe Sheena’s reaction to my response in the narrative above as a performance. Picower bases her argument on a study of eight middle class white preservice teachers’ conceptualizations of race. These teachers maintained racial hierarchies while taking a multicultural education course.

Pennington et al. (2012) showed how Pennington responded to the call for white people to address whiteness and call out racism in other white people (McIntyre, 1997), as a white teacher educator. In like manner, Picower (2009) confessed that her own white skin allowed white preservice teachers to feel comfortable enough to share their genuine beliefs about race. She found that the preservice teachers’ conceptualizations of race were based on their lived experiences: namely, hierarchical relationships with people of color, where white people were in positions of power. Furthermore, life experiences explained their “hegemonic understandings”, or their “internalized ways of making meaning about how society is organized” (Picower, 2009, p. 202). These hegemonic understandings included a fear of people of color; deficit constructions of urban schools, students, and families; and viewing whites as the real victims of racism. Moreover, white preservice teachers in Picower’s study used religious identity markers (e.g., being Jewish) and white ethnicity identity markers (e.g., ancestors coming to America as poor Italian immigrants) to evade membership in the dominant culture, deny racial oppression, and promote American meritocracy. Additionally, these white preservice teachers perceived the mere discussion of race as a personal attack. In a similar fashion, Vaught and Castagno (2008)
indicated that some white teachers manipulate what it means to be racist, in order to recuse themselves of bias.

Other researchers suggest that teachers fall on a continuum, from comfort to discomfort, with discussing race (Baily & Katradis, 2016) and in racial consciousness levels (Young, 2011). Employing the combined methodologies of critical case study and action research, Asian American researcher Young (2011) analyzed race consciousness among seven urban educators (five white, one Latina, and one Black/Carribbean), regarding the prevalence of racism in schools during an antiracist professional development training. Young explored how these teachers’ race consciousness aligned with critical race theory. An analysis of interviews, meetings, classroom observations, written reflections/journals, artifacts, and online discussions “revealed four personae of racism: the conscious perpetrators, the unconscious perpetrators, the deceived/activists, and the enlightened perpetrators/activists” (Young, 2011, p. 1443).

Similar to Vaught and Castagno (2008), participants in Young’s study who viewed racism as a conscious act described stereotypical examples of overt racism that “other” white people engaged in. These unconscious perpetrators believed that racism existed in schools, but recognized racism as comprised of individual acts, instead of being systematic. However, most of the teachers never saw themselves as contributing to racism. Much like Picower (2009), Young found that some participants were not receptive to the idea that being white grants one membership into the dominant culture of whiteness. Moreover, “…their compassion for working with underprivileged children in an urban setting made it difficult for them to see that despite their activism, their whiteness nonetheless rendered them culpable of racism” (Young, 2011, p. 1446). While I disagree with characterizing children as “underprivileged”, because it casts them, their families, and their communities in deficit as compared to a white normative, I think that
Young’s point is important: working with students of color out of the goodness of one’s heart does not exempt one from participating in racism.

Do “good” white teachers perpetuate racism? Some white teachers considered “good” teachers of students of color actually maintain racism. Hyland (2005) conducted a critical ethnography of four teachers (three white, and one Latina) who self-identified, and whom others identified, as good teachers of Black students. She found that these teachers operated under colorblind ideologies and actually maintained the racist status quo through low expectations and deficit perspectives about students’ families and communities. These teachers saw themselves as helpers, which is consistent with the racist belief that Black people need help. Pam, a special education teacher, even admitted that she never advocated for students to be declassified once they met their goals, because she believed they would always need special education services. In contrast, Sylvia, a Latina teacher, believed that she could best serve Black students by exemplifying how to assimilate to white culture. This particular understanding of what it means to be a good teacher can be damaging to students of color in its promotion of racial self-hatred. Another understanding was that a good teacher of Black children takes on their cultural behaviors. Carmen, a white teacher, mimicked the speech patterns of her students, focusing on their experiences of poverty while ignoring racism. In sharp contrast with the other teachers, Maizie, also white, believed that good teachers of students of color were radical. However, at the beginning of the study, she did not believe in the prevalence of racism in schools. Out of all the white teachers, she did recognize that there were certain obstacles in school that hindered student achievement. Overall, the Picower (2009), Young (2011), and Hyland (2005) studies show many teachers do not recognize how they participate in racism, and perpetuate whiteness in schools in ways that are detrimental to students of color.
Indeed, some researchers who report on white teachers grappling with race and racism caution readers that “these representations must be read as partial” (Hyland, 2005, p. 438), and challenge other researchers to not negatively position white middle class women teachers as a monolithic group (Gomez et al., 2015; Jones & Enriquez, 2009). I would appreciate it if researchers would extend these same courtesies to students of color. Especially troubling—but certainly not exclusively—is Hyland’s (2005) characterization of white teachers teaching students of color as “the difficult task” (p. 438). This descriptor blames students of color for the inability or unwillingness of some white teachers to disrupt racism and overbearing whiteness, in schools, or to engage in culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogies. Teaching students of color is not a difficult task for many teachers of color (Dixson & Dingus, 2008; Foster, 1997; Kohli, 2009).

**Teacher transformation towards more critical understandings of race and racism.**

Some educators in the studies reviewed did begin to experience transformations towards more critical understandings of race and racism after learning about anti-racism, whiteness, and white privilege (Hyland, 2005; Lawrence, 2005; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Pennington et al., 2012; Shockley & Banks, 2011; Young, 2011). In Young’s (2011) study, the Latina principal exhibited a partial understanding of racism as the workshop concluded. By the end, she believed that everyone could be racist, and even considered the possibility that she could be racist. However, she still considered racism to be the work of individuals, and not inherent to a system. In contrast, another participant in Young’s study, Karen, did experience the sort of growth that those working with teachers to engender antiracism would desire. Young described Karen as “the prototype of white female social justice educator—compassionate, idealistic, and committed to the values of democracy and equality” (p. 1451). She was defensive at times. However, over
time, she became transparent about the fact that she could exhibit racist tendencies, by grappling with her own white privilege. Karen showed that she “did not simply take the theories presented to her at their face value; she wrestled with them, critiqued them, rejected them, and internalized them as they began to make more sense to her” (p. 1452). This should be the goal of any efforts made towards social justice teaching and antiracism education.

In contrast, Carmen, from the Hyland (2005) study, did over time consider the possibility that she could be participating in racism. She also began to realize that she needed to engage in a deeper understanding of whiteness, and its effect on people of color. Maizie was the only white teacher to make a drastic change over time. Hyland (2005) noted that, “As she began to see how her whiteness has constructed and constricted her worldview, Maizie’s sense of her own responsibility for working toward social justice began to change” (p. 453). In essence, becoming a strong social justice educator requires a critical examination of whiteness, an understanding of how racism operates in schools, and self-reflection as to how one may—inadvertently or not—participate in the oppression of students of color. Other researchers have shown that teachers make shifts in their thinking and attitudes about race after participating in anti-racist training (Lawrence, 2005; Shockley & Banks, 2011).

**Learning about race and racism from the experiences of teachers of color.** Teacher educators and researchers have been critiqued for being too preoccupied with helping white teachers “get” race and racism, instead of recruiting, and learning from (and with) teachers of color who are from the same communities as the students they serve (e.g., Kohli, 2009; Philip, 2014; Picower, 2009). Even more, some teachers of color in learning settings composed of mostly white teachers assume responsibility for, and are positioned by others to speak on behalf of, their racial/cultural group in ways that hinder their learning and the learning of their white
peers (Glazier, 2009). Furthermore, Glazier (2009) found that when teachers of color do share their perspectives on race among white peers, tensions around experiential expertise, gender, and the co-construction of racial knowledge may arise. Still, not all teacher education programs are exclusively white, so when programs focus only on white teacher perspectives, they exclude the perspectives of teachers of color. Not only are the experiences of teachers of color ignored, the coveted title of *racial justice ally* of students of color is often “theoretically and discursively” only assigned to white teachers (Agosto, 2010, p. 517). Even so, the centering of race and racism research in education on the perspectives of white teachers does not help white teachers in their growth, for they too need to hear the silenced dialogue (Dickar, 2008). Delpit (1988) described “the silenced dialogue” as the conversations among teachers of color on how race and racism operates in school. These conversations are “silenced”, because teachers of color are often not invited to share these perspectives with their white colleagues.

Without question, there is much to learn about race and racism from the perspectives of teachers of color. Philip (2014) studied the self-understandings of a political-racial Asian American identity among four preservice woman teachers enrolled in a social justice focused master level teacher education program, as they related to teaching Latinx and African American students in urban schools. Sherri, a fourth-generation Japanese American, felt that white privilege based on skin color and how people exist in the world was alive. She exposed the ‘model minority myth’ about Asian Americans by pointing out that white people still hold most positions of power. She believed that it was her duty to teach Asian American history to her Black and Latinx students in ways that showed similarities in their cultural-historical experiences. Sherri admitted that she struggled to incorporate inter-racial discussions about
oppression into her classroom. She also shared that she would have appreciated having more opportunities to learn about her Asian American identity in her teacher education program.

Marissa, a second-generation Filipina American participant in the Philip (2014) study, believed that understanding and embodying a racial and political identity is imperative to teaching for social justice. She discussed having two parts, in ways reminiscent of DuBois’ (1903) notion of double-consciousness, where “One ever feels his twoness,---an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body…” (p. 5). Marissa believed that it is her job to help her students to become critical thinkers, to raise their consciousness, to empower them, and to learn about their specific neighborhoods. She also recognized the cultural wealth that students of color bring into the classroom.

Relatedly, interview data from Kohli’s (2009) study of teachers of color revealed racial hierarchies within teacher education programs which caused them to re-experience the racial traumas that they experienced as K-12 students. Ashley, the only Black student in her science teacher education program cohort, described an incident where one of her colleagues in the program claimed that there are always job openings in Black schools because Black students are “difficult to work with” while the rest of her colleagues stood by and agreed. Of course, Ashley was no newcomer to racist comments, but what was most hurtful to her was how comfortable this teacher was in making such a comment in her presence. The irony of this incident, as Haddix (2016) has discussed elsewhere, is that these teachers chose to enroll in this social justice centered teacher education program, and claimed to believe in social justice education. This shows that race cannot be overlooked, and that it must be studied deeply, even among educators who claim to fight for social justice, and want to teach in urban schools. Interestingly, the pre-
service teachers of color attending Ivy League schools in the Merseth et al. (2008) study expressed that the cost to survive white culture was too high, and that they wanted to teach urban students of color so that they would not have to endure this dilemma.

**The need for racial affinity grouping among teachers of color.** Although certain “race talk” methodologies presume that there is strength in having racial dialogue in mixed racial groups (e.g., Chávez-Reyes’ (2012) critical social dialogue definition and process⁹), some scholars promote intra-racial dialogue through affinity grouping, for healing and sustaining purposes (Haddix, 2012; Kohli, 2009; Pour-Khorshid, 2016, In Press). Through her study of the discursive practices of two Black women preservice teachers, Haddix (2012) critiqued the prevalence of whiteness and white privilege in teacher education programs. Drawing on critical race theory, she found that these teachers engaged in “deliberate silences”, noting that “Being silent …allowed for their cultural and linguistic selves to emerge from this dominant context unharmed and unscathed” (Haddix, 2012, p. 175). LaToya and Natasha confessed that they were sick of trying to explain to their white peers and professor their perspectives, or the perspectives of other people of color, as each was often “the only one” (p. 175). Sometimes, even when teachers of color do share, they may be isolated and accused of being oversensitive as a result. Haddix (2012) found that in the company of their “sistas”, or each other, these Black women preservice teachers engaged in a counterlanguage where “Affirmation of ideas and the presence of shared knowledge, understanding, and cultural and linguistic norms were evidenced…” (p. 177).

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⁹ Chávez-Reyes (2012) calls for critical social dialogue of difference among mixed-racial teacher groups for the purposes of racial learning. She describes critical social dialogue as “the process of problem posing, facilitating personal stories through silence and multimodal assignments, and positioning them for students to re-examine and re-evaluate their understanding of systems of social difference, the beginnings of a multicultural and social justice intellectual frame for pre-service teachers” (Chávez-Reyes, 2012, p. 44).
Teachers of color perpetuating whiteness and promoting meritocracy. To achieve racial justice in schools for students of color, teacher education programs must recruit and sustain more faculty of color and preservice teachers of color (Kohli, 2009; Merseth et al., 2008; Philip, 2014; Picower, 2009; Wilder, 2000). However, Picower (2009) does recognize that “People of color are equally capable of using the tools of whiteness, so recruitment must focus on bringing in people of color who are committed to equity and social justice in urban education” (p. 212). Young (2011) agreed when she wrote that people of color “…are no less immune from society’s influence than whites, and to assume an air of impenetrability would be to trivialize racism’s endemic nature” (p. 1450). While the presence of teachers who have racial backgrounds similar to those of the students they teach should not be undervalued, I agree with Picower and Young that presence is not enough. In fact, sometimes teachers of color who claim to be committed to social justice advance hegemonic understandings. For example, Chávez-Reyes (2012) reported that one of her African American preservice teachers, Zora, characterized urban parents as unfit and as not caring for their children, later claiming that it is more difficult to be poor and Black than it is to be poor and white. Here, Zora is partially holding to hegemonic understandings of “unfit and uncaring urban parents” or what Chávez-Reyes (2012) would call stock/concealed stories while simultaneously acknowledging how race complicates experiences of poverty.

Again, it is important to study the race and racial understandings of teachers of color, because we are all at risk of succumbing to whiteness. Philip’s (2014) findings revealed the complexities of race that exist among people of color. Brook, a second-generation Chinese American, did not connect with a political-racial identity, and disassociated herself from the label “people of color.” This is consistent with the common attempts of some wealthy people of
color, who deny their racial identity and instead hold to a national identity. One might consider the prominent examples of entertainers Raven-Symoné and Morgan Freeman—who are Black by phenotype and historically situated in the Black American experience—deny their Blackness, and embrace an American identity alone. Brook also ascribed the limitations of her own Chinese heritage to her lack of daily experiences with Chinese “fun, food, and festivals” (McVee & Boyd, 2016), and believed American meritocracy sufficiently explained why some people get ahead and others do not. Moreover, Brook felt it was her duty to help her students not stereotype her, and to know that if they work hard they can achieve, as her father did.

On the “savior” complex. The hegemonic understandings that are consumed by some people of color are even more evident in Merseth, Sommer, and Dickstein’s (2008) study of European American, Asian American, Latinx, Native American, and African American students attending Ivy League schools who planned to teach in urban schools. Similar to Picower (2009), the researchers found that preexisting identities influence preservice teachers’ professional identities, and how they experience urban schools. Although the authors frame their findings in a positive light, I find some of their findings to be problematic. Similar to the teachers critiqued in other studies (Hyland, 2005; Picower, 2009), the teachers wanted to teach in urban schools to “help” them, and to “right the wrongs” of society. There exists a prevalent notion that urban students of color need saving that some researchers recognize and challenge, and other researchers do not. According to Picower (2009), “Because the participants perceived their presence in urban schools to be altruistic and helpful, they did not appreciate hearing that they might have to do special preparation to work in these under-resourced environments” (p. 207). The overarching concept appears to be that urban students of color are blessed to have middle class white teachers teach them, because white teachers are automatically morally superior and
smarter (Fordham, 1993; Foster, 1997). There does not seem to be any concern that these
teachers may be ill equipped to teach these students.

While the teachers in the Merseth et al. (2008) study acknowledged their privileged
economic and social positions, as compared to many students in urban schools, they advocated
for a “tough love” approach to teaching. For instance, one preservice teacher, employing a
“tough love” approach, expressed “a runaway sister—I’m not impressed…We do not get to
choose our family situations or the lives we’re given, but…we do get to choose the lives we
create” (Merseth et al., 2008, p. 97). The authors celebrated statements like these, as though they
contain elements of good teaching. In contrast, I read these statements as promoting American
meritocracy without a critical analysis of racial and economic oppressions. Clearly, Picower
(2009) and other researchers provide a more critical examination of preservice teachers’
understandings of race and urban schooling. Also deeply problematic, Merseth et al. (2008), in
support of their participants, equate good teacher quality with high academic achievement in Ivy
League colleges, to which Milner and Howard (2013) pose the question “What role does race
play in who gets to be considered the best and the brightest?” (p. 543). The assumption that Ivy
League educated teachers are better teachers of students of color does not complicate how they
do, or do not, challenge racism in schools.

**Studies of racial literacy development among teachers.** Sealey-Ruiz (2011) argued
that without racial literacy in teacher education programs, “teacher educators and their students
will continue to find themselves powerless in dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline and other
inequitable educational systems on the basis of race” (pp. 118-119). In essence, learning about
race, racism, and explicitly developing a racial literacy is crucial to improving the school
experience. To illustrate, Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2015) found that a diverse group of
Preservice teachers uncritically consumed popular stereotypical visual images of Black male students. Thus, the authors argued for racial literacy development among preservice teachers, to prevent them from making assumptions about what it is like to teach in urban schools composed mostly of students of color. Interestingly, there are many studies of racial literacy development among K-12 students (e.g., Gardner, 2017; Philip, Olivares-Pasillas, & Rocha, 2016; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Vetter & Hungerford-Kressor, 2014), and teacher education students (e.g., Epstein & Gist, 2015; L. J. King, 2016; Mosley, 2010; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015; Skerrett, 2011). However, researchers have directed scant attention towards cultivating racial literacy among practicing teachers through professional development, even though many students of color in urban schools experience racism daily. Foregrounding this dissertation’s exploration of racial literacy cultivation among practicing teachers via ‘race space’ CPD, I reviewed studies of preservice and in-service teacher processes toward racial literacy development and enactment within teacher education programs and classrooms.

As Sealey-Ruiz (2011) advised, some teacher educators do infuse opportunities for racial literacy development into their courses with preservice teachers. Literacy scholars Rebecca Rogers and Melissa Mosley have explored the nuances of racial literacy development among preservice teachers via book clubs (Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2008). For example, Rogers and Mosley (2008) employed a critical discourse analysis of a book club to explore how preservice teachers became racially literate. Among this group of four students (one Black woman, one white woman, and two white men), the researchers found that becoming racially literate “is an interactive process that includes both support and challenge” (p. 125). They argue that the complexity of racial literacy development is due to the various semiotic...
tools, experiences, and histories that individuals draw upon as they make meaning. In another study, Mosley and Rogers (2011) examined the discourse of three white preservice teachers, and found tensions in language and content over taking stances as active/passive racist or racist/anti-racist. In response, the authors argued that racial literacy development requires “a commitment to examine the complexity of racialized discourses and to construct new ways of practicing racial literacy” (p. 321).

When operationalizing racial literacy, researchers found that in-service and pre-service teachers center race in their instruction in critical ways (Epstein & Gist, 2015; L. J. King, 2016; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Skerrett, 2011). For example, Skerrett (2011) inquired into the racial literacy knowledge and practice of two secondary English teachers, and found that some teachers were uncomfortable with teaching race on their own and only did so when it was a part of the mandated curriculum. She also found that the students of teachers who teach race incidentally received problematic messages about racial learning in schools. Moreover, Skerrett (2011) asserted that when racial learning is ill-informed, teachers offer students problematic perspectives on racial issues. The teachers whose pedagogy reflected their deep commitments to teach race did so through sustained and strategic dialogue about race with their students. Similarly, Epstein and Gist (2015) revealed that three culturally relevant urban teachers of working-class students of color were committed—philosophically and pedagogically—to promoting an anti-racist approach in their teaching. Their commitment enabled students to conceptualize concepts of race, culture, and power, in complex ways.

Some research suggests that teachers enact racial literacy when offered support. For instance, L. J. King (2016) explored the ways in which four pre-service social studies teachers understood and taught race through Black history, during their student teaching placements. Prior
to their placements, King provided them with support through a summer reading program on Black history. As a result, he observed the teachers commenting on, deepening, and augmenting to the limited curriculum on Black history and race offered in their teaching assignments. The preservice teachers reported that they were able to engage with curriculum in these ways because of their participation in the summer reading program. However, L. J. King (2016) found that those teachers did not discuss the intersections of race with other forms of oppression (e.g., gender, class, and geography). This is quite an oversight, as “being racially literate is about interrogating concepts of power and privilege” (L. J. King, 2016, p. 1314).

In contrast, Mosley (2010) found that understandings of racial literacy do not always translate into pedagogy. She analyzed the discourse between one white preservice teacher and two African American students during a reading lesson, and in a discussion of children’s literature with other preservice teachers. While Kelly was able to describe and articulate what it means to practice racial literacy in the context of a book club with her peers and through written reflection and interviews, she missed opportunities for anti-racist practice when working with her two African American students. However, Kelly acknowledged that she was in the process of developing racial literacy. In like manner, Mosley Wetzel and Rogers (2015) examined three literacy events involving Lisa, a white preservice teacher, as she practiced racial literacy. Lisa recognized her own failure to analyze the racial dynamics of the white characters in the story she read and discussed with her Black student because the researchers provided space for her to interrogate and reflect on her own racial literacy practice.

**Summary of literature on teachers learning about race and racism.** If teacher education programs maintain and protect whiteness (Haddix, 2016; Picower, 2009), then it is no wonder teachers have difficulty discussing and challenging racism and whiteness (Glazier, 2003;
Sleeter, 1992). Unlike much of the literature on white teachers studying race, which characterizes them as resistant (e.g., Hyland, 2005; Sleeter, 1992) and hesitant to discuss race head on (e.g., Glazier, 2003), Picower (2009) argued that, instead, these teachers are in fact protective of white supremacy, and employ the following tools of whiteness to do so: emotionality, ideology, and performance. Additionally, certain scholars have critiqued the ‘savior’ complex existent among teachers who believe it is their job to ‘save’ urban youth of color from deplorable lives (Haddix, 2016; Hyland, 2005; Picower, 2009). Another recurrent theme in the literature is pervasive problematic understandings of race and racism among teachers of all backgrounds, which focus on racist individuals and disregard the racism of the system itself, colorblindness, and a belief in “rugged individualism”, or American meritocracy (e.g., Philip, 2014; Picower, 2009; Young, 2011). These studies suggest that it is important for teachers to understand their own racial identity, and how race and racism function in schools, in order to teach for social justice.

Some educators in the studies reviewed did begin to experience a transformation towards more critical understandings of race and racism after learning about anti-racism, whiteness, and white privilege (Hyland, 2005; Lawrence, 2005; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Pennington et al., 2012; Shockley & Banks, 2011; Young, 2011). Other researchers have shown that teachers make shifts in their thinking and attitudes about race after participating in anti-racist training (Lawrence, 2005; Shockley & Banks, 2011). In studies around understanding race and racism, sometimes only a single participant out of many exhibits growth and seems to begin to “get it” (e.g., Haddix, 2012; Hyland, 2005; Philip, 2014; Young, 2011), and in certain studies, none of the participants appear to reflect social justice and racial equity goals (e.g., Dickar, 2008; Picower, 2009). Other researchers suggest that teachers fall on a continuum, from comfort to discomfort, when discussing race (Baily & Katradis, 2016) and in racial consciousness levels
Additionally, some teachers strategically evade acknowledging their perpetuation of racism and bias (Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Young, 2011). Unfortunately, the Picower (2009), Young (2011), and Hyland (2005) studies revealed that many teachers do not recognize how they participate in racism and perpetuate whiteness in schools, in ways that are detrimental to their students of color.

Overwhelmingly, teacher educators and researchers have been critiqued for being too preoccupied with helping white teachers “get” race and racism, instead of recruiting, and learning from (and with), teachers of color who are from the same communities as the students they serve (e.g., Kohli, 2009; Philip, 2014; Picower, 2009). To achieve racial justice in schools for students of color, teacher education programs must recruit and sustain more faculty of color and preservice teachers of color (Kohli, 2009; Merseth et al., 2008; Philip, 2014; Picower, 2009; Wilder, 2000). Moreover, some scholars promote intra-racial dialogue through affinity grouping for healing and sustaining purposes (Haddix, 2012; Kohli, 2009; Pour-Khorshid, 2016, In Press).

Presently, the cultivation of racial literacy in practicing teachers through professional development is an understudied area. However, researchers have examined racial literacy among teacher education students (e.g., Epstein & Gist, 2015; L. J. King, 2016; Mosley, 2010; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015; Skerrett, 2011). Specifically, literacy scholars Rebecca Rogers and Melissa Mosley have explored the nuances of racial literacy development among preservice teachers via book clubs (Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2008). When operationalizing racial literacy, researchers found that in-service and pre-service teachers center race in their instruction, in critical ways (Epstein & Gist, 2015; L. J. King, 2016; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Skerrett, 2011).
An examination of research on teachers learning about race and racism, along with studies of racial literacy development among teachers, informs this dissertation’s exploration of racial literacy cultivation among urban in-service teachers within the context of ‘race space’ CPD. The next section of this literature review discusses research on teachers practicing social justice teaching. This section informs how learning about social justice influences the ideological becoming of teachers, and how teachers enact these understandings through curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches, and social action.

Research on Teachers Practicing Social Justice Teaching

Contradictions in social justice beliefs and actions. While social justice theories and perspectives of social justice teaching are likely to be found in teacher education, Agosto (2010) notes that “[i]dentifying the incongruence between the values espoused and practiced can expose areas of injustice” (p. 507). If social justice educators are not practicing what they preach, then they are sustaining the oppressive practices they claim to oppose. As a case and point, Latoya from Haddix’s (2012) study reported her frustrations with peers who can write about what it means to teach for social justice, but were unable to or unwilling to practice it. Her peers often equated teaching for social justice with service learning, when these are not the same. Similarly, Young (2011) found that particular understandings of social justice prompted participants to conflate their activism with race-consciousness and action toward racial justice. The participants believed they were already engaged in social justice work, when in fact, they were not. For them, “…social justice education [was] more about embracing the students’ individuality and their diversity rather than addressing issues of social and racial equality” (Young, 2011, p. 1454). These participants missed the point that “schools were rooted within a system of dominance and
“oppression” (p. 1454). In view of these contradictions, researchers must interrogate how teacher translated their understandings of social justice teaching into classroom practice.

For example, Philip (2014) found that while Sherri, a Japanese American teacher, displayed critical understandings of race, racism, and white privilege, she was unsure of how to incorporate discussions about oppression with her students. Sherri expressed that she would have appreciated being educated on how to implement such discussions into her classroom, instead of just having academic and theoretical discussions. Relatedly, through a four year longitudinal qualitative case study, Jones and Enriquez (2009) explored the impact of a graduate course on culture, critical literacy, and social justice on the teaching practices and habituses of two focal participants, Rebecca and Brooke. This study found that while Rebecca entered the course with a feminist social justice background, and modified her habitus to discussions on race, as a classroom teacher she did not take up critical literacy. Instead, she engaged in the privileged practices of balanced literacy, because this form of instruction carried capital at her school. Rebecca separated the injustices she understood were happening outside of the classroom from the literacy teaching that she did in the classroom.

In contrast, while Brooke had little preexisting knowledge of social justice understandings, the course deepened her understanding of injustices present in the world. Brooke did engage in critical literacy practices in her classroom, however, and critically read the prescribed curriculum of her school. Similarly, Philip (2014) found that Marissa’s ability to connect her critical understandings with her teaching was due to the mentored support she received during her undergraduate program. The findings across these studies suggest that “transformative knowledge does not fluidly transfer from one context to another” (Philip, 2014, p. 235).
Social justice identities as reflected in classroom practice. In her study of two novice teachers who worked alongside mentor teachers focusing on a unit centered on social activism, Davila (2011) found that, while committed to social justice, they did not navigate critical discussions on race with a multi-raced group of high school seniors. Consequently, the teachers did not enact a critical literacy stance, instead exhibiting colorblind ideology, as well as historical and current social misconceptions, and a limited grasp on history and perspectives. Allen, a European American man, and Bernardo, a biracial man of European American and Mexican American descent, “unintentionally reinforce[d] the kind of hegemonic shadow stories and tropes they hope[d] to interrogate via classroom discussion” (Davila, 2011, p. 46). Their teacher education social justice coursework had not prepared them for these situations. According to Davila (2011), “When teachers are prepared to withstand uncomfortable conversations and to guide exploratory journeys into their students’ ideas, it may be possible for the class to transcend the hegemonic notions that foster structural inequality and discrimination” (p. 15). Davila argues that teachers needed support in becoming critical guides during these uncomfortable conversations. Indeed, Allen and Bernardo wanted support, and were open to learning more about what it means to teach for social justice. Teachers like Allen and Bernardo need support in developing their social justice identities.

In comparison, Ticknor (2015) conducted an analysis of interview data and a critical discourse analysis of emails to understand how Tammy, a white woman preservice teacher, developed a social justice identity. Tammy resisted the limiting literacy pedagogy of her mentor teacher, describing him as “the Smart Board guy” (Ticknor, 2015, p. 11), and boldly used more critical literacy approaches. After observing one of Tammy’s lessons on Mexican culture, her supervising teacher suggested that she assign one of her Latinx students as the expert on the
topic. Tammy explained that she would not do this, as it was based on problematic assumptions. While she stood up for what she believed in, Tammy filled with self-doubt, writing, “I think she got a little offended when I said this…” These findings show how social justice committed teachers need to be supported in becoming confident in their pedagogical decisions, as not all will agree with their approaches (Philip, 2012).

Some researchers and teacher educators do support in-service teachers in developing their social justice understandings and identities. Mirra and Morrell (2011) argue that “to produce the ‘Teacher as Civic Agent,’ teachers need to be engaged in learning that is collective, productive, and active” (p. 413). The researchers facilitated The Council of Youth Research, where students, teachers, university professors, and graduate students use youth voices to improve urban schooling conditions, and to help students become civic agents. Mirra and Morrell found that participating in the Council had positive impacts on teacher identity development, in the areas of forming a collective identity among their colleagues, a productive identity that had products to show, and an engaged identity that is involved in local community contexts. The researchers also found that participating in the Council had a positive impact on the teachers’ classroom practice. Teachers engaged in action research projects, which resulted in their involving their students in civically centered projects and activities. The Mirra and Morrell (2011) study is one of few research projects that showed how in-service teachers were supported in their development of social justice teaching ability, as well as how their understandings were enacted in their teaching.

Differing from the studies discussed so far, Gomez et al. (2015) examined the ideological becoming of aspiring educators who “marked” themselves as different from their peers based on race, physical capabilities, and/or sexuality identities, and how they used these differences to inform their engagement with youth different from themselves. The researchers conducted life
history interviews with 58 aspiring teachers enrolled in Gomez’s and Powell’s service learning course over the span of four semesters. Kaylee, a biracial (Black and white) woman, and David, a white bisexual man suffering from a chronic illness, were two students who marked themselves as different from their mostly white, heterosexual, able-bodied peers. One of the course requirements was a 25-hour service-learning component in afterschool tutoring programs or community centers serving students from marginalized groups (e.g., ELL, homeless students, and students working to improve their academic status). Kaylee’s and David’s experiences and identities shaped how they interacted with students, and supported their ideological becoming.

Kaylee deemed it her responsibility to learn the best ways to help the students she tutored learn math. This contrasted starkly with the approach of her colleagues, who “spoke first about the race, and then the social class of youth with whom they worked, most often marking their many deficiencies and differences” (Gomez et al., 2015, p. 168). Similar to Picower’s (2009) findings, Kaylee’s colleagues rarely spoke “about their own need to be competent in their subject matter and pedagogical skills” (Gomez et al., 2015, p. 168). Kaylee, instead, “saw the children as needing her to be a highly competent mathematics tutor, and that she needed to push herself to be the most knowledgeable tutor she could be” (Gomez et al., 2015, p. 168). Although biracial, Kaylee could at times pass for white due to her light skin complexion, while experiencing racial discrimination in other contexts. Kaylee recognized, and reflected upon, this duality. She also critiqued the tutoring center for having limited resources available to students who needed them the most.

In contrast, David took it upon himself to apply for grants to fund opportunities for the students at the community center where he served. He wanted the students to learn new skills and have fun experiences. Like Kaylee, David critiqued volunteers who held deficit perspectives
of the students. David reflected on how his identities of difference influenced how he interacted with students by stating: “While I am privileged for my middle class whiteness, I have intersecting statuses of disability and queerness that have created discrimination and hardship in my life” (Gomez et al., 2015, p. 170). By acting, in applying for grants, David exemplifies another area of social justice teaching that is rarely taken up by teachers: engaging in social action.

**Enacting social justice teaching and social action.** Guided by narrative inquiry and Latinx critical race (LatCrit) theories, T. L. Rodriguez (2011) examined how one Latinx novice teacher, Patricia, articulated a vision for social justice teaching, how this vision was informed by her personal experiences, and how her vision was enacted in the classroom. The author analyzed Patricia’s ‘stories of self’ and ‘stories of practice’ as revealed in three life history interviews, focusing on this teacher’s development of literacy courses for Spanish speakers at a public charter middle school with an expanding Latinx population. Findings revealed that Patricia critically questioned and resisted the dominant ideology in her trajectory from high school, to her education course, and into her classroom. Because of her personal experiences, Patricia centered the lived experiences of her students when creating curriculum, and analyzed systems of oppression in her life and her positioning throughout her life.

Similarly, Picower (2015) employed grounded theory methods to analyze the end-of-year ethnographic interviews of nine novice teachers (seven were white, two Latinx, and one Haitian) who participated in a three year social justice critical inquiry project. While Picower found that the teachers were enacting their understandings of social justice teaching in powerful ways in the classroom, the teachers were not engaging in action towards social transformation. The teachers rationalized their inaction by using tools of substitution, tools of postponement, tools of
displacement, and tools of dismissal (Picower, 2015). Some teachers substituted their action in the world with their teaching in the classroom. Other teachers postponed their action, claiming that they did not really know the social issue about which they were most passionate. In order to avoid acting, teachers also used tools of displacement, such as school conditions, teaching demands, and classroom management issues. Lastly, some teachers dismissed social action altogether, revealing their lack of faith in the power of social movements to invoke change. It is baffling to me how any teacher could claim to be a social justice educator and want to teach for social justice while not believing that social transformation is possible. As Picower (2015) argued,

...a teacher activist, or organizer, is a fully realized social justice educator as they are practicing what they teach. Rather than rely on students to transform the world on their own, teacher activists are ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work alongside them. (p. 910)

Simply put, teachers cannot call on their students to work towards change, equity, and justice if they are not willing to act themselves.

**Summary of literature on teachers practicing social justice teaching.** Many studies show that teachers need support in learning about social justice and enacting social justice teaching (Davila, 2011; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Philip, 2012; Ticknor, 2015). Espoused social justice stances must translate into actual practice, in order for real social justice teaching to occur (Agosto, 2010; Haddix, 2012; Young, 2011). Furthermore, learning about social justice theories and critical pedagogy does not necessarily transfer easily into classroom practice (Philip, 2014). When teachers are unprepared to actually teach for social justice, they may advance dominant historical narratives and deficit perspectives (Davila, 2011).
On the one hand, a number of studies show that some preservice and in-service teachers do enact their understandings of social justice teaching (Jones & Enriquez, 2009; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Philip, 2014; T. L. Rodriguez, 2011; Ticknor, 2015). Some pre-service teachers even use their markers of difference to inform how they work with urban youth of color, and knowingly or unknowingly engage in social justice teaching (Gomez et al., 2015). On the other hand, studies also show that, even when enrolled in social justice/critical literacy courses, or social justice focused teacher education programs, some preservice and in-service teachers do not enact their understandings of social justice teaching, and need to be supported in doing so (Davila, 2011; Jones & Enriquez, 2009; Philip, 2012, 2014). Lived experiences and support received (or not received) inform how understandings of social justice get enacted (Philip, 2014; T. L. Rodriguez, 2011). In addition, some pre-service and in-service teachers want to develop their social justice identities, and are open to receiving support to do so (Davila, 2011; Philip, 2014; Ticknor, 2015).

Teacher educators must help teachers make the connection between their understandings of social justice teaching and their classroom practice (Davila, 2011; Jones & Enriquez, 2009; Mirra & Morrell, 2011). When teachers do enact social justice teaching, they need to understand that teaching for social justice is also about engaging in social action towards justice (Picower, 2015). This explains why “robust hope” is needed to do this work. Social justice teachers and teacher educators need to think critically about the type of educator urban students of color need them to be (Gomez et al., 2015; Picower, 2009)

Through this dissertation, I also seek to understand “how racialized subjects make meaning of the confluence of school malaise and racial melancholia” (Dumas, 2014, p. 3), and to learn how teachers can provide the type of education students of color desire. The following
section provides a literature review on what we learn when we listen to urban youth of color.

This literature informs the overall purpose of this dissertation: to improve the educational experiences of students of color. To do so, I begin the next section by sharing one unforgettable conversation with my eighth grade students, which occurred during my last year of teaching.

**Personal Vignette: As Classroom Teacher Learning with Students of Color**

_One class has ended and the next one is about to begin. I am standing in the hallway near my classroom door, as I normally do during class transitions, waiting for my next group of students to arrive. I monitor other students with hellos and corny jokes, while rushing everyone inside classrooms. Meanwhile, eighth graders saunter into my classroom, each of them wearing uniformed white button up shirts, black ties, black bottoms, and black shoes. Upon entering, one by one, they routinely place all their gear on the table to the right side of the room, grab their social studies materials, and take their seats at the carpet (the whole group area). Mason, a thin, mahogany-toned boy with a fresh fade, who hasn’t quite experienced his growth spurt yet, walks in holding a large stack of books and binders that appear about ready to topple over. He glances at me while performing a perfected balancing act and laments, “Ms. Nyachae, we gotta talk to you!” I look at Mason with wide eyes and concede “Oh...okay.” Samuel, a gangly, deep brown boy with a lovely centered gap in his teeth, already seated at the carpet, pauses his flirtatiously annoying behavior towards Olivia. He stands up, turns his head towards me, and nodding quickly adds, “Yes we do!” With that confirmation, I believe that whatever Mason and Samuel have to tell me is pressing and private. I know by their tone, and from experience, that we need to talk now. Therefore, I decide this is a “close the door” type of conversation. Once everyone is inside, I close the door. All at once, many of my students, who are Black youth, express that they are concerned about how our school has changed, and is changing, for the worse. These young people claim that the new principal, Dr. Cleveland, a middle class Black man, does not greet them or even acknowledge them in the hallways. Instantly, I have a mental flashback to Dr. Cleveland’s first staff meeting months earlier, where he flaunted his elite university education and told us not to expect greetings from him, rationalizing that “I’m an introvert.” I didn’t know this behavior extended to the children as well. My students explain that this interaction is starkly different from the warm and friendly interactions they are used to having with most of the adults in our school. My students know it is difficult for me to hide my facial expressions, so they earnestly watch my reactions for guidance. I survey the carpet with sad eyes and divulge, “I know...” Brittany, a short athletic girl with mocha skin, interjects “And you know who I can’t stand...” and describes Mr. Grant, a white male teacher, positing “He ignorant.” Brittany describes how Mr. Grant is always trying to prove her wrong when she shares her ideas, and how she doesn’t like that. Other students charge that Mr. Grant favors Olivia, who is the family..._
member of someone who works at the school. Olivia peers into my eyes, admitting “He does”, while nodding in agreement. I think back to my personal observations of Mr. Grant doing just what my students testify. Other students tell similar stories of mistreatment by teachers and school staff.

All of a sudden, Courtney, the tallest student in the class, a golden-toned girl, stands up, fixes her eyes on me, and exclaims, “Oh my God, I had a dream about this. I forgot to tell you, Ms. Nyachae. I had a dream about this.” The rest of the students and I look up into her piercing hazel eyes as she continues. “In my dream, I was outside looking at our school building and it (the building) looked exactly like our school. And then, all of a sudden, the first floor collapsed. The rest of the building was still there, but the first floor was gone.” Courtney interprets her dream and prophesizes that the new administration will destroy everything the former administration worked so hard to build. Other students, many of whom have been attending this school since kindergarten, chime in admonishing that the school wasn’t the same and was changing for the worse. Stunned, I listen and agree, thinking, “They are so right.”

A Review of Research on the Perspectives Urban Students of Color

This experience stays with me and motivates my push, no matter how extensive my research agenda becomes, to listen to urban youth of color. This vignette reveals that no matter how “good” or “relevant” teachers (be they white or of color) think they are, we must always “check in” with students. My greatest efforts in working with teachers, supporting their ability to teach with a racialized understanding of the world, and for social justice, are meaningless if the students for whom these efforts are ultimately intended do not find it beneficial. To illustrate, Mr. Grant walked around the school as if he was the best teacher, openly critiquing other teachers in a competitive manner, and put up the façade that he was the one who best understood our students. In knowing Mr. Grant personally, and in having worked with him for seven years by this time, I had also witnessed him doing great things with and for students. Perhaps he would have had a more accurate perspective of his teaching and relationships with students had he asked his students more probing questions, and had listened to their critiques. As for Dr. Cleveland, I do not think the students’ perspectives would have phased him either way; he is an introvert, an individual, and a graduate of an elite institution, so he believed he knew what was
Best for urban students of color experiencing poverty, or the working class. My students’ assessment of the new principal reminds me of Dumas’ (2014) critique of the Black middle class in the turning of their backs on the Black poor, forgetting about the importance of a collective equity. Not greeting students is a turning of one’s back. Furthermore, Dr. Cleveland’s example supports a point made earlier in this chapter: the mere presence of teachers of color is not enough, as we are all at risk of succumbing to whiteness (Picower, 2009; Young, 2011).

As shown above, my students’ perceptions of one white teacher, and one Black educator commissioned to “fix” our school, were anything but favorable. By calling out Olivia’s preferential treatment, based on her being the family member of someone from school personnel, the students revealed that they were aware of school politics. Moreover, over time, Courtney’s prophecy proved to be quite accurate. The new colorblind corporate approach to running our school destroyed everything that Dr. Adams (the administrator described in the personal vignette in Chapter 1) had worked so hard to build. The school lost its warmth, among other things. We cannot ignore the fact that, as Dumas (2014) argued, for many youth of color, specifically Black students, “schooling is a site of suffering” (p. 2). Clearly, my students were suffering. Teachers must interrogate the “materiality and mundanity of everyday struggle” (Dumas, 2014, p. 19), as told to us from the perspectives of youth of color.

**How students of color perceive school and its many parts.** Several researchers have conducted studies that specifically question urban youth of color on their perceptions of school, teachers, curriculum, pedagogy, and school reform (e.g., Cushman, 2006; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Howard, 2002; Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003; Wilder, 2000). Researchers derived the data for these studies from individual interviews, small group interviews, focus groups, and classroom/program observations.
with urban students of color. Students of color complained most about unengaging and boring teaching practices (Ardizzone, 2006; Cushman, 2006; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Liou, Martinez, & Rotheram-Fuller, 2016; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007; Schultz, 1999).

Specifically, many youth of color reported that they were dissatisfied with what they were being taught in school (Ardizzone, 2006; Liou et al., 2016); and as a result, they considered their coursework to be a waste of time (Kinloch, 2009; Liou et al., 2016). They deemed the curriculum and coursework to be irrelevant to their lives (Ardizzone, 2006; Nieto, 1994; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). Students of color also felt that grades were overemphasized in curriculum and pedagogy (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Nieto, 1994), instead of true education.

Another recurring theme in the literature is that students of color experience racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious discrimination in school (Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994). They reported that teachers base their expectations on racial, cultural, and class differences. Both high achieving (Nieto, 1994) and low achieving (Liou et al., 2016) students of color recognized these distinctions. Students considered to be low-achieving by teacher standards are often allowed to do nothing (Liou et al., 2016). For instance, in one study a Black urban middle school student claimed “…We don’t do nothing” (Storz & Nestor, 2003, p. 15). According to reports from urban students of color, discrimination is manifested in many ways, such as, being ignored (Liou et al., 2016) and disrespected by teachers (Nieto, 1994), and through low expectations (Liou et al., 2016; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). Many urban youth of color find the use of sarcasm, hostility, and humiliation disrespectful (Howard, 2002; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007). I wonder if these forms of disrespect are what Brittany from the previous vignette was trying to articulate when she described Mr. Grant as “ignorant.” I wish I had probed further.

Regardless, it is important to note that “…the disrespect of teachers and administrators towards
Students of Color is rarely challenged or discussed…[sending] a message…that it is acceptable to treat Students of Color as inferior” (Kohli, 2009, p. 249). The lack of action taken to disrupt the demeaning treatment of Black and Brown students significantly contributes to their daily suffering in schools. These practices alienate youth, and confirms for them the inferior status that is also promoted structurally throughout society (Ardizzone, 2006; Nieto, 1994).

Specifically, Nieto (1994) found that while students of color value their race and culture, this value is at odds with social constructions of race and culture. Moreover, the ways in which schools perceive race and culture caused them to be concerned with how their families and communities were represented in schools, and society at large (Kinloch, 2009; Nieto, 1994; Schultz, 1999). Many of the young people in these studies were adamant that their families wanted them to achieve in school (Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994). It is interesting that, when asked about their perceptions of school, urban youth of color feel the need to advocate for their parents’ support of education. I remember advocating for my parents’ goodness and love of education as a youth, to prove to my white teachers that a family and community that supported my educational pursuits surrounded me. In mentioning this information about their families, when being questioned about school, perhaps these students of color, seek to dispel the deficit and racist belief that the adults in their lives did not support them in their educational pursuits, as I had as a young student. Moreover, Kohli (2009) claimed that “…racism is a cycle that continues in schools”, and recalls that their families “endured it when they were young, and Youth of Color experience it in schools today” (p. 249).

Relatedly, Kinloch (2009) listened to Phillip as he guided her through his Harlem neighborhood, and expressed his feelings about the racialized gentrification of his community. Her ethnographic study revealed that youth want to learn, act, and discuss their plans for social
action and social transformation. Phillip confessed “I’m just a concerned youth” (Kinloch, 2009, p. 317). Philip cared about his community, and yearned to exert this passion in school. For students of color, the disconnections between community and classroom are painful and problematic. Kinloch encourages us to “[draw] on youth community engagements inside of school in ways that stimulate practices in critical reading, writing, and performing” (p. 319). While Phillip’s school worked to incorporate new and relevant curriculum, these implementations did not connect to his or his peers’ out-of-school worlds. Similar to Brittany from my narrative above, Phillip wanted teachers to “give us freedom to tell our stories, have our argument” (Kinloch, 2009, p. 329). When we listen to students, “learning [becomes] reciprocal” (Kinloch, 2009, p. 331). Teachers should not ignore the racialized experiences of students occurring outside of school.

In a similar vein, in her book, *Hip Hop’s Li’l Sistas Speak*, Bettina Love (2012) detailed her ethnographic study of six teenage Black girls between the ages of thirteen and seventeen participating in an afterschool tutoring program in Atlanta, Georgia. Love examined how the girls’ constructed their racial and gender identities through their understanding of rap music and rap videos, and how their lived experiences were shaped by this. Through individual and group interviews, along with observations over a sixteen-month period, Love found that these Black girls listened to rap songs with misogynistic lyrics for fears of being “lame” in the eyes of their peers, without challenging their messages. Their engagement with these songs revealed the they, a marginalized, racialized, and gendered group, “consented to their own oppression” (Love, 2012, p. 93). The girls also believed that Black women in rap videos choose their marginalization, and that white women were not portrayed that way in videos because they made better choices. The girls did not consider how mass media was based on racism, and intended on
their interpreting the video just as they had (Love, 2012). Furthermore, the girls never thought to resist these messages through some form of social action. Love (2012) cautioned, however, that “before we pass judgement on their interpretations, we have to ask if they ever had a chance to interpret things differently, with what they were given” (p. 86). Love argues that we as educators fail students when we do not engage them in critical pedagogy so that they can deconstruct such messages. Another key point is that Love does not advocate for censorship; instead, she wants educators to teach students how to read critically the world.

Equally important, Mansfield (2014), through student interviews, found that the required uniforms in a single-track STEM high school for girls of color were a cause of contention between the girls, and youth from their communities. However, the school integrated women’s studies in the curriculum, planned public events, and conducted conversations about sexism and racism. Still, like the students in Nieto’s (1994) study, the girls of color felt their cultures were invisible in curriculum with a proclaimed multicultural focus. These findings left Mansfield (2014) wondering, if educators “are not asking students about their lived experiences, how will they ever know what is truly happening in their lives” (p. 425)? Taken together, the Kinloch (2009), Nieto (1994), and Mansfield (2014) studies show the importance of teachers who implement social justice curriculum in knowing, listening to, and understanding students in ways that refuse to ignore the racialized out-of-school experiences students face (Sands et al., 2007).

**People of color reflecting on their experiences of school as children.** There is much to learn from adults reflecting on their schooling experiences as children. For example, Yull (2014) conducted oral history interviews with 52 Black people across four different generations who were self-identified descendants of U. S. slaves and who were from rural and urban geographical spaces, in order to explore their experiences of race and racism throughout their K-12 schooling.
She found that Black people from highly concentrated Black urban communities believed that “schools considered them uneducable” (p. 8), and that race and racism were significant aspects of their K-12 schooling experiences. In contrast, Blacks from rural areas with lower concentrations of Black people described race and racism as insignificant to their schooling experiences, although analysis of their interviews suggested otherwise. Yull’s findings suggest that urban students are cognizant of the ways race and racism play out in schools, and that educators could learn from students’ unique racial, social, and geographic locations.

Asking people of color to reflect on their K-12 educational experiences provides significant insight on how race and racism in schools effect youth of color. Decades after they unfolded, racist encounters in schools experienced by youth of color are remembered in detail throughout adulthood, having left a lasting impact (Dumas, 2014; Kohli, 2009; Love, 2012; Yull, 2014). Moreover, Kohli (2009) argued that teacher education programs should value and learn from the experiences of teachers of color, in order to inform their dealings with youth of color. Through the individual and focus group interviews of twelve Asian-American, Black, and Latinx women teachers of color in Los Angeles, Kohli (2009) found that they experienced racism through racial slurs from other students, cultural/racial absence in curriculum, the prioritization of white history, and colorblindness during their K-12 education. Even when adults were informed of or witnessed such occurrences, they often did not intervene. These experiences provided these teachers with a heightened awareness of racism in schools today. They often commented on how their observations of students’ experiences of racism mirrored their own racist schooling experiences. JoAnn, a Latinx teacher, witnessed her white teacher colleagues having low expectations and deficit perspectives of Latinx youth, referring to them as “hood rats” and lazy. Julianna, a Mexican-American teacher, witnessed white teachers talking about
Black and Latinx youth “through a one-dimensional identity of gangs” (p. 247). Urban youth of color are multifaceted, and teachers can discover this if they learn about and from students.

**Schooling and educative experiences that students of color desire.** Ultimately, teacher attitudes toward students matter, and students of color desire respectful, supportive, and caring teachers (Cushman, 2006; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Howard, 2002; Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). These students want teachers who listen and relate to them (Ardizzone, 2006; Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Cushman, 2006; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Sands et al., 2007). Many students of color believe that schools should encourage and set high expectations for all students, regardless of their achievement histories (Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Cushman, 2006; Howard, 2002; Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007; Storz & Nestor, 2003). Moreover, they want teachers not to give up on them when they do not display high achievement (Liou et al., 2016; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). When teachers give up on students, students may give up on themselves, and come to feel hopeless about their futures.

According to most of the literature reviewed, urban students of color desire the sort of education that Love (2012), Kinloch (2009), and other critically conscious researchers recommend. Students of color want curriculum that is connected to their lives and their futures (Cushman, 2006; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). What is more, classroom practices which reflect the values of their families and communities are important to them (Howard, 2002). In essence, students of color want their families to be included as partners in their learning (Sands et al., 2007). Additionally, students of color want their culture, race, identities, languages, communities, and histories reflected in curriculum (Ardizzone, 2006; Nieto, 1994; Storz & Nestor, 2003). For example,
students of color would like to be offered a variety of perspectives in the books they are expected
to read (Nieto, 1994), and some choice in what they learn (Ardizzone, 2006; Cushman, 2006;
Sands et al., 2007; Storz & Nestor, 2003).

One consistent finding across many of the studies is that urban students of color crave a
meaningful and challenging curriculum (Ardizzone, 2006; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Nieto,
1994; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003) that prepares them for life outside of school (Liou et
al., 2016; Schultz, 1999). By and large, students of color want to be empowered (Ardizzone,
2006; Nieto, 1994). In the first place, they prefer lessons that are creative and imaginative, going
beyond textbooks (Ardizzone, 2006; Cushman, 2006; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Liou et al.,
2016; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007; Schultz, 1999). These students need to engage in dialogue,
ask questions, and share their opinions and voices in school (Ardizzone, 2006; Nieto, 1994;
Sands et al., 2007; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). However, urban students want to talk
about real issues or issues that matter to them (Ardizzone, 2006; Nieto, 1994; Storz & Nestor,
2003). They require revolutionary teachers, and want to be treated as equitable citizens
(Ardizzone, 2006).

It is worth mentioning that some urban students of color plan to work in their own
communities, so social justice teaching is very important to them. These young people are
committed to making a difference in their communities in ways that affect their actual lives
(Ardizzone, 2006; Cushman, 2006; Dixson & Dingus, 2008; Kinloch, 2009; Schultz, 1999; Storz
& Nestor, 2003). In some cases, the desire to make a difference is so strong that students of color
create their own educative experiences (Kinloch, 2009; Schultz, 1999). Unfortunately,
empowering pedagogy often seems to occur with more prevalence in out-of-school spaces then
in school for urban youth (Ardizzone, 2006; Chen, Desai, & Knight-Manuel, 2016; Haddix et al.,
2015; Kinloch, 2009; McArthur, 2016; Muhammad, 2015a, 2015c; Nieto, 1994). If this is the case, then why do we send children to school, and why do we teach in schools? Is it possible for students to receive an empowering and critical education in school? Considering the amount of seat time invested there, students should indeed come to experience empowering curriculum and pedagogy in school (Ardizzone, 2006; Nieto, 1994).

Some scholars have worked directly with urban youth to understand how they see their world, how they seek to transform it, and the type of education they desire (Edwards, 2005; Greene, 2016; Haddix et al., 2015; Kinloch, 2009; McArthur, 2016; McArthur & Muhammad, 2017; Muhammad, 2015b). Often, youth are not “invited to weigh in” (Dumas, 2014, p. 2) on how they experience school and life. Haddix et al. (2015) described how Josanique, a high school sophomore participating in their Writing Our Lives (WOL) project, used the civic and social justice understandings gained from WOL to critique police brutality, violence in her community, and her schooling experiences at a school board meeting. Young people are cognizant of the ways in which they are oppressed, in school and beyond (Ardizzone, 2006; Dumas, 2014; Kinloch, 2009; Love, 2012).

**Summary of literature that listened to the voices and perspectives urban youth of color.** Although eager to participate, the Black girls in Love’s (2012) study wanted to know why Love, who had been a staff member and basketball coach for the program they attended for two years prior, wanted to interview them. At that moment, Love “realized that many of the girls had never been asked what they thought about Hip Hop or, typical of societal engagement with girls (and girls of color especially), had never been asked what they thought about anything of substance” (p. 13). Similarly, other researchers observed that urban Black and Brown youth were surprised when asked to be participants and asked about what they thought, because they were
not used to their perspectives on school or education being deemed valuable (Nieto, 1994; Schultz, 1999). On this issue, Dumas (2014) made the following claim:

…”there is a tendency to dismiss the suffering of children, because it is assumed that children’s own assessments cannot be trusted, or at very least, if they do experience some trauma, it is for their own good and will be forgotten well before adulthood.” (p. 23)

The studies discussed reveal that the racialized suffering and trauma experienced by children in school is very real, not “for their own good”, and painfuly memorable. Teachers, especially those who claim to teach for social justice, must ask students how they perceive curriculum and school, and then listen to their voices (Kinloch, 2009; Mansfield, 2014; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007).

Students of color have something to contribute if we would only tap into it (Kinloch, 2009). Young people have insightful things to say, and their thoughts reveal that they are engaging in critical literacy (Ardizzone, 2006; Love, 2012) through their articulation of how they are marginalized (Storz & Nestor, 2003). Furthermore, they are seeking a space for their voice and identities (Ardizzone, 2006; Fordham, 1993; Nieto, 1994; Schultz, 1999). Teachers have a lot to learn from students (Cushman, 2006).

Listening to the voices of urban students of color challenges schools to think about the meaning of education (Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994; Schultz, 1999). Many youth of color want a social justice education, and to engage in social action in order to positively impact their communities (Ardizzone, 2006; Cushman, 2006; Dixson & Dingus, 2008; Haddix et al., 2015; Kinloch, 2009; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). Specifically, students of color want critical pedagogy (Ardizzone, 2006; Nieto, 1994; Sands et al., 2007; Schultz, 1999; Storz & Nestor, 2003). They also want their families, communities, cultures, race, and histories to be reflected
and honored in their schooling (Howard, 2002; Kinloch, 2009; Liou et al., 2016; Nieto, 1994; Schultz, 1999).

In the next chapter, I detail my research design, which is informed by my literature review of teacher professional development; teachers learning about race; teachers enacting social justice teaching; and teachers listening to the voices of urban students of color.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

*parquet /ˈpɑːkɛt; -kɪt/ (noun): a floor composed of short strips or blocks of wood forming a pattern, sometimes with inlays of other woods or other materials* -Dictionary.com

**Context**

This qualitative study took place in a northeastern U. S. city called Parquet\(^\text{10}\). Parquet can be described as *urban emergent* because of its middling size, with fewer people per capita and fewer resources than an *urban intensive* city (Milner, 2012). As a mid-sized rustbelt city with a post-industrial past, Parquet may appear simplistic, antiquated, and predictable upon first glance. However, although Parquet may be positioned as a floor, or the bottom, compared to other cities as its meaning suggests, it contains much to uncover in terms of racial and social patterns that are entrenched in “inlays of other woods” (Dictionary.com, 2018). Undoubtedly, Parquet is still in transition from the industrial to the technological age, and is experiencing gentrification in its downtown area.

This study took place in the Parquet Public School District (PPS), with three teachers who expressed a commitment to social justice. The demographics of schools throughout Parquet over all can be described in extremes, due to intersectional, racialized, and classed *de facto* segregation. For example, there are high concentrations of Black and Brown students in many public and charter schools in Parquet, and high concentrations of white students in surrounding suburban and rural schools. However, in 2011, white teachers made up 84% of the national teacher workforce (Feistritzer, 2011). Similarly, according to the Parquet Public School District’s Statistical Brochure for 2016-2017, 86% of PPS teachers were white\(^\text{11}\). At the same time—and disproportionately—over half of the 31,398 PPS students enrolled were students of color,

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\(^{10}\) Pseudonym used.

\(^{11}\) This data was not further disaggregated by gender.
according to Parquet’s State Education Department. Specifically, Black students made up 47 percent of the PPS student population, while white students only made up 20 percent. In addition, nineteen percent of the PPS student population were Latinx. Asians, Native Hawaiians, or Pacific Islanders represented nine percent of the PPS student population, and Native Americans made up one percent of PPS students. Moreover, four percent of PPS students were classified as multiracial. I provide these statistics to avoid a narrow, decontextualized usage of the word “urban”, when describing the relationship between students and place (Irby & Hall, 2011).

Adding to the complexity of how I understand “urban” in this context, Parquet appears to be actively welcoming of immigrants and refugees, with its four active resettlement agencies. These agencies serve to accommodate PPS immigrant and refugee students and families, which have more than doubled in the last decade. According to a recent Parquet Brief, published by a local community-based organization, in 2016, 34% of the 5,028 refugees who settled in the state resided in Parquet’s county. Specifically, sixteen percent of PPS students were English Language Learners, speaking 83 languages among them at the time of this study. Even more, seventy-nine percent of PPS students were experiencing poverty and/or the working-class, and 23% were students with disabilities, according to the State Education Department. Keeping Parquet’s context in mind, in the next section, I describe the methods employed during my research project with PPS teachers and students.

**Methods**

Hyland (2005) charged social justice researchers to “find ways to work with small groups of teachers in intense long-term partnerships to begin to counter the racism that is embedded in

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12 These students were eligible for free lunch, which suggests that their families were living below the poverty line.
the schools in which they teach and even within their own definitions of successful teaching” (p. 458). Responding to that call, this research project involved in-depth intensive work with a small group of teachers, in order to learn how to challenge race and racism in schools, and how to enact social justice teaching. I examined various dynamics of teacher participation in the ‘race space’ CPD, to inform the discourse on supporting teachers who are committed to social justice. As stated in Chapter 1, I asked: What is the nature of ‘race space’ CPD? Specifically, among urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, how does a ‘race space’ CPD cultivate: a) racial literacy; b) social justice teaching, and; c) ideological becoming?

My research questions interrogate the essence of the ‘race space’ CPD, and “require an extensive and ‘in-depth’ description” (Yin, 2009, p. 4) of racial literacy, ideological becoming around social justice understandings, and the enactment of social justice teaching as a complex social phenomena. Therefore, this ethnographic case study of the ‘race space’ CPD drew largely from practitioner inquiry and ethnographic methodologies. My research questions “deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence” (Yin, 2009, p. 8) as does case study research.

Similar to practitioner inquiry, teacher learning and professional growth were examined (Orland-Barak, 2009). According to Yin (2009), “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). Teacher learning and growth was examined in the real-life, blurred contexts of the ‘race space’ CPD, and the classroom. For this ethnographic case study, the bounded system (i.e., case), and the unit of analysis, is the ‘race space’ CPD. The embedded unit of analysis is the racial literacy cultivation,
ideo logical becoming, and social justice teaching of PPS teachers committed to social justice who teach mostly students of color.

**Participant Recruitment**

To ensure that participants represented the bounded systems within this project, I employed homogeneous sampling and network sampling (Patton, 2002) approaches to recruit three in-service urban teachers of students of color, who espoused social justice stances, or claimed to be committed to social justice. These purposeful sampling approaches were employed because these teachers could “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem” (Creswell, 2013, p. 156); that is, determine how to better support teachers who espouse social justice stances, and develop an understanding of the phenomenon of racial literacy cultivation, ideological becoming, and enacting social justice teaching. Network sampling is one recruitment strategy that is useful for studies about topics of race, because it requests referrals of teachers who might already be interested (e.g., Young, 2011).

After receiving IRB approval for this study, I sent out recruitment materials to faculty at colleges and universities throughout Parquet, with whom I had previously established relationships, for referrals. Many of these teacher educators were already working with in-service urban teachers, supporting them in teaching for social justice. I also sent recruitment materials via email throughout the PPS, and to charter schools in Parquet. Josh and Shay responded to this recruitment call via email. I explained that we would begin ‘race space’ CPD once I received approval from PPS. I completed the PPS “Request for Research Activity” form, and waited for approval before beginning to conduct research in the school district. Subsequently, I received PPS approval, under the conditions that I receive additional permission from individual principals to conduct this research study in their schools. Each teacher who expressed interest in
the study completed a “screening” form before receiving a formal invitation to participate. This screening form inquired about their interest in learning about race, their commitment to social justice, and their classroom practice and curriculum.

Josh’s principal responded right away, allowing me to conduct my research in his school. After a few rounds of emailing and phone tag, Shay’s principal and I were able to speak over the phone. After some interrogation as to what exactly I would be doing with students, she allowed me to conduct my study at the school. In contrast, I met Gigi at a community event that hosted a conversation about race with students of color and teachers throughout Parquet. As this event ended, I tried to recruit the teachers who had participated to be a part of my study, gathering names and contact information. Other attendees left as Gigi, another PPS teacher, and I continued to talk, for what seemed like hours. We discussed the status of the PPS teacher contract and the Parquet Teachers Union’s next steps. When we finally said our goodbyes, I told Gigi, “You have to be in my project” and she agreed.

**Participating Teachers, Students, and their School Settings**

**Gigi.** Gigi is a white female secondary biology teacher (refer to Table 1) who lives in West Parquet. Gigi is also the parent of one white daughter and two Black sons. She considered herself a community activist, and admitted that she was not enacting social justice teaching at the time of this study. While Gigi displayed racial literacy and social justice understandings, she participated in this project so that she could learn how to incorporate her community activism into her teaching. Additionally, she had fifteen years of teaching experience in PPS. During the 2016 – 2017 school year, she followed a split teaching assignment schedule between two nontraditional schools (see Table 1). Students enrolled at these schools had either been a part of the criminal justice system, or had been expelled and/or suspended multiple times from other
schools. I observed Gigi at her morning school. Due to the school’s context, Gigi’s principal held a face-to-face meeting with me and the school counselor, in order to understand my research project before allowing me to begin. When all of her students were present, during the period I observed, her class consisted of two Black girls, one Latinx girl, and one Black boy. Nontraditional schools, like the one where Gigi worked, tend to have smaller class sizes for a variety of reasons. I received parental consent and assent forms from Kayla, a Black girl, and from Isabel, a Latinx girl.

Table 1. Participating Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gigi</th>
<th>Shay</th>
<th>Josh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Area</td>
<td>Secondary biology</td>
<td>Academic Intervention Services (AIS) English Language Learners (ELL) - 6th to 8th grade</td>
<td>Special Education - 6th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>2 Nontraditional high schools</td>
<td>K – 8 school</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Teaching</td>
<td>16th</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>14th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shay. Shay is a Black female Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and English Language Learner (ELL) teacher (see Table 1). Shay is the mother of three daughters, and lives north of Parquet in a smaller surrounding city. At the time of this study, Shay was a fourth-year teacher, teaching in a school where 37% of the students were classified as ELL, and 95% were students of color, according to the State Education Department. She shared with me that her cousin, who had worked with me to conduct a summer social justice literacy workshop for young people throughout Parquet, encouraged her to be a part of this project. She hoped to learn about new strategies to improve her classroom practice. I observed Shay teaching her third period AIS
class of at least 20 students throughout the year. This class consisted mostly of Latinx students. There was also a small group of Black students and an even smaller group of Asian students present. I received parental consent and assent forms from Annalise and Carmen, two Latinx girls.

Josh. Josh is a white male sixth grade special education teacher in a self-contained classroom with fourteen years of teaching experience (refer to Table 1). He and his wife have one son and one daughter. They live in South Parquet. Josh joined this project to make sure that he is being respectful to all people. Prior to this project, Josh and I worked together as teachers for several years at a charter school in Parquet. We both sat through the “race talk” I described in Chapter 1. At the time of this study, Josh taught at a PPS middle school where 39% of the students were classified as having various disabilities, and 86% were students of color. Josh’s self-contained special education class was composed of seven Black boys and one multiracial (white and Puerto Rican) boy who self-identified as Black. I received parental consent and assent forms from Jason, an African American boy, and Patrick, a multiracial (white and Puerto Rican) boy who self-identified as Black.

Data Collection

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the teachers and I participated in twelve ‘race space’ CPD sessions over the course of eight months. As shown in Table 2, I facilitated the sessions, completed 1-2 classroom observations of each teacher every week, and interviewed teachers and two of their students. I interviewed each teacher at the beginning and end of the project (see Table 2). During their first interview, teachers selected one class for me to observe throughout the year. The only criteria for selecting a class for observation was that teacher participants would actually be teaching. I did not want to observe them merely completing a
“duty” (e.g., lunch monitoring, holding study halls, or detention duty). Gigi selected the class with the highest student attendance. Shay selected the class where she would mostly be teaching ELA, and Josh selected his social studies class. Teacher participants also completed pre- and post-questionnaires around their racial understandings, social justice understandings, classroom practice, and curriculum. I interviewed student participants from the observed classes 1-2 times throughout the year, as shown in Table 2. My plan was to reciprocate by offering the teachers instructional coaching sessions as they desired, and to develop social justice units using critical backwards planning (Muhammad, in progress; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011; Wilhelm, 2007). Josh was the only teacher who took me up on my offer. We worked together on his Egypt social justice unit plan after my classroom observations and virtually.

Table 2. Data Collection Timeline 2016–2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Aug–Sep</th>
<th>Oct–Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan–Feb</th>
<th>Mar–Apr</th>
<th>May–June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 2 Times throughout the year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Race Space’ CPD Sessions</td>
<td>1 – 2 Times a Month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 2 Times a Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifacts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical Memos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Race space’ CPD Sessions: What took place? ‘Race space’ CPD consisted of twelve 90 – 180 minute sessions (see Table 3). As shown in Table 3, sessions began with open dialogue as we ate dinner. I provided dinner for teachers, because I realized that they were rushing to our 5 pm start time after teaching all day. I also wanted us to “break bread” together as a way to form relationships and build community. I sent along various restaurant menus for their orders ahead
of time. The teachers expressed their appreciation that dinner was provided each time. As we ate, teachers often expressed what was happening in their personal lives; divulged teaching concerns; shared resources; and/or described the realities of working within the constraints of the public schools system.

**Table 3. Summary of ‘Race Space’ CPD Sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Summary of Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1       | 11/10/16  | Gigi, Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 90 min.  | - Open dialogue while eating dinner, formal introductions, and statement of reasons for deciding to be a part of ‘race space’ CPD  
- Writing about and sharing of border crossing experiences (McVee & Boyd, 2016)  
- Lecture – Social justice teaching  
- Dialogue on their thinking at this point |
| 2       | 11/21/16  | Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 90 min.  | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Lecture – Teacher professional development and the need to discuss race and racism  
- Viewing of “Moving the Race Conversation Forward” video  
- Dialogue about the ideas presented in the video  
- Lecture – Critical race theory  
- Dialogue about ideas around critical race theory |
| 3       | 12/8/16   | Gigi, Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 120 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
| 4       | 12/19/16  | Gigi, Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 135 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Book Club – “Introduction” to *Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom* by Rick Ayers and William Ayers  
- Lecture – Critical backwards planning (Muhammad, in progress; Wiggins & |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5 | 1/9/17     | Gigi, Josh, Tiffany | 180 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Book Club – “So-Called Social Justice Teaching and Multicultural Teacher Education: Rhetoric and Realities” by Marcelle M. Haddix (Chapter 3 from *Cultivating Racial and Linguistic Diversity in Literacy Teacher Education: Teachers like Me*) |
| 6 | 1/25/17    | Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 120 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Book Club – Previous reading  
- Social Justice Lesson Analysis – Video of Josh’s Lesson |
| 7 | 2/13/17    | Gigi, Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 105 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Book Club – Previous reading  
- Consciousness-Raising Exercise  
- Brainstorming final project ideas for Josh’s unit, based on student responses |
| 8 | 2/27/17    | Gigi, Josh, Tiffany | 180 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Book Club – “Becoming ‘Urban’ Teachers: Teaching for Social Justice, Behavior ‘Management,’ and Methodological Overload” by Marcelle M. Haddix (Chapter 4 from *Cultivating Racial and Linguistic Diversity in Literacy Teacher Education: Teachers like Me*)  
- Dialogue around social justice curriculum planning that is connected to content |
| 9 | 3/13/17    | Gigi, Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 90 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Book Club – Previous reading  
- Report out on how social justice teaching is going  
- Social Justice Curriculum Planning |
| 10| 4/18/17    | Josh, Shay, Tiffany | 120 min. | - Open dialogue while eating dinner  
- Dialogue on the current state of public schools  
- Social Justice Curriculum Planning  
- Viewing of Last Week Tonight with John Oliver clip on charter schools |
Teacher choice and availability was also very important to me, so our sessions were not set in stone. Instead, I sent out Doodle Polls via email twice a month, prior to scheduling our sessions, and I scheduled sessions based on everyone’s availability. As is life, at times teachers were still unable to attend, as shown in Table 2. However, all teachers attended the majority of the sessions. Generally, we met twice a month until March (see Table 3). By this point in the school year, testing schedules and end of the year activities limited our meetings to once a month.

The beginning sessions included some frontloading on ideas around critical race theory and social justice teaching. I provided mini-lectures on these topics. Overall, we structured sessions around book club, social justice lesson analysis, one consciousness-raising exercise, and social justice curriculum planning (refer to Table 3). Patricia Hill Collins (1998) described consciousness-raising as “exercises designed to help individuals or groups become more aware of the workings of [racial], political, social, economic, and/or cultural issues in their everyday lives” (p. 276). Thus, consciousness-raising exercises were employed, to support ideological becoming around social justice understandings among teachers. As the facilitator, I organized the lectures and selected the book club readings based on my observations of teachers’ needs. At
Josh’s request, I included a social justice lesson analysis, and time for teachers to engage in social justice curriculum planning.

**Situating Myself and my Subjectivities within the Work**

For this ethnographic case study, I played many roles. During the ‘race space’ CPD and instructional coaching sessions, I was participant-observer and facilitator; during classroom observations and interviews, I was researcher and participant-observer at times. No matter the role, I had an agenda. Most researchers do, regardless of their claims of objectivity (Dillard, 2000). This is important, because I cannot ignore how my positionality as a Black feminist pedagogue and my endarkened feminist epistemologies shaped my facilitation and interpretation of ‘race space’ CPD from the onset.\(^\text{13}\)

Through this project, I attempted to investigate and support the educative experiences of urban teachers in ways that would improve the educative experiences of students of color. I want urban students of color not to just survive school, I want them to thrive (Love & Evans-Winters, 2015). Moreover, my research agenda is situated in my experiences in schools throughout Parquet, as a descendant of U.S. slaves, as a Black girl student, and later, as a Black woman teacher. Dumas (2014) reminded me that “…there is mourning, for the suffering we carry with us, and for those who continue to suffer in schools every day” (p. 23). I remember wanting more in school as a youth, and today I see students who, like me, deserve more in school. Similar to McVee (2012),

…part of my intent in investigating teacher learning is to practice what I preach. If I expect [the teachers I work with] to practice an inward gaze, to reflect upon their teaching and cultural identities, I too must take up such a reflective stance. (p. 4)

\(^{13}\) See “Critical Race Theory” section in Chapter 2 for explanations on Black feminist pedagogues and endarkened feminist epistemologies.
In essence, I must be honest and reflective about how my background, identities, and agenda influence my research. Considering my experiences and my agenda, I must be in constant reflection when working with urban teachers, in order to surround them with genuine love and support.

To be clear, I did not presume that I was prepared to work with PPS teachers. I will admit that my biggest hesitation and fear going into this research project was working with urban teachers, especially as there was a strong likelihood that I, as a Black woman, would be working with mostly white women teachers, as the literature suggests. I have tried to “play nice”, regardless of the numerous racial micro-aggressions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) that I have experienced at the hands of white people, and the whiteness that operated daily in the public schools I attended, in my undergraduate experiences, in my teaching experiences, and in my doctoral program experiences. In Chapters 1 and 2, I shared some of these realities, but some I will never share. With this in mind, I understand that I bring particular perceptions of, and experiences with, white teachers, in my experiences as their student and colleague, influencing my interactions with, and interpretations of them. Kohli (2009) expressed a similar sentiment when she wrote, “For teachers of color, reflecting on racism in their schooling can help them to identify their responsibility and agency in interrupting racial injustice” (p. 245). Yes, I brought my experiences as a Black teacher fighting, and defending the humanity of my students to my white colleagues, to this research project. I brought my insider perspective to my research (Tillman, 2002). Still, I needed to take care to enact radical listening, and I needed to limit my defensiveness. I knew that I usually was defensive about educational inequities, because the experiences and futures of Black youth, and Black people in general, are so close and dear to my heart.
At the same time, I did not assume that “[b]ecause I [was] current in the literature and from the ‘hood,’ [that I was] ready and prepared to work with [urban youth]” (Love, 2012, p. 51). While my economic status, racial background, and the neighborhood I lived in as a child was similar to those of many of the students in this study, my classifications and groupings in school were drastically different from theirs. Beyond being labeled “average”, in terms of my academic ability, I did not experience labels and categories in the ways that these students did when I was a child. From kindergarten to twelfth grade, schools did not label me as learning disabled, ELL, AIS, as having a discipline problem, or as being a criminal. As Love (2012) pointed out, just because we may have shared a racial category and neighborhood characteristics, we did not necessarily share the same experiences, consciousnesses, or ideologies.

Still, I understood that, in engaging in a research project of this nature, there was a possibility that I would endure racial micro-aggressions, possibly similar to those that students of color experience in schools. While they may be unintentional, the impact can still be significantly damaging. Dumas (2014) reminded us that “Black educators, children and families are never quite sure when they will be taken (back) to this place of trauma, nor can they fully determine when, or if the pain will end” (p. 3). In other words, there was some trepidation there. However, around the second year of my doctoral program, I developed an intimate group of ‘Sista-girls’ and ‘Sista-friends’, helping me to process the hybridity of oppressions I experience in academic spaces. This group consists of women of color who are around my age, and who are intentional and unapologetic about centering people of color and social justice in their research. There is no need for the “believing game” (McVee & Boyd, 2016) when discussing my racialized and gendered experiences among my ‘Sista-girls’, because they already believe me. I
realized that I needed them, our space, and that we needed each other, in order to engage in this work without sacrificing our emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, racial, and cultural health.

Ultimately, I needed to be cautious of my subjectivities if I aimed for ‘race space’ CPD to be about relationship, love, trust, and a flattening of all hierarchies, with the hope that we could grow together. Obviously, I brought with me academic capital, unlike the urban students and teachers involved in this project. For one, as a doctoral student, I have had an opportunity to study teaching, literacy, critical pedagogy, and culturally relevant pedagogy on a deeper level than had been afforded to me as a classroom teacher. My doctoral studies also afforded me the opportunity to study my Blackness, culture, race, gender, and class in profound ways, which did not occur during my experiences as a student in public school. I grappled with and worked through the subjectivities described above throughout this entire project, by conversing with my ‘Sista-friends,’ recording analytical memos, and simply writing. These tools, along with other data sources, helped me to better understand what exactly was happening during ‘race space’ CPD.

Data Sources

Primary data sources that were analyzed for this ethnographic case study included: a) audio and video of ‘race space’ CPD sessions and classroom interactions, b) field notes, c) teacher and student interviews, and d) pre- and post-questionnaires of teachers. Secondary data sources used as evidence to support my data analysis of primary sources included artifacts and analytical memos.

‘Race space’ CPD sessions. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the teachers and I participated in the ‘race space’ CPD one to two times a month. Each session was audio-recorded and video-recorded. Audio-recordings were transcribed.
**Classroom observations and field notes.** I observed each teacher one to two times a week during the academic year, and wrote field notes. My field notes included observable details and commentary. I attended to the teaching methods, behaviors, and content employed by the teacher, and the verbal, emotional, and physical student responses. For instance, I detailed Josh’s movement around the classroom as students wrote in notebooks, and the “underground” conversations of Shay’s students during her ELA review. I also included some commentary of incidents and aspects of classrooms, teachers, and students that stood out to me. For example, I wrote about the eerie quietness of Gigi’s classroom. Each classroom observation was audio-recorded and video-recorded. I used video recordings to expand my field notes.

**Interviews.** I conducted two semi-structured interviews (Charmaz, 2014; Seidman, 2013) with teacher participants, at the beginning and end of the school year and one to two interviews with student participants (see Appendices A and B for sample interview questions). Teachers were interviewed on their educational philosophies, life histories (e.g., personal lives, professional lives), educational/schooling/professional development experiences, teaching experiences, social justice and social action experiences in and out of school, and experiences with race and racism. The end-of-year interviews also inquired about their perceptions of the ‘race space’ CPD, and its influence on their classroom practice and curriculum planning.

Students were interviewed on several topics, including: a) life histories (e.g., personal lives, schooling lives), b) communities and families, c) educational/schooling experiences, d) desires for educative experiences, e) social justice and social action experiences, f) experiences with race and racism, g) perceptions of teachers’ curriculum, and h) suggestions for urban teachers engaging in social justice teaching. The second interview also inquired as to whether or
not the students noticed a change in their teacher’s teaching, as compared to the beginning of the year.

**Pre- and post-questionnaires.** Participating teachers completed pre- and post-questionnaires (see Appendix C) around their understandings of race, social justice, and social justice teaching. I wanted to inquire into whether ‘race space’ CPD cultivated their racial literacy, social justice ideological becoming, and social justice teaching.

**Artifacts.** Artifacts were collected from teachers (e.g., personal narratives, lesson plans, etc.), and students (e.g., assignments, projects, etc.) during ‘race space’ CPD sessions, and classroom observations. I photographed the artifacts, uploaded them to an electronic source, and/or copied them.

**Analytical Memos.** I also wrote analytical memos, as my first attempt at data analysis to explore what it all meant (Saldaña, 2013). Analytical memo writing pushed my thinking and strengthened my overall analysis.

**Data Analysis**

**Preliminary Analysis for Inquiry of a Recursive Nature**

Informal data analysis began during data collection after Gigi, Josh, and Shay completed the “screening” form, the pre-questionnaire, and their first interviews. I read their forms and pre-questionnaires, and noted their levels of racial literacy, social justice understandings, and social justice teaching. Due to the recursive nature of this inquiry project, my initial analysis of informal data helped me to design the beginning ‘race space’ CPD sessions. According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008), “recursivity indicates an emergent research process in which the design and procedures unfold as the study proceeds” (p. 745). Based on the literature I had read up to that point, I assumed that teachers who expressed a commitment to social justice would
possess basic social justice understandings, but this was not the case. For example, Josh equated social justice teaching with community building in his screening form and pre-questionnaires. Gigi reported her practice of relationship building with students, and her understanding of the inequities her students experienced, as examples of social justice teaching. For this reason, I provided direct lectures on social justice teaching and critical race theory. In contrast, Shay gave the following examples of social justice teaching: “Students researched social justice issues. Students presented their findings to the class on slave labor. Students read books that exposed social injustice” (Shay’s Screening Form). In this sense, Shay seemed to have a better understanding of social justice teaching than did Josh and Gigi. I also listened to the teachers’ first interviews, to try to learn who they were, in terms of the identities and histories they would be bringing into ‘race space’ CPD. I wrote some preliminary findings about each teacher, based on this informal data analysis. For instance, on November 1, 2016, I wrote the following:

Some teachers need support in their social justice ideological becoming and in enacting this becoming…Teachers need space to process and understand their own racial identity and racial histories in order to teach for social justice…Gigi, Josh, and Shay are at various stages in their social justice ideological becoming.

As another form of preliminary analysis, I recorded an analytical memo after my first classroom observation of each teacher. I tried to capture what stood out to me, or what was going on in their classrooms. For example, I talked about the smell of vanilla that contributed to the warm feeling in Josh’s classroom. I talked about how quiet it was in Gigi’s classroom. In addition, I spoke about how Shay seemed to have her hands full with over 20 students in her AIS class. Overall, I discussed what ‘race space’ CPD needed to be and do for each teacher.
Once ‘race space’ CPD began, and I continued my classroom observations, I audio-recorded analytical memos when I noticed things that perplexed me. For example, the dialogue around the consciousness-raising exercise during Session 7 was different from all the other sessions we had had up to that point. Therefore, I recorded an analytical memo, thinking about what it all meant. Later on, I listened to a segment of that dialogue multiple times and wrote about it. Through a process of recursivity, I began to theorize the actualization of Third Space in ‘race space’ CPD as a space where artifacts from students of color signify from the periphery through consciousness-raising exercises. I also transcribed my analytical memo from that session, to engage in some meaning making. Furthermore, on April 27, 2017, I wrote the following preliminary finding: “Over time the ‘race space’ CPD transformed from teachers learning from me, as ‘expert’, to learning from each other by brokering the varying funds of social justice knowledge available.” Overall, analyzing this segment of talk helped me to reshape my theorization of Third Space.

**Beginning Data Analysis: Cleaning Up Data**

Once all ‘race space’ CPD and interview audio were transcribed by rev.com, I began cleaning up transcriptions, and writing passages of my interpretations of what I noticed. During what seemed like a never-ending process of cleaning up transcriptions, I listened to Sessions 1 – 5 as I drove in the car. When I stopped driving, I would write down what had stood out to me. The writing and notes I took while cleaning up transcriptions and listening to the first five sessions would later help me to create my codes. For example, while listening to Session 3, I wrote “facilitator providing them with tools to resist being confined to standards and testing in an effort to teach for social justice.” This observation helped me to realize that—instead of only attending to the teachers—I needed to pay attention to my own engagements in the space as a
participating actor and shaper of the space. By listening to the sessions while driving, I noticed the narratives shared, and the rich dialogue, that was taking place. At this point, I noted that I would need to code the dialogue as well as the narratives embedded throughout.

After cleaning up the transcriptions of Sessions 1 and 2, I wanted to write a detailed description of ‘race space’ CPD. Data analysis for ethnography case study must provide “thick descriptions” (Glesne, 2011) of ‘race space’ CPD, and chronicle the occurrences as experienced by the participants, examining the group interaction and different perspectives through the views of the participants (Creswell, 2013). By analyzing video, audio, and transcripts from Session 1, I wrote the opening narrative to Chapter 4. After reading this narrative of how we began to my mother, she announced, “I want to know where everyone was sitting.” Consequently, I created a figure of the space and the seating (self) assignments. This figure helped me to visualize how racial literacy cultivation and social justice ideological becoming happened throughout the sessions. Moreover, through revising this narrative, and multiple re-readings of it, I was able to understand how each of us entered the space and individual iterations of ideological becoming over time.

First Cycle Coding

By listening to Sessions 1-5 and cleaning up transcriptions, I came to understand that ‘race space’ CPD was filled with dialogue and narratives. Using NVivo, I analyzed 591 pages of session transcriptions for narratives and dialogic exchanges around racial literacy, social justice understandings, meaning-making around social justice teaching, classroom practice, curriculum planning, and more (see Table 4). NVivo is qualitative data analysis software used for data management and analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). This software assisted me in code development, coding, and keeping track of codes and coded data. Specifically, I engaged in
descriptive coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2013; Wolcott, 1994) and process coding (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Saldaña, 2013) during first cycle coding. Descriptive coding summarizes the topic of a passage of data in a word or a short phrase (Saldaña, 2013). For example, the sub-codes “Activism” and “Racial Literacy” shown in Table 4 summarized the focus of data segments. Process coding captures observable activity or actions, and conceptual actions, by using words with –ing endings, such as, criticizing or saying (Saldaña, 2013). As shown in Table 4, examples of process coding include the sub-codes “Critiquing School”, “Meaning-Making around”, and “Challenging to.”

Table 4. “Dialogue” and “Narrative with Commentary” Sub-Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Narratives with Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>Activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom Practice, Curriculum, Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critiquing School (e.g., policies, curriculum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies to Resist and Information Sharing or “work around” administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning-making around…</td>
<td>Meaning-making around…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act for Antiracism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act for Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intersectionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach for Antiracism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Class-Sensitive Pedagogy (Jones &amp; Vagle, 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Justice Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppressive Schooling</td>
<td>Oppressive Schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Identity</td>
<td>Racial Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Literacy</td>
<td>Racial Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Identity – Confidence</td>
<td>Teacher Identity - Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging to…</td>
<td>Challenging to…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 Initially, I named this code “Racial Understandings.” However, when I realized I needed to employ a sharper theoretical articulation of CRT, I changed the name to “Racial Literacy.” Additionally, I began to have a deeper understanding of what the teachers and I were displaying in these moments, as I grew to understand the concept of racial literacy.
- Act for Antiracism
- Act for Social Justice
- Avoid deficit thinking about students of color
- Teach for antiracism
- Enact Social Justice Teaching

**Social Justice Understandings**
- Race or Ethnicity
- Test Prep
- Deficit Thinking about Students
- Humanization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' Lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Intersectionality

Table 4 shows the sub-codes for codes “Dialogue” and “Narratives with Commentary.” Some of the sub-codes are the same across codes. For example, the codes under the “Meaning-making around” and “Challenging to” sub-codes have similarities. However, while there were dialogic exchanges about test prep, no one shared a “test prep” story. For this reason, “Test Prep” is not a sub-code under “Narratives with Commentary.” I queried into descriptive statistics of codes and sub-codes via NVivo throughout the coding process, in order to gather emerging themes as I progressed in data analysis.

Each of the bolded sub-codes shown in Table 4 were my initial sub-codes, developed during preliminary analysis while I listened to Sessions 1-5 audio. I created the sub-codes that are not bolded as I coded transcriptions, and discovered that the preexisting sub-codes did not characterize certain aspects of the data. Creating new codes, along with coding narratives within dialogic exchanges, caused me to analyze each session transcription multiple times. This recursive process of redesigning my methods of analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008), based on what the data revealed, was useful in helping me to sharpen my research questions and my theoretical focus (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986). For example, from the onset, I employed
critical race theory generally. However, through data analysis, I realized that I needed a sharper articulation of CRT that is racial literacy. Comparing what I found during data analysis to literature on racial literacy helped to strengthen my interpretation of what the data revealed.

**Second Cycle Coding**

At this point in the data analysis process, I had to decide as to whether I was going to focus on the dialogue or the narratives. I began by gathering the sub-codes with 10 or more references for each code (see Table 5). As Table 5 shows, the “Narratives with Commentary” code had more references than the “Dialogue” code. However, the prominent sub-codes under the “Dialogue” code covered 311 pages of data, a much higher percentage than that covered by the “Narrative with Commentary” code. Therefore, I decided to focus on the dialogue, and save the narratives for another time.

**Table 5. Sub-Code Frequency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Code</th>
<th>Dialogue Frequency</th>
<th>Sub-Code</th>
<th>Narratives with Commentary Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Practice, Curriculum, Teaching</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of School (e.g., policies, curriculum)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Racial Literacy</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Literacy</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>With Students</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice Understandings</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Classroom Practice, Curriculum, Teaching</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning-Making</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Critique of School (e.g., policies, curriculum)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Justice Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Challenge</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Racial Identity</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Justice Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppressive Schooling</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Oppressive Schooling</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Identity</td>
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<td>Social Justice Understandings</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To Challenge</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Social Justice Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To Challenge</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, I engaged in descriptive coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2013; Wolcott, 1994), process coding (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Saldaña, 2013), and versus coding (Saldaña, 2013; Wolcott, 2003), to characterize each dialogic exchange within each sub-code listed under “Dialogue” in Table 5. Versus coding involves “identify[ing] in dichotomous or binary terms the individuals, groups, social systems, organizations, phenomena, processes, concepts, etc., in direct conflict with each other” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 115). For example, I coded one dialogic exchange as “Critiquing test prep v. Advocating for test prep” because teachers were going back and forth between embracing and rejecting the practice of focusing on test preparation during classroom instruction. Additionally, I kept count of each dialogic exchange under each sub-code. For example, I identified over 70 dialogic exchanges on racial literacy and racial identity, covering over 100 pages of session transcriptions. Next, I noted prominent themes across dialogic exchanges within each sub-code.

**Critical Discourse Analysis: A More Fine-Grained Analysis**

Little (2002) argued that “…more fine-grained analysis of naturally occurring interaction among teachers should enable us to understand how and to what extent professional communities afford opportunities for teacher learning and innovation” (p. 919). Thus, I conducted a critical discourse analysis (Huckin, 1997; Rogers, 2011; Wodak & Reisigl, 2003) of ten focal dialogic exchanges within each prominent theme developed during second cycle coding. Focal dialogic
exchanges were selected if they included three or more dominant speakers. These dialogic exchanges highlighted our (the teachers’ and my own) individual and collective learning and tensions.

Critical discourse analysis is important to this analysis, because it understands “discourse as social practice [that] implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). In essence, our unique experiences, contexts, schools—and the stratified society in which we exist—imprinted and informed each discursive event within ‘race space’ CPD. I engaged in critical discourse analysis in order to understand how each interlocutor employed these aspects to: a) advocate for one’s self or another; b) get/share resources and information; c) gain/surrender power; d) articulate social justice understandings; e) reveal one’s vulnerabilities or oppression(s); f) affirm, question, and challenge; g) accept/avoid one’s participation in injustice; h) incite resistance. I also attended to each interlocutor’s moves “to criticize, delegitim[ize], and argue against racist opinions and practices...to pursue antiracist strategies” (Wodak & Reisigl, 2003, p. 372). Specifically, I analyzed focal discursive events for dialogic moves that cultivated or thwarted collective and individual racial literacy, and ideological becoming around social justice understandings.

For data triangulation, I moved in and out of the ‘race space’ CPD, to and from the following sources: a) analytical memos, b) classroom observation field notes, c) descriptive coding and process coding results of teacher interviews, d) markings of teacher change in ideologies and understandings from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire. In the next chapter, I present the findings from my ethnographic case study of ‘race space’ CPD. Specifically, I further explain and interpret my critical discourse analysis of each dialogic exchange.
CHAPTER 4: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY OF ‘RACE SPACE’ CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal Narrative: As Researcher Learning with Teacher Participants

I open a windowless brown wooden door labeled “Adult Education.” I enter a room in the basement of a local college building that is about half the size of a standard classroom. It is November 10, 2016, two evenings after Donald J. Trump, an unprecedented candidate, was elected to become the 45th president of the United States. Hillary Rodham Clinton, self-proclaimed champion of people of color and LGBTQ communities, had lost. It was like a surprise ending to a suspenseful nightmare, where the good guys are actually eaten by the monster. Democrats and fellow justice fighters, even Bernie Sanders supporters, knew Clinton would win the election. National polls and Electoral College votes leading up to the election showed that she had this election in the bag. But people lied about who they were really going to vote for during the polls. Moreover, large groups of white folks, who lived in rural areas and/or who were experiencing poverty or the working-class, felt that Trump would “bring back jobs” and “make America great again.” They went to the polls on the 8th of November, some for the very first time, and voted for him.

To be clear, I did not trust nor support Clinton. I did not forget her advancement of policies which led to the incarceration of thousands of people of color in the 1990s and beyond. I was also annoyed and insulted by her latest pandering to Black and Latinx communities for votes. I would have preferred to vote for Bernie Sanders, but Clinton had won the democratic primary. Consequently, I entered long and arduous debates with folks on social media about various ways of engaging this election in the interest of oppressed groups. I sided with one infamous undercurrent among Black folks: do not participate in the election at all. I argued vehemently in support of Black millennials who chose not to vote because neither candidate represented their interests. I believe that in a democracy, and particularly for liberated Black folks, one also has the right not to vote, because voting is not the only way to participate politically. I came under fire for that belief by some Black leaders, friends, and family.

In the end, I voted for Clinton on the premise that she was my only option and, in the back of my mind, I knew she would win anyway. Thus, I had spent 2016 vigorously fighting for almost everything the 45th president of the United States was not. I fought on various platforms, such as social media, community initiatives, and debate parties. I also carried out this fight daily through my teaching, writing, and learning. Based on the 2016 presidential election results, all of my work seemed to be in vain, and by this point, I am tired. It is the first night of our ‘race space’ Critical Professional Development (CPD) sessions, and I disrupt the darkness of the room by turning on rectangle shaped florescent lights stationed within a suspended ceiling. Wearing a mourning blue shirt resembling a cape, I drag my feet across carpeted squares of brown and gray variations. I set up iPads with stands for video recording, my iPhone for audio recording, and food for sustenance before the teachers arrive.
Josh arrives proudly wearing his daily uniform, a royal blue hooded sweatshirt with gold lettering and school emblems accented by indigo jeans. He sits in one of the plush black chairs that surround a brown conference table in the center of the room (see Figure 3). Josh would later share his appreciation of these comfy chairs as compared to the “plastic hardness that you sit on” during traditional professional development. Yellow brick walls with several large empty green cork boards greet us and promise to keep our secrets (refer to Figure 3). At first glance, this room seems windowless. However, there are windows at the very top of the sidewall going up into an enclave (see Figure 3). These windows let in the last remnants of sunlight as our 5 pm start time approaches. In this room, we as a collective will engage narratives, reflections, and dialogue around race, racism, racial identity, and social justice in the context of U.S. society, schools, and classrooms.

Figure 3. The Room

Using a smart cart that is connected to a grandiose television overlooking the table (see Figure 3); I download my PowerPoint presentation on critical race theory and social justice teaching while catching up with Josh. Gigi arrives. Behind the table, on the right side of the room, are oak colored cabinets over, and under these a metal sink and green counter, as shown in Figure 3. These cabinets hold the paper plates, napkins, and beverages that we will use to break bread together for relationship building. To the left of the cabinets is a smaller brown table for the nightly spread of food (see Figure 3). Gigi and Josh engage in small talk as they select slices of pizza. Old school jazz notes saturate the atmosphere, providing a calming backdrop, as I continue to set up equipment. Josh and Gigi settle into their seats next to each other and begin eating. The three of us discuss where and with whom we watched the 2016 presidential election results play out. Josh and I watched in intimate settings, and Gigi attended watch parties. I tease, “We had to start this right after Election Day” and offer a hearty laugh. I am acknowledging the irony
of beginning a professional development series on racism the day after a person who has been described as one of the most overtly racist candidates—among other things—became the highest leader of our nation. Gigi, wearing a Black cardigan over a deep burgundy camisole, looks up at me and affirms, “Yeah, yesterday kind of sucked…One of the places I went [to] yesterday was the victory party for the gender identity policy through the Parquet Public School District. It was like everyone’s in the room and… no one feels celebratory right now because the LGBTQ community definitely feels like their rights are going to be rapidly eroded.”

Josh concurs with a “yup.” It is apparent that Gigi, like me, enters the session deflated. All of our hopes for social justice have been compromised. Although he does not elaborate much on the topic, Josh offers empathetic looks and agreements when Gigi and I continue to share the precarious state we find ourselves in as activists. I confess that I recently left my multiracial church and unfriended many people on Facebook because of this election season. Josh and Gigi nod their heads and extend “mmhmms” while chewing on pizza.

Coming from her afterschool program, Shay arrives in a whirlwind wearing a Black down coat with a feather brimmed hood. We solidify our seats. Shay and I sit at opposite heads of the table; while Josh and Gigi sit together to my right and Shay’s left (refer to Figure 4). We all face the television. We will sit in the same seats for most of the sessions to come. We proceed on our learning journey through ‘race space’ CPD.

Figure 4. The Room and Our Seats

I begin this chapter with the narrative of how we began our ‘race space’ CPD sessions, to acknowledge the ideological and material turmoil, conflict, and uncertainty of our nation in that moment. We, as educators committed to social justice, had lost a huge battle. The stated beliefs
and plans of the new president of the United States gave us great pause as to whether any racial and social justice battles would be won any time soon. The irony of that moment was that we were beginning a professional development series intended to engage our social justice ideological becoming. While intended to depict the actual shape of the room, the box shape of Figures 3 and 4 mirror the real and perceived constraints imposed upon us because of this election. The flatness of the figures is symbolic of the hopeless heaviness we felt as we entered this space. Another way to interpret the flatness of these figures, however, is that it presents the possibility for social justice ideological becoming, and the need for critical hope in the midst of hopelessness. This dissertation study sought to understand how ‘race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy among urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, and supported their social justice ideological becoming, in ways that led to more just interactions with and educative experiences for students of color.

This chapter’s opening narrative describes the context in which I began facilitating ‘race space’ CPD with three teachers from the Parquet Public School District (refer to Chapter 3), each with a self-proclaimed commitment to social justice. The complexities of the various “social justice” understandings and fights with which each of us entered this space are made visible through the distinctions of “I” as facilitator, and “we” as collective, throughout this narrative. Multiple re-readings of this narrative illuminated for me the heaviness and labor I felt as a Black woman, distinct from the solidarity of “we” as collective. As described in the opening narrative of this chapter, although “I am tired…, I disrupt the darkness of the room” by turning on the lights. As a Black feminist pedagogue, I was compelled to move forward and labor for the good of my community and myself (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1994). Black feminist pedagogues operate from their whole beings, from their hearts and spirits, from a place of love, and in community
with others (Dillard, 2000, 2012; hooks, 1994). To illustrate, after hearing Gigi grieve about being moved from her last school on multiple occasions, I affirmed her by stating, “You are on my heart, Gigi, you really are” (Session 3). Black feminist pedagogues work for the good of humanity, and for the liberation of all peoples (Collins, 1998, 2000; Henry, 2005; Joseph, 1988; Omolade, 1987). This is important, as I cannot ignore how my positionality as a Black feminist pedagogue, and my endarkened feminist epistemologies, shaped my facilitation of ‘race space’ CPD from the onset.

Equally important, this narrative is meant to capture how, where, and the conditions under which we began in order to understand the influence ‘race space’ CPD had on teachers’ shifting ideologies and classroom practice across twelve 90 – 180 minute sessions during the 2016-2017 academic year (see Chapter 3). Through dialogue, we explored racial literacy, social justice understandings, and social justice teaching. This dialogue occurred organically and purposefully through book club, social justice lesson analysis, social justice curriculum planning, and one consciousness-raising exercise. Patricia Hill Collins (1998) describes consciousness-raising as “exercises designed to help individuals or groups become more aware of the workings of [racial], political, social, economic, and/or cultural issues in their everyday lives” (p. 276).

In preparation for various exercises and discussions, sessions began with open dialogue as we ate dinner. Teachers often expressed what was happening in their personal lives; expressed teaching concerns; shared resources; and described the realities of working within the constraints of public schools during this time. As facilitator, I organized and delivered the lectures, and selected the book club readings, based on my observations of teachers’ needs.

Teachers joined this project to improve their classroom practice. Therefore, the structure of ‘race space’ CPD allowed teachers to play a role in shaping the direction and focus of the PD.
For example, at the end of Session 3, Josh asked if the group could provide him with feedback on the social justice unit plan, which he hoped to teach soon. Consequently, we supported Josh in his social justice teaching cultivation throughout ‘race space’ CPD. As facilitator, I listened to teachers, and worked with them to shape this space, based on their needs in the areas of racial literacy, social justice teaching, classroom practice, and curriculum planning. In this chapter, I present my findings from my ethnographic case study of ‘race space’ CPD. I respond to the following broad question: what is the nature of ‘race space’ CPD? Specifically, among urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, how does a ‘race space’ CPD cultivate (a) racial literacy, (b) social justice teaching, and (c) ideological becoming?

Throughout this chapter, I will discuss how ‘race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy, social justice teaching, and social justice ideological becoming. In the following sections, I describe and interpret the following three major findings: a) ‘Race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy by affirming the racial literacy various teachers already displayed, while providing teacher support in responding to the racial consciousness of students of color; b) ‘Race space’ CPD cultivated social justice teaching through dialogic exchanges around classroom practice and curriculum planning; c) ‘Race space’ CPD cultivated social justice ideological becoming among teachers, through dialogic exchanges that advanced and critiqued the oppressive nature of school. I end this chapter with a brief summary of the nature of ‘race space’ CPD.

**Findings**

**Cultivating Racial Literacy by Responding to Teachers’ Articulations of Structural Racism and Whiteness as Property**

‘Race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy among urban in-service teachers by acknowledging and being responsive to the racial literacy teachers already displayed. A critical
discourse analysis of focal dialogic exchanges revealed that teachers were already displaying some racial literacy, as evidenced in their articulations of structural racism and whiteness as property. The dialogic exchanges that cultivated racial literacy during ‘race space’ CPD focused largely on the following themes: a) bringing to the fore structural racism that make equitable educational opportunity impossible for Black children experiencing the working-class, or poverty; b) whiteness as property exhibited through the material privileges and benefits of being a white teacher.

**Articulating structural racism.** While eating dinner at the beginning of Session 6, Josh shared several critical thinking exercises that he used daily with his students. As I struggled to complete the exercises successfully, I laughed and claimed, “That’s why I never do good on standardized tests” (Session 6). Shay worriedly expressed the need for her own children to prepare for the SATs. According to Shay, “they keep telling little Black kids, that ‘you don’t have to take SATs’” (Session 6). Shay was concerned that if students followed this advice, they would not be accepted into 4-year colleges and universities. Shay was displaying a sophisticated level of racial literacy through her articulation of structural racism. Structural racism is “the normalized and legitimized range of policies, practices, and attitudes that routinely produce cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color, especially Black people” (CSREA, 2018, para. 1). Josh and I offered statements of dismay initially, and then affirmations.

Although the existence of structural racism was not new to me, hearing about it in this way from Shay saddened me. The “they” Shay referred to are school personnel in the institution of school, with power and influence. School personnel include teachers, counselors, and school administrators who maintain the existing stratified social structures that place “you”, Black students specifically, on the bottom through structural racism, limiting their educational
opportunities. I interpret Shay’s use of the word “little” to mean that Black children, mostly from working-class families or families experiencing poverty, are consuming such messaging at very young ages, early in their academic careers, and perhaps at their introduction to formal schooling, in insidious ways. Consuming such messaging means that these children are not expected to attend 4-year colleges and universities, not because they do not want to, but because it is not even an option presented to them by their academic institutions. Shay and I then noted a current trend to push Black students into the military, or community colleges, instead. We reported on how we routinely witnessed military recruitment campaigns, and observed school counselors encouraging urban students of color to apply to local community colleges, instead of local universities and state colleges.

The theme of structural racism emerged again during Session 8. Structural racism deems Black children experiencing the working-class or poverty as lacking in intellect and agency, thus producing limited career choices. After eating dinner, we engaged in book club on the book chapter, “Becoming ‘Urban’ Teachers: Teaching for Social Justice, Behavior ‘Management,’ and Methodological Overload” by Marcelle M. Haddix (2016). One outgrowth of this book club was a dialogue around the racist comments that teachers sometimes unknowingly make towards Black students, in an effort to be inclusive. I gave the example of “You’re really smart for a Black girl” (Session 8) as a problematic statement. Josh followed up by thinking aloud, stating:

Hey, what are you really saying there? Why are you saying that? Because that qualifier for a Black girl, like that qualifier doesn't need to be there, right? That doesn’t need to be a thing. You can just say “You’re a really smart kid, nice job figuring that out. That's good.” (Session 8)
The qualifier “for a Black girl” is problematic because it normalizes the notion that Black children are incapable of being intellectual. Such ingrained beliefs produce adverse effects for people of color. This qualifier also measures their intellect against a white normative of what it means to be “smart”, in much the same way as Josh’s suggestion to just say “You’re a really smart kid” does. Our statements reveal how structural racism is still at play through the inclusive techniques employed by some teachers.

During this dialogic exchange, Gigi shared other inclusive techniques, employed by school personnel, which actually advance structural racism. Gigi critiqued the practice of telling students “…you should go in[to] that [career] because there’s not a lot of Black people” (Session 8). While Gigi did discuss underrepresentation in particular fields, she finds it problematic to encourage students of color to go into particular fields solely due to a lack of representation. This type of diversity rhetoric convinces Black students that going in these fields is the way out of poverty, when that isn’t a guaranteed outcome. Moreover, “you should” reads like a commandment that they must follow, or else “you”, as a Black child, will be unsuccessful and poor. It also presumes that Black students are incapable of making sound decisions about their futures. Furthermore, it ignores how structural racism maintains the location of Black children in a stratified society. Perhaps school counselors, teachers, and administrators are well-meaning in these suggestions, but this practice is very limiting—to enter a career solely because there are few people from one’s racial group in it.

Later on in this dialogic exchange, I attempted to push Gigi and Josh further by stating “No, give kids a good education, and give them the freedom to do what they want to do” (Session 8). Gigi, Josh, and Shay (during Session 6) had been arguing for equitable education within the existing structure of school, or in school as it is. As a Black feminist pedagogue, I
attempted to push them beyond equitable education within the existing system, towards reimagining what schools could be. My move here was not only an attempt to cultivate their racial literacy, but also an attempt to cultivate social justice ideological becoming. My statement suggests that working-class students of color are capable of deciding for themselves, and should be encouraged and prepared to do so. Furthermore, educational institutions should provide them with a plethora of experiences that prepare them to follow their passions. In this instance, I employed endarkened feminist epistemologies, and embodied Black feminist pedagogy, to evoke a radical educational imagination for Black children. In essence, I argued against letting “the system” decide for students of color.

The recognition of how school practices adversely affect students of color is necessary for racial literacy cultivation. I acknowledged the racial literacy displayed by the teachers, and attempted to push them further to cultivate their racial literacy, as well as their social justice ideological becoming. Furthermore, Shay and Gigi’s disparate exemplifications of structural racism advanced in schools helped to cultivate racial literacy among all participants. This racial learning was sparked by “the people”, or by actual teachers in classrooms. I, as facilitator, was also a participant, suggesting a non-hierarchal participation and interaction existed amongst all of us in ‘race space’ CPD. Both dialogic exchanges demonstrate how racial literacy was cultivated, through our sharing of the racist acts committed towards students of color that we witnessed in schools. These acts create real barriers, denying the possibility of equitable educational opportunity for students of color. The teachers also displayed racial literacy through their articulation of whiteness as property.

**Whiteness as property in urban public schools.** The theme of whiteness as property emerged in three separate dialogic exchanges during ‘race space’ CPD. Whiteness as property is
the “notion that whiteness itself has value for its possessor and conveys a host of privileges and benefits” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 174). During ‘race space’ CPD, teachers discussed whiteness as property in terms of the differences of instructional materials and resources that white teachers possessed in the Parquet Public School District, as compared to the materials that teachers of color possessed in the same district. On separate occasions, Shay and Gigi initiated and directed these dialogic exchanges. Shay and Gigi described their personal experiences as teachers in schools, and with colleagues, that revealed differential privileges and benefits, or lack thereof, based on race. Shay and Gigi’s initiation of these dialogic exchanges cultivated our racial literacy in important ways.

Throughout ‘race space’ CPD, I offered Post-it chart paper for teachers to use in their classrooms, for various teaching strategies. Post-it chart paper is very convenient for mini-lessons and group collaborations. The strong adhesive backing allows past lessons and student work to be posted easily around the classroom, for students and teachers to refer back to. Thus, Post-it chart paper can function to help facilitate teaching. Presently, the Office Max listing price for two pads of Post-it chart paper, with 30 sheets per pad, is $61.99. Therefore, out-of-pocket Post-it chart paper purchases would be quite an expense for teachers to come up with repeatedly. During two separate dialogic exchanges, Shay referred to the Post-it chart paper that I offered as “white people stuff” (6.20) as shown in Table 6. It is important to note the facetious tone taken up by each interlocutor of the dialogic exchange shown in Table 6. The jesting began with Shay accusing me of “getting too close to whiteness” (6.1), in suggesting that she use Post-it chart paper in her classroom. Later on, I used humor to defend my suggestion by stating, “Excuse me! Let me tell you how awesome Post-it [chart] paper is” (6.14). Furthermore, when I explained that I was planning to give Josh some Post-it chart paper, Shay jested, “He’s already white. He
doesn’t want to be extra white” (6.13). Josh laughed and confirmed her claim by stating, “I have already addressed it (whiteness) in four articles—I know that I’m ...” (6.15 – 6.16). Josh was referring to the four book clubs that had transpired in ‘race space’ CPD by this point (refer to Chapter 3), in which we discussed whiteness as a social construct. A critical discourse analysis of this dialogic exchange revealed much more than jesting on Shay’s part. Shay considered Post-it chart paper to be the property of white teachers, based on what she experienced as a teacher of color.

Table 6. Dialogic Exchange19R during Session 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>That Post-it paper is getting too close to whiteness. We just use the old fashioned ... She want you to be super white with the Post-it paper. Like, what’s wrong with regular chart paper and tape? Like we used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>We just got to make sure we roll it up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>It’d be super white-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Are you talking about me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Yeah, that Post-it. Who buys that Post-it paper that sticks to the wall?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>$70.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>I-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>That’s the whiteness, unless you get Post-it labels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>I was going to go get you some (to Josh).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>He’s already white. He doesn’t want to be extra white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Excuse me! Let me tell you how awesome Post-it [chart] paper is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>I have already addressed it (whiteness) in four articles—I know that I’m ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Sorry, you don’t want to get closer to whiteness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>All this fancy Post-its.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Post-its ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>That’s white people stuff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>No it’s not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Why isn’t it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 7, Post-it chart paper is “white people stuff” (7.2) because “The white teachers got it” (7.26) and “The Puerto Rican teachers don’t [have] that stuff” (7.28) according to
Shay. In essence, Post-it chart paper reflects whiteness as property, in that the teachers of color at Shay’s school do not have access to such resources; Post-it chart paper only belongs to white teachers. It was unclear as to whether white teachers were receiving Post-it chart paper from the school, or purchasing it themselves. Nevertheless, Shay believed that one of the privileges of being a white teacher is having access to the best resources the school has to offer, even when teaching at a “poorly funded” urban public school. Still, Shay wanted access to good resources for her students too. In fact, Shay admitted that she “likes white people stuff” (7.20). Soon thereafter, Shay confessed that “I’m tired of using masking tape because [my charts] be falling, so yes I would love some of your white people paper” (7.22 – 7.24). Access to Post-it paper would mean that Shay would be able to post her charts around the classroom without them falling, so that she and her students could refer back to their work throughout the year.

Table 7. Continuation of Dialogic Exchange19R during Session 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Me and my advisor [are] Black, we use Post-it paper all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>That’s white people stuff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3-4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Because…we put it around, we put a picture on there. I do gallery walks with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>They have Post-it…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Quotations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>$30 per packet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>You know what it is though?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.10-11</td>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>If I was classroom teacher…I didn’t really have the option then, but as a professor, they pay for that type of stuff when you get grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>That’s white people stuff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>So I have access to it. If you need…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>The higher you get up the ladder, the better materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15-17</td>
<td>31-33</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>That’s why I work at a school with teachers so I can take the resources and give it to you. That’s why I was like, “Do you need it? Because I will go … I got some in my office.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>I need it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>No, that’s white people stuff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While I am ashamed to admit this, it is evident that I have missed Shay’s point throughout both dialogic exchanges, in my dismissal of her association of Post-it chart paper with white people. In doing so, I did not prioritize the distinctive racialized experiences of Shay as a person of color, in order to examine how race and racism operate. Prioritizing the distinctive racialized experiences of people of color in order to examine how race and racism operate is one core principle advanced by critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005). My rejection of Shay’s association is evidenced by my claim that “Me and my advisor [are] Black, we use Post-it paper all the time” (7.1). In truth, I overlooked the importance of this exchange in that moment, and I only attended to her meaning during data analysis. Shay articulated a sophisticated level of racial literacy around whiteness as property through her strategic use of comedic devices and language. At the same time, Shay was being vulnerable and transparent about how she believed schools denied her, as a teacher of color, equitable access to teaching resources.

At certain points, Josh and I associated a lack of access to Post-it chart paper with its high cost (6.9, 7.11). Josh even stated, “The higher you get up the ladder, the better materials” (7.14). In other words, the more money one makes increases access to expensive Post-it chart paper.
However, Shay does not accept our premise, and her rejection of our premise is an attempt to cultivate our racial literacy. I am left to wonder why Josh and I were so quick to move away from Shay’s contention that whiteness played a role in who possessed Post-it chart paper at her school. As a Black feminist pedagogue, I did not want to be associated with whiteness in any way. Moreover, Josh had “already addressed it (whiteness) in four articles” (6.15), so he was done. Josh and I were quick to offer income—as opposed to whiteness—as a logical reason that other teachers had Post-it chart paper and Shay did not. However, it does not follow that it would be an income issue, considering that Shay is also a teacher.

Table 8 shows another dialogic exchange about “the sticky white people paper” (8.1) that Shay initiated at the end of the next session, all while maintaining her facetious tone. In sharp contrast to previous dialogic exchanges, Shay began by asking me for some “sticky white people paper” (8.1). I then barked, “Would you stop saying that?” (8.2). It is clear that Shay’s consistent association of the materials that I am offering her with whiteness annoyed me. After I provided my rationale as to why Post-it chart paper is not “white people stuff”, Shay refused and taunted “[Be]cause you want whiteness. That’s [be]cause you’re close to white” (8.7 – 8.8). Gigi seemed to understand and agree with Shay’s association here, divulging that “I have a Black card, so I don’t get that paper either” (8.14). In essence, acting on behalf of Black people in any way results in a lack of access to privileges and resources. It is important to note that Gigi is distancing herself from whiteness, and employing Blackness as a commodity, through her claim to be in possession of “a Black card.” Moreover, it is unclear as to who granted her the “Black card.”
Table 8. Dialogic Exchange 27R during Session 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>No, I want some paper, the sticky white people paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Would you stop saying that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Well what is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>It’s just sticky post-it paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>No, it’s not. It’s fancy paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>I use it all the time. My advisor is Black and she uses it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>[Be]cause you want whiteness. That’s [be]cause you’re close to white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Oh my gosh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>Are you talking about the big-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Yes, the $30 pack of paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Do you hear her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>Oh she knew exactly what you’re talking about right away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>Well, I’m sorry. I have a Black card so I don’t get that paper either.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>See there. We just trying to get the good paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Well, I don’t know what’s wrong with me, [be]cause I need my sticky paper. We just did an awesome activity in my class with that sticky paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Well see, at the beginning of the year, when did our Step-Up-To-Writing…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>And they told me it was the best lesson ever. Graduate students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>All of my transitions was ... No, I didn’t have the good white people paper. I had the paper that was like tissue paper and I had to put masking tape on it and it did not stick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Because they want to oppress our kids. I just want some good paper that’s going to stay up. It just kept falling off the blinds, the shades.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final variation in this dialogic exchange differs from the previous one, as Shay insisted that she does not receive access to Post-it chart paper “Because they want to oppress our kids” (8.26). In other words, Shay and Gigi’s racialized lack of access to resources is intricately bound up in the oppression of students of color in schools. Shay sees her lack of access to Post-it chart paper as not only an act of discrimination against her, but also one extended to her students. Perhaps Shay believes that if white teachers at her school were teaching her students, then they would have access to Post-it chart paper. Shay simply wants “good paper that’s going to stay up”
(8.26 – 8.27), so that her students are able to refer to teaching points and visual supports while working independently.

These dialogic exchanges also reveal that Shay and Gigi construct racial identity as having access to certain materials and property. Constructing one’s racial identity as white and being associated with/to whiteness means that one will experience whiteness as property. Shay and Gigi described personal experiences, in schools and with colleagues, which revealed differential privileges and benefits—or lack thereof—based on racial identity and one’s relationship and solidarity with racialized people. If Shay and Gigi are able to articulate the structural racism that they witness in schools, then it is possible that students of color are aware of how they too are marginalized in schools. We must trust their knowing, a point explored in the next section.

“**They Know**: Cultivating Racial Literacy by Attending to How Teachers Respond to the Racial Consciousness of Students of Color

While teachers displayed sophisticated levels of racial literacy, they needed support in cultivating their racial literacy in responding to the racial consciousness of students of color. This need was evident in dialogic exchanges where teachers grappled with their racial identity, as they unpacked the racialized comments of students of color. Approximately halfway through our ‘race space’ CPD, we engaged in a consciousness-raising exercise that I created. It was based on my experience with Carrie,¹⁵ a student in a master level class that I was teaching, as well as on one classroom observation of Josh teaching a social justice focused unit on Egypt to his class of Black boys. These events occurred within a month of each other. Carrie was a practicing second grade teacher who also engaged in social justice teaching, and who expressed how she felt and

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¹⁵ Pseudonym used here.
responded when Jalen\textsuperscript{16}, one of her Black students, told her “White people hate Black people.” As part of the consciousness-raising exercise during Session 7, I posted this statement on the screen with the following three questions for the teachers to consider: a) How does this make you feel; b) How are you positioned; c) How would you respond?

This scenario mirrored my seventh classroom observation of Josh teaching a social justice lesson on race when his student, Rakeem\textsuperscript{17}, stated that race “don’t make sense” and Josh responded with “I love that. I love that you said that” and prompted him further (Classroom Observation 7). Rakeem went on to say, “It doesn’t matter what race we is, we all human” (Classroom Observation 7). Here Rakeem was leveraging the biological argument of race, which is scientifically true. However, when Rakeem said, “Yeah, but my race can’t scrub off”, Josh did not offer fond praise, nor further prompting (Classroom Observation 7). Rakeem displayed and articulated his racial consciousness of how Blackness is read in society, even though “we all humans.” Other students mentioned that their Black identity is important, but Josh did not take up those comments either. Josh’s move not to take up student comments that acknowledged their own racial identity suggested that he was uneasy with the racial differences between him and his students. In my audio analytical memo following this observation, I expressed that, while I was proud of Josh for taking a risk in teaching this lesson on race, I felt like his response—or nonresponse, rather—actually encouraged his class of Black boys to ignore race (Analytical Memo 3 – Josh). The colorblind responses from students of color served to allow Josh to ignore his, and his students’, racial identities.

Carrie and Josh’s responses to students of color revealed that even when teachers are willing to engage in social justice teaching, and take up race and racism, they still need support

\textsuperscript{16} Pseudonym used here.  
\textsuperscript{17} Pseudonym used here.
in cultivating their racial literacy. Moreover, when the racial literacy of students of color surpasses that of their teachers’ and/or that of their teachers’ comfort level, their brilliance and vulnerabilities in these moments are at best, overlooked, and at worst, scorned. In addition, the racial consciousness of students of color challenges traditional teacher stances, where teacher is sole expert. Teachers of social justice must not only cultivate their racial literacy, they must have space to grapple with how their racial identity shape their responses to students of color, in ways that are contrary to their intended purpose. It is important to provide empathic and probing responses to students of color who acknowledge race and racism in ways that either describe white people as racist, or acknowledge the difference between what it means to be Black in America versus what it means to be white in America. My hope for this consciousness-raising exercise was that Josh, Shay, and Gigi would grapple with their responses to students’ comments about racist white people, and consider how their racial identity shaped their responses.

After the teachers read the statement and the questions, the dialogic exchange shown in Table 9 began. I continued sharing my narrative about Carrie, the student from the master level class that I was teaching. I described how she “went home and…cried” (9.2 – 9.3). Before Carrie went home and cried, however, she corrected her student and personalized his response by stating “No, no, no, no. Not all white people are like this” (9.4), instead of prompting him. Carrie then presumed that Jalen did not believe that she, and other white people at the school, hated Black people, by asking, “Is Ms. So-And-So like this? Is So-And-So like this” (9.4 – 9.5)? Carrie’s interrogation of Jalen also dismissed any of the micro and macro ways he has experienced racist white people. After sharing the narrative, I expressed that I was conscious of how my racial identity, as a Black woman, shaped how I felt, and how I was positioned in,
teaching a class of mostly white women. I expressed that, therefore, I needed to be mindful of how I responded. As the facilitator of ‘race space’ CPD, it was important that I modeled the type of hard reflective racial work that I expected the teachers to do. Upon reflection, I encouraged my student Carrie to prompt her student Jalen, and to try to understand what constitutes racist white people according to him, as a Black boy, and why.

Table 9. Dialogic Exchange 6RI during Session 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Okay, that’s what the [student] said. So she’s telling this story to her small group and she says, “He said this and I went home and I cried...The first thing that I did was, I pulled him aside and I said, ‘No, no, no, no. Not all white people are like this. Is Ms. So-And-So like this? Is So-And-So like this?’ This is one of those moments that, as a Black woman, I had to check myself because I was frustrated in that moment...she made that about her.... It is about her, but...what I asked her was...“Well, did you ask him why-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Why did he-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9.11     | 3   | Tiffany | -he said that?” …She said, “...No, I didn’t ask him that but, I just wondered because they’re in second grade and they shouldn’t be speaking hate...He’s a very smart little boy...He’s travels to Egypt. He did this, he did that.” This is a perfect example. I would have responded to that totally different. This is a perfect example of how who we are affects how we respond to kids...Even in that moment ... I have to interrogate myself. Now I’m dealing with mostly white teachers, right? We’re talking about these issues. So, I had to check myself and I had to pause because it frustrated me, because I felt like she demonized the boy instead of the issue. That’s what we [as teachers] have to be careful of...because your feelings were hurt ... And that’s really ... Your feelings are hurt, but why would he think that? Where’s he getting that from and why couldn’t we connect that to ... Why couldn’t we interrogate ... “why’d you say it?” “What did you see?” “Did you watch something last night?” “What did you watch that made you think that?”...Okay, let me stop...If you read this, how would this make you feel? Or, if you heard a student say that out of the blue while you were teaching...
I think being on the outside is easy. I think being on the inside of that moment might throw you for a loop. Don’t know how I would react in that moment. I would hope I would say why, what makes you say that? But sometimes it’s hard not to take things personal and...you have to be ready for those things. I don’t know. I hope I would react that way. I would hope I wouldn’t say that, “I don’t hate you” and go that way with it.

Even though it’s true. You know what she told me the boy said? He said, “Oh, Ms. So-And-So, but you’re not white. I’m not talking about you.” So even [as] a white teacher... you don’t even have to say that to them. You were trying to defend yourself and they’re not even putting you in that category. Because [for some] students of color, if you’re a good white teacher, you have to remind them sometimes that you’re white, until you really explain [crosstalk]... I mean you do.

My daughter, she doesn’t even think her teacher is white. She’s in Pre-K.

Because of the relationship, right?

Ummm...partly yeah and the other part is because she says “Black comes in all different colors, right?” I was like, “Yeah.”

We talked about that today.

It’s just...the concept though, that I’m not white, is so scary. I don’t know. I mean, good.

Say more about that. Why is it scary?

It’s good in the sense that I’m not being seen as a negative. It’s scary that white is viewed negatively. I don’t know. I guess I haven’t fully finished thinking about that. “You’re not a White person.” [crosstalk]
A critical discourse analysis of Josh, Shay, and Gigi’s beginning dialogue during the consciousness-raising exercise shown in Table 9 revealed that their racial literacy was being cultivated. One way was by considering how not to personalize the statements of students of color that categorize white people as racist. I urged them to move beyond the fact that “your feelings were hurt” (9.22) while acknowledging that, although it is not about us, it is about us, and how our responses to students of color around white people being racist reflect who we are. I attempted to problematize that. Josh admitted, “sometimes it’s hard not to take things personal” (9.33 – 9.34) and how hearing a statement like that from a student “might throw you for a loop” (9.31). Similarly, Gigi stated, “I guess I was raised on the personal” (9.89). “If I grow up and I’m a good person, then that’s what counts” (9.91 – 9.92). The possibility that they, as “nice” and “good” white people, could be linked with racist white people bothered Josh and Gigi. Their
status as non-racist is threatened in discussions of racist white people. It is important to note that both Shay and my first responses are to ask Jalen why he feels this way (9.10, 9.11). As Black people, hearing “white people hate Black people” is not a foreign or offensive statement, because our historical context, familiarity with the societal injustices people of color experience at the hands of white people, and some of our own personal experiences with white people, support this notion.

Josh’s and Gigi’s racial literacy is being cultivated through the tension between being conscious of their historical and current racial position as members of an oppressor group, and their not constructing themselves, as individuals, as oppressors. Not seeing oneself as a “racist” white person is what makes Jalen’s comment seem like a personal attack to some white people. In this moment, as the facilitator, I struggled to fight against the emotionality of whiteness (Matias, 2016) exhibited, as it is customary to cater to the comfort of white people.

According to Gigi, “if you’re a ‘woke’ white person, you do feel some type of way about this heritage, coming from the oppressor group” (9.70 – 9.72). As evidenced in my student’s contention that “they shouldn’t be speaking hate” (9.12 – 9.13), the danger of personalizing student articulations of racism and oppression, without grappling with one’s own racial identity, can lead to vilifying students and misrepresenting their claims. Jalen shared his interpretation of racism and white people that he has either witnessed or experienced, yet his teacher accuses him of advancing hate. As I stated during this exchange, “she demonized the boy instead of the issue” (9.20 – 9.21). Just because a white teacher does not hate this Black boy, or consider themselves racist, does not guarantee that students of color do not see them, or read their actions, as racist. Furthermore, one cannot be celebrated for working on behalf of people of color if unwilling to take seriously the racialized experiences of students of color. Equally important, a white
teacher’s personal distance from the label of “racist” does not mean they are not complicit in whiteness, nor does it mean that they do not benefit from being white.

I then shared how Jalen was quick to assure his white teacher that “you’re not white. I’m not talking about you” (9.39 – 9.40). Jalen interprets white people as being racist towards Black people. If you are a white person who is not mean to Black people, then you are not racist, and therefore not white, according to second grader Jalen. At this point in the dialogic exchange, a major shift occurred, from grappling with the personalization of Jalen’s comment to meaning-making around who is white and who is not, and one’s relationship to whiteness either way.

Shay shared how her daughter, who is in Pre-K does not believe her white teacher is white, because she believes that “Black comes in all different colors, right” (9.56 – 9.57)?

Gigi claimed to have experience in not being considered a white person, through her assertion that “For my students to like me…to identify with me, then I get a Black card” (9.72 – 9.73). Gigi’s recurring claim to “a Black card” describes a figurative membership granted to a non-Black person by a Black person. This membership allows a non-Black person to become an imaginary Black, due to their acceptance and understanding of Black culture, as well as their intimate relationships with Black people. According to Gigi, membership and access to this group means that one is not white. In her first interview, Gigi expressed that “I consider myself the daughter of a Black man, but of course, I’m not Black. And, I’m the mother of two Black sons, and of course, I’m not Black, so it’s kind of an interesting situation” (Interview 1). While Gigi has established deep personal relationships with Black people throughout her life, Blackness is not a commodity granted to someone. As previously stated, it is unclear as to whether Black people granted Gigi a “Black card”, or whether she granted it to herself because of her relation to Black people.
In contrast, Josh was stunned that he could possibly not be white, in Jalen’s interpretation of white people as inherently racist, and his identification as a non-racist person. This notion of a white person not being white was new to Josh, and cultivated his racial literacy throughout this dialogic exchange. According to Josh, “the concept though, that I’m not white, is so scary. I don’t know. I mean, good…” (9.59 – 9.60). After prompting from me, Josh reflected, “It’s good in the sense that I’m not being seen as a negative. It’s scary that white is viewed negatively” (9.62 – 9.63). Whiteness is viewed as good in larger society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The fact that most racially conscious people of color interpret whiteness as bad terrified Josh. In other words, in order for Josh to identify as white, he must subscribe to hateful belief systems and practices. Gigi concurred with Josh by bemoaning, “Why can’t I feel good about being white?” (9.67 – 9.68). She also expressed her discomfort with being connected to a dark heritage of oppression that she did not create and did not want (9.79 – 9.80). However, she realized that “… I’m still part of this oppressive system, even if I didn’t choose to be … I can be a good person but I still belong to this system” (9.95 – 9.97). This shows how ‘race space’ CPD provided space for Gigi to be transparent about her complicated racial understandings. She simultaneously defended the goodness of her white identity, while acknowledging how her whiteness privileges her in a system that oppresses all others.

Through this consciousness-raising exercise, we prioritized the racialized experiences of students of color to examine the relationship between racial identity and racism, as critical race theory advises. My statement that “you have to remind them sometimes that you’re white” (9.43 – 9.44) presumes that students of color do not understand whiteness beyond racist white people. My statement also presumes that students of color do not understand how the social construction of white people in the world positions white folks in a way that provides them with a host of
privileges and benefits. I am highly critical of the simplified harmonious interracial colorblind rhetoric that my statement may imply. However, Jalen did tell his white teacher that she was not white. This scenario begs the question: What does it mean to be a white person who is deemed “not white” by their students of color? Obviously, these students felt comfortable discussing racism with their white teachers, and discursively constructing white people as hating Black people.

Perhaps Josh would have responded to Rakeem and his other Black students who embraced their Black identity differently, had he had an opportunity to engage in a dialogue that allowed him to come to terms with what it means to be white. In fact, after this consciousness-raising exercise and after providing some instructional coaching, I observed Josh enacting social justice teaching that took on race and racism directly. Through these lessons, Josh used the biographies of Emmett Till (Classroom Observation 15) and Malcolm X (Classroom Observation 16) to unpack the history of racism in America with his students. Moreover, the ways in which Josh responded to his students’ expressions of racial consciousness during these lessons was starkly different from the way he responded to Rakeem during my earlier observation. For instance, after watching a short clip on Emmett Till, one of Josh’s students yelled out “racist ass” and Josh affirmed that “it’s okay to be angry” (Classroom Observation 15). Instead of personalizing and ignoring this statement, Josh was empathic and validated this student’s racial consciousness.

Another dialogic exchange about how teachers respond to students of color who classify certain white people as racist ensued later in Session 7. As shown in Table 10, this dialogic exchange began with Shay expressing her frustration with her Black and Brown students calling
certain white teachers in her school racist.\(^{18}\) According to Shay, “they just go around and tell teachers, ‘You voted for Trump, didn’t you?’ ‘You voted for Trump’” (10.1 – 10.2). Her frustration suggests that teachers of color can also be dismissive of the articulations of racial consciousness from students of color. It seems as if Shay hears such comments from her students quite often, considering her assessment that “all they do” (10.4) is complain about racist teachers. Perhaps Shay is the only teacher in the building that the students feel comfortable sharing why they believe certain teachers voted for Trump, and why they consider those teachers racist.

**Table 10.** Dialogic Exchange 23R during Session 7

**Arial Rounded MT Bold:** provides students’ of color understandings of what makes a white teacher racist  
**Bernard MT Condensed:** what constitutes a white person according to students of color  
**Bookman Old Style:** expands the interpretation of white people to be both racist and unwilling to let go of privilege

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<tr>
<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>My students, they just go around and tell teachers, “You voted for Trump, didn’t you?” “You voted for Trump.” “I don’t like him because I know he voted for Trump.” Like that’s all they do—the seventh and eighth graders and they have their mind made up, that they do not like the science teacher because he doesn’t like them and they say he’s racist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>So what do we do in those moments? This is the stuff. This [is] what I mean [when I say] I’m going to push y’all. What are we doing in those moments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>I ask them why they ... You know, I acknowledge their feelings and try to probe. “Why do you think that?” “Because he ... All the Black kids are failing.” I’m like, “Okay, well why do you think that is?” “Because we’re at school with just minorities.” The majority is the minority. I just keep probing and probing and probing. They know that he really ... You can tell he’s uncomfortable teaching in this school. Not so much as scared to walk the halls or scared to tell the students to behave, but</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{18}\) Shay’s frustration is better illustrated in the audio of this dialogic exchange than in the transcript. In the audio, Shay’s tone, emphasis of certain words, and exhalations suggest that she finds the comments from her Black and Brown students as described in TOT 1 frustrating, and that she’s exasperated with hearing about them.
because he ... Everything is just so the same and it’s almost like he doesn’t realize who he’s teaching. That makes sense? It’s like you come in, you sit down, you watch Brain Pop, and you take notes—every day. Then every two weeks we’ll give you a test. It’s just boring and when they offer suggestions its shot down. It’s science. They don’t do experiments. They do labs but it’s just like measuring stuff. So I guess, because he’s not accommodating ... They realize that he doesn’t accommodate them, like some of the other teachers do. They know he’s not going to make a slide giving you notes with pictures. He’s not going to have pictures on his slide. He’ll just have slides with words. There’s no song about anything to help you remember it. There’s no strategies to help you learn it better. It’s just straight and to the point.

So he’s white?

Yeah, he’s white.

And the rest of the other teachers are not?

No, the other teachers are white, too, but-

No, I mean like white. Right? Like the white we just talked about.

He’s keeping his privilege card.

White as a social construct.

As a social construct.

He’s keeping his privilege card.

He’s the white guy.

Yeah. We have maybe two teachers who would be willing to burn theirs but he’s keeping his. Yeah. I’m thinking that’s where they’re getting it because obviously he hasn’t said anything [like], “Oh, you know, I hate Black people” or “I hate the Puerto Rican people.” But umm...

But this is-

He hasn’t said, like I think it’s just ... I don’t know. They know.

For Shay’s students, voting for Trump is an accusation and an offense. Her students’ sentiments here mirror our sentiments—Gigi, Josh, Shay, and me—when we first began ‘race space’ CPD after Election Day 2016, as depicted in the opening narrative of this chapter. In fact, many white people went out and voted for a candidate who ran one of the most overtly racist campaigns in recent U. S. history. Furthermore, the Ku Klux Klan openly endorsed Trump. Thus, for Shay’s students, a white person that voted for Trump is racist. Shay reported that one of her
students claimed, “‘I don’t like him because I know he voted for Trump’” (10.2 – 10.3). In other words, any white teacher who they deem as racist, they also believe voted for Trump. This dialogic exchange is important, because it includes her students’ direct admonishment of racist white teachers, as opposed to simply naming a racist white people.

Although Shay’s frustration with her students’ comments was evident, she reported that she prompted her students to figure out why they considered the science teacher to be racist. Her students offered, “All the Black kids are failing” (10.12 – 10.13) his class as justification. Shay herself paints a boring and unaccommodating picture of this teacher’s classroom practice, despite the school’s large ELL student population. Shay claimed, “He’s not going to have pictures on his slide. He’ll just have slides with words. There’s no song about anything to help you remember it. There’s no strategies to help you learn it better” (10.28 – 10.31). Shay also noted that, “It’s science. They don’t do experiments” (10.23 – 10.24). These students were not receiving high quality science instruction, based on Shay’s observation. No wonder the majority of students were failing the class.

Shay’s students also believed that this teacher was uncomfortable teaching at a school with a high concentration of students of color. In their minds, high student failure was happening in this teacher’s class “because we’re at school with just minorities” (10.14). Her students were exhibiting their racial literacy around structural racism. Their reasoning suggests that they believed that this teacher would teach differently if he were teaching white students. Thus, they deemed this teacher racist. A “racist” classification from her students is bound up in how they are treated and measured by white teachers; how their white teachers teach; how Black students achieve in those teachers’ classes; and the quality and cultural responsiveness of a teacher’s classroom practice. Shay confirmed her students’ claim by acknowledging that this science
teacher is “uncomfortable teaching in this school” (10.16 – 10.17), and she likens this to a claim that “he doesn’t realize who he’s teaching” (10.19 – 10.20).

Even though this science teacher has never directly said that he hates Black and Brown people, according to Shay, at different points in this dialogic exchange she asserts that still, “they know” (10.15, 10.50). The “they” she referred to here is her students of color. Although Shay may be tired of hearing her students complain about racist teachers, she trusts their knowing. Shay believes her students of color “know” that their science teacher does not like them because of their racial identities. Moreover, Shay’s assertion that “they know” suggests that she trusts her students’ ability to determine whether a white teacher is racist, even if she is tired of being the one who has to hear about it. The racial consciousness displayed by her students’ here is based on their experiences of racial microaggressions, or “everyday forms of racism” that “are systemically mediated by institutionalized racism (i.e. structures and processes), and guided by ideologies of white supremacy that justify the superiority of a dominant group (whites) over non-dominant groups (People of Color)” (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015, p. 297).

After Shay provided a detailed picture of the perceived racist science teacher at her school, Josh made a distinction between a non-racist white person, such as himself, and racist white people, such as the science teacher by asking “So, he’s white” (10.33)? When Shay confirmed for Josh that the science teacher is white, Josh responded with “No, I mean like white. Right? Like the white we just talked about” (10.37), referring to earlier dialogue during the consciousness-raising exercise from Session 7 (see Table 9). Josh was demonstrating his understanding of Jalen’s interpretation of white people. Here Josh is displaying an area of racial literacy that was cultivated during ‘race space’ CPD. However, Shay further developed Jalen’s interpretation of who is white. White people who are unwilling to surrender their privileges are
white, according to Shay. In essence, in order to not be white, white people must expunge all of their privileges. For Shay, the science teacher is a more complete example of a white person because “He’s keeping his privilege card” (10.41). She goes on to say, “We have maybe two teachers who would be willing to burn theirs but he’s keeping his” (10.43 – 10.44). Shay’s calculation of only two white teachers who would be willing to burn their privilege cards offers hope, but still suggests that many of the white teachers at her school are unwilling to abandon whiteness.

Later on, during Session 7, we reengage with Jalen’s statement that from the consciousness-raising exercise, “white people hate Black people” through dialogue. This dialogue begins by revealing that Josh’s racial literacy around responding to the racial consciousness of students has been cultivated from the beginning of the exercise to this point. This growth is evident in Josh’s shift from “I just hope I wouldn’t say that, ‘I don’t hate you’” (9.36 – 9.37) to “I think I might say, ‘I don’t hate you.’ Until now…” (Session 7). Josh’s reexamination of whether he would say “I don’t hate you” suggests that he understands how his personalization of comments from students of color that describe a racist white people is an operationalization of whiteness. Moreover, ignoring and personalizing the racialized comments of students of color is a racial microaggression in itself. “Until now” means that through the consciousness-raising exercise, Josh was able to grapple with what whiteness means in the world, according to students of color. Josh was also willing to be transparent about his shortcomings in the area of racial literacy.

After some time in Session 7, Gigi and I further developed why responding with “I don’t hate you” served the white teacher, in that “it’s comforting” and “dismissive” of the experiences of students of color (Session 7). Moreover, Josh experienced a conceptual awakening that is
evidenced by his claim that, “I’m not a white person anymore” (Session 7) because “white means bad” (Session 7). Through this consciousness-raising exercise, Josh conceptualized his racial frame of reference, and reconstructed it, based on a socially mediated co-construction of racial literacy, which prioritized the racialized experiences of students of color. In this moment, ‘race space’ CPD became a Third Space, in that, through the cultivation of racial literacy, Josh re-conceptualized who he is in order to better serve students of color. Still, Josh needed further support in understanding how he benefits from whiteness, because he is read as white, in a world that privileges white people. Although at times Josh expressed doubts in Jalen’s ability as a second grader to accurately articulate systemic racism, Gigi, Shay, and I advocated for trusting the racial consciousness of students of color.

‘Race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy by allowing time and space for teachers to grapple with distances to, and from, their racial frames of reference, in efforts to both personalize and depersonalize the racial consciousness of students of color. Josh’s and Gigi’s racial literacy was cultivated through the tension between being conscious of their historical (and current) racial position as members of an oppressor group, and not constructing themselves—as individuals—as oppressors. Additionally, when Shay expressed her frustration with students of color constantly complaining to her about racist teachers, other interlocutors offered that seeking to understand what constitutes racist white people, according to students of color, was part of her larger antiracist project.

In Session 7, the following purposes of ‘race space’ CPD were accomplished: teachers were able to be vulnerable, reflect, and grow; taboo topics were unpacked and discussed. The dialogic and transparent nature of ‘race space’, which was carefully planned with the ideological products of students of color, contributed to the cultivation of racial literacy among each of the
participants. As racial literacy was being cultivated throughout ‘race space’ CPD, we also worked to consider how our learning could and would translate into classroom practice and curriculum planning, through social justice teaching.

Cultivating Social Justice Teaching through Classroom Practice and Curriculum Planning

‘Race space’ CPD cultivated social justice teaching among urban in-service teachers through dialogic exchanges around classroom practice and curriculum planning. These dialogic exchanges focused largely on the following themes: a) challenging each other to purposefully engage in social justice teaching as a response to oppressive schooling conditions, and b) meaning-making around social justice teaching, by urging thoughtful and purposeful social justice unit planning which co-exists with impromptu social justice teaching. What follows is my critical discourse analysis of focal dialogic exchanges from each theme.

Challenging each other to engage in social justice teaching as a response to oppressive schooling conditions. A critical discourse analysis of focal dialogic exchanges revealed that participants challenged each other to enact social justice teaching, despite their current oppressive teaching contexts. The supportive and collaborative nature of ‘race space’ CPD prompted Gigi to move from focusing on how her current teaching context prevented her from engaging in social justice teaching, to considering the many social justice teaching possibilities that are unique to her current context. In addition, the healing nature of ‘race space’ CPD was apparent when I shared my own struggles with urging my master level students to engage in social justice teaching, as a teacher educator of color.

Gigi’s teaching and schooling context consisted of teaching biology at two separate nontraditional high schools for students who have been removed from traditional high school settings due to severe school disciplinary histories and/or for being involved in the criminal
justice system. The class that I observed had four students in attendance most of the time. On multiple occasions, Gigi expressed that she was not motivated to engage in social justice teaching, or even to teach, because of the low number of students in her class (Interview 1; ‘Race Space’ CPD Sessions; Informal Conversations after Classroom Observations). Gigi believed that the district transferred her as a punishment because of her work as a community activist. As shown in Table 11, she claimed, “I got here because this is my year of punishment” (11.18 – 11.19). The year before she taught seventh and eighth grade science in standard sized classes at another school in the Parquet Public School District. When Gigi’s school was scheduled to be closed, she was transferred. Her new teaching assignment required her to split her time between two nontraditional high schools, although her transfer interviews with various district principals of more traditional high schools seemed promising.

When Gigi first claimed “… I don’t even do any work” (Session 3), Josh responded with “Is that on tape?” (Session 3). Similar to this instance, during interviews and after several classroom observations, Gigi openly admitted to me that she was not teaching to her fullest potential. Moreover, my field notes from classroom observations included several mentions of Gigi working on her laptop while students completed independent work (Classroom Observation 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). By my seventh classroom observation of Gigi, I wrote the following reflection:

This is the first time I have seen her teach from this side of the room. I am so glad I came today. I have never seen her lecture. Her lecture is very engaging. She presents information in a way that makes it conversational and interesting.

It is worth noting that I had not observed Gigi actually teaching, beyond answering student questions about independent work, until my seventh classroom observation. The dialogic
exchange in Table 11 shows how Josh, Shay, and I challenged Gigi to engage in social justice teaching, and to consider the many possibilities that her current teaching context offered.

Table 11. Dialogic Exchange 4CTSJ during Session 3

**Arial Rounded MT Bold:** urges the consideration of the many possibilities that non-traditional teaching contexts offer for engaging in social justice teaching

**Bernard MT Condensed:** details non-teaching work that takes place in the classroom and corresponding concerns

**Bookman Old Style:** employs institutional and systemic inequity understandings that attempt to deflect from the non-teaching that is happening in the classroom

**Britannic Bold:** complains about current teaching conditions that are believed to be the result of politically targeted institutional oppression

**Century Gothic:** provides examples of social justice teaching and activism

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<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>It’s almost like you have the perfect set-up to do something more with them than just biology or whatever that class is…it’s almost like you have the kids that need the most opening of their minds.</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
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<td>11.4</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>I do a lot of counseling and we do a lot of talking about different things. But, as far as my curriculum, will they get credit on the exam in June? Hell no.</td>
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<td>11.6</td>
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<td>11.7</td>
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<td>11.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>Probably not.</td>
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<td>11.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>So, I worry about that for them. I also know this program doesn’t suit their needs. If I was going to design a program, [it] would not even be similar to what’s in place. We don’t have enough outside resources. Our attendance teacher at (anonymous school) is there once every eight days. So, there’s absolutely no home visits or real follow-up. So, it’s a very difficult position. Also, being split between two buildings...you don’t feel the same level of relationships with your co-workers or your school community because I’m going from one building to another building. And then, I got here because this is my year of punishment. I’m an agitator in the district, so this is punishment. And they did “punishment” exactly the way that you would. [For] some teachers it would be punishment... “Oh, let me put you in [a] position that you have to work really hard in.” But no, my punishment is that I’m bored.</td>
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<td>11.10</td>
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<td>11.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>I know somebody who would love that. They would love to switch with you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.26</td>
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| 11.27    | 6   | Gigi    | I get a lot of community work done when I’m at the second school, because I sit there by myself. Today, I actually had no students first period and [none during the] last period of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.30</td>
<td></td>
<td>day. So, I only taught three out of five periods. Two out of three of those periods had one student in each one, so I had four kids...six kids today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.33</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>This sounds like a great opportunity, though.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>I see what you’re saying (to Josh), but she’s bored. She wants the classroom management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.36</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>You’re aggressive about this [community work], but you’re bored [be]cause you’ve only got one kid, but you’ve got one kid who needs this thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.39</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>Right, I do sometimes... In (anonymous afternoon school), we were talking about gentrification. We pulled up a map of the city—of all the empty lots on the east side—because they were talking about some of the development. So, we were talking about gentrification and redevelopment. I’m pulling up certain things and then they saw...these people working on the (anonymous not-for-profit advocacy organization), for [the] ninety-five million owed [to] the Parquet Public School District. During my prep, I had been entering this information into a computer to make a database so that we could talk to these people again and get them more involved in this campaign. And this kid said, “How come I don’t get to fill that out?” I said, “Oh don’t worry about it. I’ll have it tomorrow.” So yeah, they kind of know what I do. We talk about that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.56</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>I’m going to have to amen Josh, because the stuff that you do in the community...I think if the kids...even if [it’s] just that one that comes every day. It’s the one girl that I see every day, every time I come. If they knew all that stuff that you were doing...I just think it would open up their world. We could brainstorm how to ... even if you used that book <em>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</em>. I know you know it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>Mm-hmm (affirmative).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.65</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>The science that’s in that, the issues that you already do every day. You live activism. You live social justice. If you just opened up that curtain a little bit to the kids, they’d be like, “That’s my teacher!” You know, that’s your life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.70</td>
<td>Gigi</td>
<td>I had that experience at my last school, (anonymous school). A lot of those kids would follow me on Facebook so they saw what I’m doing. My homeroom took me aside last year and they said, “We need to</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The dialogic exchange shown in Table 11 began with Josh pushing back against Gigi’s justification for not teaching. Josh’s contention was that “you have the perfect set-up to do something more with them than just biology” (11.1 – 11.2). In essence, Josh challenged Gigi to see the possibilities for social justice teaching with so few students, and in a school where there is little to no interference from administrators. Doing “more…than just biology” is engaging in social justice teaching. Unfortunately, by her own admission, Gigi was not even teaching “just biology”, because systemic inequities made her teaching assignment “a very difficult position” (11.15). Gigi used real institutional and systemic inequities to deflect from her contribution to such inequities through her non-teaching of students of color. Gigi presented what she would do if she were over the entire program. The problem, however, is that there is much that she can do as a teacher right now, that she is not doing.

Gigi’s focus on “being bored” with teaching very few students forefronts her complaints over the needs of her students. This is evident through her constant use of the words I, my, and me throughout this exchange. Furthermore, this “bored” narrative ignores the fact that the few students in front of her need to be taught, regardless of how she feels and her dissatisfaction with her teaching conditions. My own boredom in watching her work on her laptop, instead of teach, was evident from my first field note, where I wrote, “It’s soooo quiet” (Classroom Observation 1). Shay offered the following tongue-in-cheek response to Gigi’s being bored with few students:
“I know somebody who would love that. They would love to switch with you” (11.25 – 11.26).

In other words, some of the teachers that Shay knows would love to have the opportunity to teach a small number of students, so that they could go deeper into curriculum and provide more one-on-one support for their students. I witnessed Shay trying to provide ELA support as an academic intervention to over 20 students during my observations in her classroom. Academic Intervention Services (AIS) is supposed to be provided to a small group of students in order to be effective. Shay heard Gigi complain about teaching a small number of students on multiple occasions. Compared to the level of services she is expected to provide to over 20 students as an AIS and ELL teacher, Shay “would love to switch with” Gigi. Shay concluded that Gigi is bored because she “wants the classroom management” (11.35).

Josh also argued, “…you have the kids that need the most opening of their minds” (11.3 – 11.4). Gigi’s students had experienced the oppressive nature of schools and society. Thus, her students were in great need of social justice teaching. Gigi interpreted Josh’s point as her students needing “the most opening of their minds”, in terms of deficit, by sharing that she offers counseling. However, Josh was not talking about counseling; he was talking about social justice teaching that goes beyond the sanctioned biology curriculum. Josh persisted by stating that “you’re bored [be]cause you’ve only got one kid, but you’ve got one kid who needs this thinking” (11.37 – 11.38). Moreover, her current context would allow her to engage in such teaching without being hassled by administrators. Throughout this dialogic exchange, Josh and Shay do not accept Gigi’s justifications for not teaching, and I support their contentions.

It is concerning that the consequence of Gigi’s lack of motivation to teach is that she is not teaching, and that her non-teaching may result in further academic failure for students. According to Gigi, “as far as my curriculum, will they get credit on the exam in June? Hell no”
Certainly, it is highly unlikely that her students will pass the biology exam if they have not been prepared to take it. It is unclear as to whether Gigi is accepting partial responsibility for the possibility of further academic failure among her students, or if she has drawn conclusions that students with such histories, and in such inequitable situations, are prone to failure either way. Nevertheless, Gigi did employ institutional and systemic inequity understandings to deflect from the non-teaching that she practices. When Josh concurred that her students will “probably not” (11.8) pass the exam, Gigi shared how she supports students in dealing with their personal traumas through counseling. While the life counseling that she provides to students may be helpful, when teachers counsel apart from teaching content, it is neither culturally relevant nor teaching for social justice. Gigi made many excuses as to why she does not teach (11.15 – 11.24; 11.28 – 11.32). She did not hide the fact that she does not teach, but did attempt to draw attention to other inequities, in the same vein as her non-teaching. Teachers must teach students no matter their teaching situation, because the students are the ones who suffer when they do not teach.

The irony is that Gigi is a community activist, fighting for teachers’ rights, and engaging in community work while denying her students the right to science content which will allow them to be successful on their state biology exam. No matter how much counseling is taking place, Gigi is not culturally relevant or culturally responsive, because she is not ensuring the achievement of students of color. Gigi is bored, but there is much work to be done in her teaching context. After further reflection of this dialogic exchange, questions that emerged for me were; Are you really helping “the people” if you are not teaching “the people?” Furthermore, as a community activist who centers yourself, are you (Gigi) really for “the people” or just for
yourself? Gigi amplifies her individual situation, instead of how she is complicit in systemic oppression.

Towards the end of this dialogic exchange, after yet another prompting from Josh to enact social justice teaching, Gigi professed, “I do sometimes” (11.39). Gigi went on to share impromptu social justice teaching that she engaged in with students (11.39 – 11.55; 11.70 – 11.75; 11.70 – 11.82). Most of her examples revealed the social justice teaching that she was able to engage in at her last school. They were not from the school where she presently taught. This social justice teaching was situated in her community activism. In these reported instances, Gigi shared her community activism with her students, and used it as a springboard for social justice teaching.

The healing nature of ‘race space’ CPD. As with Gigi, Josh challenged me to persist in my social justice teaching, despite the resistance I received from my master level class, composed of mostly white women. By our eighth session, I felt comfortable enough with the teachers to be transparent about my frustration, and the sentiments of hopelessness that I had towards this group of students. The students were using “developmentally inappropriate” as an excuse to avoid teaching young students the truth about Columbus. Even though I modeled developmentally appropriate ways to engage in truth-telling about Columbus with young children, I read journal entries that accused me of pushing my own agenda. I confessed that “It’s disappointing to me and draining because…in the younger grades, you’re probably only teaching social studies on the holidays” (Session 8). I was perplexed that my efforts to engage in social justice teaching, and to encourage other teachers to teach for social justice, were not bearing fruit.
Gigi mockingly explained, “You took away the nice Pilgrim hat making...where the kids get to choose whether they’re going to wear the Indian feathers or the Pilgrim hat” (Session 8). She was right. After I continued to gripe about how draining the situation was, Josh challenged me to remember why I chose to encourage elementary teachers to engage in social justice teaching in the first place, which connected to why I chose to create and facilitate ‘race space’ CPD. Josh advised the following:

I think you’re supposed to be challenging them, right? That’s the idea…to challenge?
Half of that stuff is in [the readings], right? Challenge your notions, your identities, where you are, and hopefully, come out with something different on the other side. It sounds like some of the people are moving, right? And you’re going to have two or three that are always going to resist... If you can, through this whole process, plant that, in that woman, one seed of question and it festers for a while, and eventually it develops, you know what I mean? Maybe she comes out later…a different person. She might not have the quick turnaround that you want.

Josh’s advice shows that he was applying what he had been reading in ‘race space’ CPD. He used the ideas presented in ‘race space’ CPD to remind me of what it means to teach for social justice, and cultivate my social justice ideological becoming. The resistance that I was receiving was to be expected, because I was challenging their identities and long held beliefs. It was clear that I was no longer just the facilitator and expert; I was also a participant, grappling with my own social justice ideological becoming and journey to center social justice in my teaching. I was vulnerable in sharing these struggles and attempts with them. Josh offered a different lens for me to look at my situation. Josh even suggested that I show a segment of our dialogue from ‘race space’ CPD to my class, to help them see how we were processing
everything. The healing nature of ‘race space’ CPD was apparent when I shared my own struggles with urging my master’s level students to engage in social justice teaching, as a teacher educator of color.

“Not just random tangents”: Meaning-making around social justice teaching in virtue of intentional social justice curriculum planning that welcomes organic social justice teachable moments. Dialogic exchanges around social justice teaching revealed that teachers spent a significant amount of time engaging in meaning-making around what social justice teaching actually is, and what it could possibly look like in their classrooms. As teachers supported each other in curriculum planning, meaning-making around what it means to enact social justice teaching simultaneously occurred. During early ‘race space’ CPD sessions, I frontloaded some ideas that ground social justice teaching, as shown in Figure 3. We unpacked the meaning of these ideas and used these ideas to check for understanding, and to support meaning-making throughout the sessions. However, a critical discourse analysis of focal dialogic exchanges revealed a meaning-making tension between dialogic organic social justice teachable moments, and the need for intentional curriculum planning centering social justice. By organic social justice teachable moments, I mean incidents and occurrences which happen when we are with young people in contexts that present an opportunity to prompt social justice thinking. Organic social justice teachable moments also emerge when students ask questions and share perspectives and narratives from their lives, which may or not be school-related. When teachers see engaging in social justice teaching as a stance, and as part of their larger political projects, they are more likely to seek out and seize dialogic opportunities to engage in social justice teaching.
As facilitator, I urged teachers to connect their social justice teaching meaning-making with intentional curriculum planning, as well as to attend to organic social justice teachable moments as they arise in their classrooms. The teachers’ experiences of organic engagements with social justice teaching revealed whether they connected social justice teaching with teaching for social justice. Indeed, this ability to move dialogically in and out of social justice teaching, recognizing social justice teachable moments, demonstrates an important level of expertise. However, apart from enacting thoughtful and purposeful social justice curriculum, while important, such teachable moments are sporadic and memorable at best. In essence, they do not offer multiple opportunities for students “to question, deconstruct, and then reconstruct knowledge in the interest of emancipation” (refer to Figure 5). The meaning-making around the ideas presented during ‘race space’ CPD that are shown in Figure 5 led teachers to share sporadic, impromptu instances of social justice teaching in their classrooms, and in their interactions with students. Gigi, Josh, and Shay all presented “random” examples of how they enacted social justice teaching in their classrooms.

**Figure 5. Social Justice Teaching Ideas Presented in ‘Race Space’ CPD**

- Recognizes that educational politics are entrenched in the prevailing social climate (Banks, 2006).
- Encourages students to critically analyze political systems and then act to transform their realities (Leistyna, 2009).
- “...[F]unctions to cultivate students’ ability to question, deconstruct, and then reconstruct knowledge in the interest of emancipation” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 12).
The supportive and collaborative nature of ‘race space’ CPD allowed Josh to ask content specific questions, and to ‘try out’ ideas for social justice themed units as he taught them in his classroom. In fact, Josh sought out instructional coaching from me around planning his social justice unit and his enactment of social justice teaching via email, and after my classroom observations. As shown in Table 12, there were instances, however, of social justice teaching being defined as “random” (12.15) and “going off on tangents” (12.10) due to the many organic teachable moments that arose. Due to her participation in ‘race space’ CPD, Shay commented that she is much more willing to allow discussions to “go off on a tangent” (12.10). These tangents centered social justice. According to Shay, her students charged that Mexicans in the United States are presently being deported due to racism during their discussion of *Esperanza Rising* (12.5 – 12.8). Similarly, social justice “tangents” prompted Josh’s student, DeAndre19, to ask about the origins of slavery (12.24 – 12.35). During early ‘race space’ CPD sessions, Gigi also discussed her social justice teaching tangents, as shown previously in Table 11 (11.36 – 11.48; 11.62 – 11.65; 11.67 – 11.71). As the dialogic exchange in Table 12 reveals, there was a tension between the possibilities and joys of welcoming social justice “tangents” in classrooms and the need for social justice instruction to be organized.

**Table 12.** Dialogic Exchange 17MTSJ during Session 9

**Arial Rounded MT Bold:** characterizes social justice teaching as random and disorganized  
**Bernard MT Condensed:** pushes meaningful and thoughtful social justice curriculum planning  
**Bookman Old Style:** shows a commitment to social justice teaching that is connected to content

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<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>The book that we’re reading is <em>Esperanza Rising</em> for my AIS class...I think some of the issues that the characters have been faced with have brought up some good discussion in the classroom. Talking about the Mexican farm workers going on strike and rights</td>
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19 Pseudonym used here.
in the country. Somebody brought up how people are being deported now and they made that connection, and they, of course, [said] “It’s racist because they just don’t want them here because they’re Mexican and they should be allowed to be here.” I think it has brought up good discussion and I think that before I probably wouldn’t have let the discussions go off on a tangent like I kind of do now. I think I do let them go deeper and just talk about it, so it goes farther than just making a connection. How do you feel about that? Even if it takes us longer to get through the book.

| 12.5 | | in the country. Somebody brought up how people are being deported now and they made that connection, and they, of course, [said] “It’s racist because they just don’t want them here because they’re Mexican and they should be allowed to be here.” I think it has brought up good discussion and I think that before I probably wouldn’t have let the discussions go off on a tangent like I kind of do now. I think I do let them go deeper and just talk about it, so it goes farther than just making a connection. How do you feel about that? Even if it takes us longer to get through the book. |
| 12.6 | |
| 12.7 | |
| 12.8 | |
| 12.9 | |
| 12.10 | |
| 12.11 | |
| 12.12 | |
| 12.13 | |
| 12.14 | 2 | Josh | Definitely. I can see that. We’re at such a … I feel like social justice has made me so random in the last like three months, but … I mean, it’s really not random. There is a method to it, or whatever, but- |
| 12.15 | |
| 12.16 | |
| 12.17 | 3 | Shay | Awareness. |
| 12.18 | 4 | Josh | Yeah … I have taken Egypt…this unit that I thought I was just going to do and go through and then have them do a project on it. We’ve mixed it with Black History and mixed it with that DNA video and we’re merging all this crazy stuff together and they’re like, “What are we doing?” I’m like, “Where’s the connection? What’s going on?” It was … I want to say … It was DeAndre … One of the kids said last week, “Where did slavery start?” His mind was, he was thinking the U.S. That’s where his mind was on slavery, but we just had happened to, the day before, read about slavery in Egypt. Wait a second…we just had slavery over there. How is that slavery different from this slavery that we’re talking about? That’s where I think it’s really … For them to have a perspective of slavery. For him to research and say, “Slavery has been in existence in every civilization”, and that’s his pullout from when he was doing his research of it. And, then we think about, “Where is it? What did it look like? How is it different?” Those kind of things. Some of the stuff that we’re doing right now I had no idea about. My commitment is pretty strong to it. Now it’s just like how can I make it more…? My next steps are how can I make it more organized? |
| 12.19 | |
| 12.20 | |
| 12.21 | |
| 12.22 | |
| 12.23 | |
| 12.24 | |
| 12.25 | |
| 12.26 | |
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| 12.31 | |
| 12.32 | |
| 12.33 | |
| 12.34 | |
| 12.35 | |
| 12.36 | |
| 12.37 | 5 | Tiffany | That’s where I’m about to come in. |
| 12.38 | 6 | Josh | Damn man. |
| 12.39 | 7 | Tiffany | What were you going to say? (to Gigi) |
| 12.40 | 8 | Gigi | I would say that that’s definitely … I struggle sometimes with how to infuse things into science because it’s a stretch with the content as it is tested, and my attendance is really poor and my kids are so far behind. to go off on a tangent, of course, makes me nervous. Although, there was a … Was it two weeks ago when we were here? Was it two weeks ago? |
| 12.41 | |
| 12.42 | |
| 12.43 | |
| 12.44 | |
| 12.45 | |
| 12.46 | 9 | Tiffany | Mm-hmm (affirmative). |
| 12.47 | 10 | Gigi | I started thinking of how to have an overarching social justice issue that directs the unit plan. You’re kind of track- |
Excuse me. I’m going to do this just because ... When your girls started asking you questions about pregnancy and STDs and you stopped, answered those questions, connected it to the biology that you were teaching in the classroom and brought them back, that’s not social justice [teaching]?

It is, and I was going to say, that’s the one thing is...I’d say my interactions with the students...If all I was doing was focusing solely on the test, it would be, “We don’t have time for that.”

I do answer their questions, but I also answer [them by] tying it to what they already know in science, or what they should already know in science.

Yeah. I’m tying it to what we’ve already covered or what we’re currently covering, so it’s not irrelevant to the course, but it is not ... Again, it’s not organized yet.

What they should be knowing in science.

Yeah. I’m going to tell you why. It should always be able to go places, but even when we’re doing -

It can be a little bit. It can be.

Then it’s like things can go places.

Because I’m going to tell you why. It should always be able to go places, but even when we’re doing -

It’s not organized.

Now I’m thinking, “Maybe it won’t ever be organized.” I’ll just have this idea-

It can be a little bit. It can be.

Then it’s like things can go places.

Because I’m going to tell you why. It should always be able to go places, but even when we’re doing -

Yeah. I got it.

Even when we’re doing social justice stuff, it is very important that we connect it...I want you to just start to think through...It’s very important that we connect it to ... bigger understandings because if you don’t do ... You have to think about the bigger understandings that you want them to have and the transfer of learning. What is the goal of the social justice work that you’re having kids do? That’s the transfer part. This is where most of your social justice [effort] can come [in], because students will be able to independently use their learning to...Outside of this unit, outside of this classroom, what type of people do I want them to be in the world, in different contexts, that I want them to think about independently of what we learn? That’s that transfer part. Sometimes it is discipline specific.

I’m very funny about it. You can see...it does need to be disciplinary understanding because even though ... Parts of it is going to seem like a free for all, but it can’t [always be].

Because what happens is when everything becomes a free for all and you’re not pushing them towards something, then you reworking every time you do this type of stuff, when you already kind of taught this, but when you think through three to four or five
As Josh enacted what he learned about social justice teaching from ‘race space’ CPD, he reflected that “I feel like social justice has made me so random in the last three months, but ... I mean, it’s really not random. There is a method to it, or whatever, but... My next steps are how can I make it more organized?” (12.14 – 12.16; 12.36). Josh realized that he needed to be sure that his social justice teaching was organized and purposeful. Gigi also reminisced about the previous session, wherein she came to understand that having an overarching social justice question that is connected to the content can guide her units of study (12.47 – 12.48). During Session 9, Gigi and Josh discussed how it is important that their teaching around social justice be organized. It was clear that the teachers understood that their social justice curriculum should be grounded in content. Moreover, Josh proclaimed that “I like my Egypt unit more now than any other Egypt unit I’ve ever done, and it’s just because we’re playing so much” during Session 9. Josh’s reflection on his growth “in the last like three months” (12.15) around social justice teaching revealed that ‘race space’ CPD heightened awareness to social justice teachable moments. Furthermore, ‘race space’ CPD caused teachers to allow class discussions to be more dialogic and student-directed (12.8 – 12.13; 12.21 – 12.23). Instead of “just … go[ing] through” (12.19) his Egypt unit, Josh actually connected it to Black history under a social justice framework. In TOT 11 of Table 12, I rebut Gigi’s concern that social justice teaching, when characterized as going off on a tangent, is not content rich and exclusive of the content that will be tested. I asked:
When your girls started asking you questions about pregnancy and STDs and you stopped, answered those questions, connected it to the biology that you were teaching in the classroom, and brought them back, that’s not social justice [teaching]? (12.49–12.53)

In this instance and others, I fervently worked to promote being intentional about social justice teaching, through thoughtful and purposeful curriculum planning which centers social justice. I presented critical backwards planning (Muhammad, in progress; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011; Wilhelm, 2007) as a way to think deeply about social justice curriculum planning. In regards to TOT 25 of Table 12, herein lies my own tension with Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011), or backwards planning as it pertains to the dialogic nature of social justice teaching, because should our goal be to push students towards particular social justice understandings? Is Josh correct that it shouldn’t ever be neatly “organized” so to be speak? It is perfectly okay not to know where the unit will end up, as Josh suggests in TOT 4 of Table 12. We want students to have particular understandings without being overly concerned as to where those understandings end up, or what it is that students do with those understandings. Nevertheless, if social justice teaching is about attending to the oppressive nature of one’s life “in the interest of emancipation” (see Figure 5), then social justice understandings must be recursively “question[ed], deconstruct[ed], and then reconstruct[ed]” (refer to Figure 5) and thoughtful curriculum planning must make room for such uncertainty. What follows is a discussion of more tensions, amid teachers’ advancement and critique of oppressive schooling throughout ‘race space’ CPD.
Oppressive Schooling Advancement and Critique amid Social Justice Ideological Becoming

...the only people that are consistent are your kids. Every year, right? You’ve got your 20, or whatever, depending on your class size...I’ve seen so many administrators in my life, that have made my life fun or have made my life hell, and no matter what, it just comes back to the kids that are in front of me during that year.

-Josh, ‘Race Space’ CPD Session 8

I begin this section by highlighting Josh’s resolve about teaching in oppressive schools, under ever-changing administrators, policies, and systems, because his students are what matter most. For him, it is a given that school personnel in urban schools, in this case administrators, are ever changing, whether for the better or for the worse. However, students are always present, and should be the focus. While this fact is a noble resolve for urban teachers of students of color to possess, oppressive schooling systems, policies, procedures, curriculum, and practices can make schools difficult to navigate, for both teachers and students of color. The dialogic exchanges which advanced, acknowledged, and critiqued the oppressive nature of schools and schooling during ‘race space’ CPD cultivated social justice ideological becoming among urban in-service teachers. ‘Race space’ CPD, as an ideological horizon, cultivated social justice ideological becoming among participants where book club, a consciousness-raising exercise, and social justice curriculum planning acted as ideological products promoting dialogue. The dialogic exchanges that cultivated social justice ideological becoming focused largely on the following themes: a) calls for, and moves towards, overcoming real and perceived fears toward acting for social justice, in ways that center and advantage students of color, and b) a preoccupation with behavior management and test preparation, coinciding with critiques of the school district’s ineffective curriculum and schooling fixation with controlling the behaviors of students of color.

What follows is my critical discourse analysis of focal dialogic exchanges from each theme.
**Calls for, and moves towards, overcoming real and perceived fears.** The fact that Shay, Gigi, and Josh worked in the same school district allowed them to engage in pertinent information sharing about policies and accessing resources. They compared and verified their experiences in ways that would not have been possible otherwise. When experiences with district administrators and policies were shared during ‘race space’ CPD, the teachers could compare and legitimize the actions of their administrators, and expose fabricated policies. This legitimization and exposure of the validity of policies imposed on them cultivated social justice ideological becoming among the teachers. For instance, when Shay divulged that her administrator “yelled at us” (Session 4) for fund-raising for a school trip to Washington, D. C., claiming that it was against district policy to do so, Gigi delegitimized this policy. According to Gigi, “A trip to D. C…. that’s something you traditionally fund-raise for… the school district doesn’t cover it” (Session 4). In essence, no such district policy exists.

It is important to note that each participant brought a different level of schooling and/or district navigational knowledge that they shared in order to support each other. To illustrate, evident throughout ‘race space’ CPD was Josh’s district navigational expertise in accessing resources for his students; he was able to do so without having those resources sabotaged or hijacked by the district. Gigi’s district navigational expertise was in teacher union rights and union activism. Shay’s schooling “know-how” was in subversively providing students of color with the content they needed to be successful, despite the inadequate instruction they were receiving from some content area teachers. Together, they brainstormed ways to defy or “work around” administrators in order to get resources for their students, and pushed each other to do so.
The dialogic exchanges shown in Tables 13, 14, and 15 reveals Shay’s progression from real and perceived fears about district policies her administrator fabricated, to being willing to “work around” her administrator. Shay’s fears had stifled her willingness to work to access technology and opportunities for her students. Nevertheless, Josh and Gigi provoked Shay’s progression towards resistance. Throughout each dialogic exchange, either Shay details what technology she lacked access to, or was blatantly denied. According to Shay, “…none of the seventh or eighth grade teachers have computers in their rooms” (13.9 – 13.10). As an AIS teacher, Shay used the classrooms of content area teachers to teach her students. She did not have her own classroom. Therefore, she had to “make do” with what was available in the classrooms, she occupied. Furthermore, Shay complained, “I just have that Smartboard and the pen don’t even work” (15.4 – 15.5). Earlier during Session 7, Shay aired “God forbid the Smartboard doesn’t work because then we’re just back to textbooks. And it happens a lot because we got the old bulbs…” (14.15 – 14.17). To add to that, although Shay’s school had a computer lab filled with computers, as well as laptop carts (13.10 – 13.11), a new online sign-up process was implemented, resulting in multiple layers of red tape. Shay hissed, “You never know when it’s free. Like if it’s free, you can’t just walk in anymore” (13.12 – 13.14). Later during Session 7, Shay mentioned that, in addition to this new sign up process, “they make us get it approved now” (14.1). Even more concerning, the computer lab was often used by substitute teachers to entertain students when absent teachers failed to leave lesson plans (13.18 – 13.20). It is highly unlikely that the computer lab was being used for instructional purposes under those circumstances.
Table 13. Dialogic Exchange 9OS during Session 7

*Arial Rounded MT Bold:* details faulty technology or the lack of access to technology in school

*Bernard MT Condensed:* illustrates school processes that add layers of red tape to accessing the technology that is available in the school.

*Century Gothic:* incites resistance and administrator “work arounds”

*Bookman Old Style:* expressions of fear around going against administrators

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<tr>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td><em>We just don’t have them (computers).</em> See the thing about that is we have them for our 6th grade, but for our seventh and eighth grade...they don’t have computers. We don’t have them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td><em>Not in your AIS room?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td><em>No. Not in the AIS room. The AIS room is the ELA room, one of the English teacher’s rooms. He doesn’t have computers in there.</em></td>
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<td>13.7</td>
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<td>13.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td><em>It’s just an off period while you’re in there?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td><em>Well, none of the seventh or eighth grade teachers have computers in their rooms. We have two laptop carts and we do have a computer lab, but for some reason they changed the process for us to even access any of that. And it’s like you got to sign-up online. You never know when it's free. Like if it's free, you can’t just walk in anymore.</em></td>
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<td>13.10</td>
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<td>13.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td><em>You got a calendar sign-in?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td><em>You got to sign-in and get it approved and-</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td><em>It has to be approved?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td><em>If there’s a sub that maybe they know the teacher didn’t leave work, like that teacher doesn’t leave work, for seventh and eight especially, they-</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Dialogic Exchange 10OS during Session 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td><em>Yeah, but they make us get it approved now. We can’t just walk in.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td><em>Approved by who?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td><em>I guess the principal and whoever else wants to control the computer lab.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td><em>So like what our librarian did is...he set up an interactive...</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>*It’s just so hard. It’s not even interactive. We don’t know. <em>Nope. We don’t know. I don’t even know... Like the lady who sent us the email saying that you can no longer sign-up in the computer lab, like she</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 This coding key should also be applied to Tables 14 and 15.
kicked us out. It was the math coach, of all people. She walked in the computer lab... “Oh no, Ms. K., you can’t just come in here anymore.” And I was like “Well nobody said ...” “No, well the sign-up sheet isn’t good anymore. You got to sign up online.” So then when I asked her, “How do I sign up online?” “Oh, I’ll get back to you.” And she never did. So, it’s like we have no technology in seventh and eighth grade. God forbid the Smart Board doesn’t work because then we’re just back to textbooks. And it happens a lot because we got the old bulbs and all that stuff. So, we can’t even go just walk into the computer lab and that’s horrible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No.</th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>I’m just frustrated now...finding out about all this technology everybody else got.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>Well, that myON thing is...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>And I just have that Smartboard and the pen don’t even work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>I don’t have technology, so you...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>And the pen don’t...(laughs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>It doesn’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>...That’s not funny. I’m sorry...it just...you said “And the pen don’t even work.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>I feel like you should do Donors-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>You (to Tiffany) see what I do in that class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>Choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shay</td>
<td>I can’t. I’m scared I’d get in trouble.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Dialogic Exchange 11OS during Session 7
After hearing about the iPads in Josh’s classroom, Shay grunted, “I’m just frustrated now…finding out about all this technology everybody else got” (15.1 – 15.2). She was baffled by the fact that they are in the same district, and both teach at schools with populations primarily composed of students of color from working-class backgrounds. Still, her students do not have access to such technology. Shay went on to lament about her limited access to technology, and complained about the inadequacies of the technology that she did have access to (15.4 – 15.15; 15.16 – 15.18).

| 15.15 | 12 | Josh | But how does she know? |
| 15.16 | 13 | Shay | I don’t know. |
| 15.17 | 14 | Josh | So like if you did it- |
| 15.18 | 15 | Gigi | You could still do it about your pen not working. |
| 15.19 | 16 | Shay | Yeah, we do and they come. It’s more so the bulb and the board than the pen. |
| 15.20 | 17 | Gigi | See, they replaced- |
| 15.21 | 18 | Shay | And they need to replace our bulbs. |
| 15.22 | 19 | Gigi | On the board, they replaced the whole center panel on the back and then they ended up having to give me a desktop computer because my school-issued laptop doesn’t load fast enough, or whatever, and so when I would write, it wouldn’t recognize ... Like you’d write your first sentence in handwriting and it would be fine. But the more you write, it couldn’t keep up with you- |
| 15.23 | 20 | Shay | Less calibrated, yeah. |
| 15.24 | 21 | Gigi | -to detect it and then [there] would start being like strange symbols. It took us a few weeks, but they finally fixed it. |
| 15.25 | 22 | Shay | Gosh, I would kill for some iPads. |
| 15.26 | 23 | Josh | I feel like you should- |
| 15.27 | 24 | Shay | Or, even a laptop cart, as slow as they are, I would love it. |
| 15.28 | 25 | Josh | How would she even know that you didn’t buy those yourself? |
| 15.29 | 26 | Shay | Because I’m a teacher- |
| 15.30 | 27 | Josh | Yeah. |
| 15.31 | 28 | Shay | -and that just wouldn’t even make sense. |
| 15.32 | 29 | Josh | But like- |
| 15.33 | 30 | Gigi | But, maybe you had a rich uncle die and- |
| 15.34 | 31 | Josh | How would she know? |
| 15.35 | 32 | Shay | Okay. Let me try it. I’ll sneak on. If I get fired I’m a just…I don’t know. |
| 15.36 | 33 | Josh | Blame Tiffany. |
| 15.37 | 34 | Tiffany | The social justice teacher is fired for resisting. |
In fact, Table 13 reveals that Gigi, Josh, and Shay were each being denied equitable access to technology in their schools. While it may have taken some time, they were able to get some of their equipment repaired by the district. Gigi and Josh’s engagement with Shay’s dilemma reveal how they in turn have navigated technology access in their classrooms. Josh reached out to Donors Choose and asked around for a dongle, whereas Gigi complained about her classroom being “in a dungeon.”

When Josh asked Shay whose approval is required in order for her to access the computer lab, Shay said, “I guess the principal and whoever else wants to control the computer lab” (14.3 – 14.4). Apparently, according to Shay, certain people—who are neither administrators nor supervisors—have control over the computer lab. These people have more freedom in using the computer lab than Shay. In truth, they serve as gatekeepers. These people are white teachers. Shay reported the following:

...the lady who sent us the email saying that you can no longer sign-up in the computer lab, like she kicked us out. It was the math coach, of all people. She walked in the computer [lab]…“Oh no, Ms. S., you can't just come in here anymore.” And I was like “Well, nobody said ...” “No, well the sign-up sheet isn't good anymore. You got to sign up online.” (14.8 – 14.14)

Shay’s scoffing that “It was the math coach, of all people” displays a meaningful observation. Even within the oppressive hierarchy of school power dynamics, another teacher has the authority to “kick” Shay and her students out of the computer lab.

Neither Gigi, Josh, nor I provoked Shay to resist the ways in which she and her students were being denied access to the computer lab, a communal area intended to be accessible to everyone who attends and works at the school. On the contrary, Josh and Gigi instigated Shay’s
progression from a fearful “I can’t. I’m scared I’d get in trouble” (15.14) to a disobedient “Okay. Let me try it. I’ll sneak on” (15.44). As Shay rattled off all of the technology she lacked, and desperately needed for her students, Josh and Gigi offered possible “work arounds” to acquire various technology. When Shay expressed that her administrator forbade her from using outside avenues to acquire technology, Josh provided rebuttals, such as, “But how does she know?” (15.15) and Gigi added “…maybe you had a rich uncle die…” (15.42). In the current context of schools, we often only hear about what teachers can’t do in public schools; we rarely hear about how teachers work against controlling and oppressive administration, in order to access resources for their students.

**Simultaneous critique of and preoccupation with behavior management and test preparation in schools.** Throughout ‘race space’ CPD, there existed a prevalent inconsistency, from critiquing behavior management and focusing on test preparation in schools, to perpetuating such oppressive practices (e.g., Table 16, Dialogic Exchanges 1, 2, 9, 10). As teachers committed to social justice, learning about what it means to teach for social justice, participants were able to articulate how schools were at fault for constantly trying to control students of color (e.g., Table 16, Dialogic Exchanges 3, 11, 12). The teachers were also able to name specific policies and practices which harmed students, such as behavior management programs, and robotic, non-responsive teaching. Table 16 shows the back and forth of teachers by noting the themes of dialogic exchanges that centered behavior management and test preparation. A close examination of Table 16 suggests that teachers, even those who are committed to social justice, play into oppressive systems at times (e.g., Dialogic Exchanges 5, 6, 7). It also reveals the difficulty of resisting the culture of obedience, control, and standardization.
that exists largely in public school districts serving students of color experiencing the working-class.

**Table 16. Critiquing or Perpetuating Behavior Management and Test Preparation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogic Exchange</th>
<th>‘Race Space’ CPD</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Behavior management – critique of carrying out incentive plans and whether schools should have them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Strong curriculum as behavior management. Ensuring strong curriculum, instead of focusing on behavior, is hard work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Critiquing test prep v. Advocating for test prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Sharing test prep strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Session 6 Analyzing Josh’s Lesson</td>
<td>Focusing on behavior management instead of teaching and dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Session 9 Book Club Chapter 4 (Haddix, 2016)</td>
<td>Behavior management methods and strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Behavior Management – preoccupied with “teaching students a lesson”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Session 9 Social Justice Curriculum Planning</td>
<td>Sharing Test Prep Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Session 10</td>
<td>Behavior management technology – benefits and misuses, how one district system makes students behave worse, not beneficial to students who have severe outside circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Session 10</td>
<td>Calls to have time to discuss the district behavior management system with colleagues to brainstorm the best ways to use it and ineffectiveness of incentive plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Session 11</td>
<td>Critiquing behavior management strategies that oppress students and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Session 12</td>
<td>Critiquing behavior management and disciplining of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During Session 3, Shay complained that the incentives connected to the school-wide behavior management system in place at her school were ineffective, as concerned her seventh and eighth grade students (Table 16, Dialogic Exchange 1). According to Shay, her students “don’t want pencils and stickers from the school store” (RSCPD 3). Reminiscing on our experiences as former middle school teachers, Gigi and I then shared some successful...
approaches to behavior management that we created with grade level teams and implemented.

Shay went on to complain about the overuse of “token rewards… because if you’re not giving them something, some of the kids won’t do anything. They’re conditioned to do something for something, they’re not doing it just because, and that is so frustrating” (RSCPD 3). Shay’s frustration here displays her critique of not only incentives, but of the students themselves. Josh offers, “I’m very extrinsically motivated too, though” (RSCPD 3).

In an attempt to move the dialogue beyond behavior management, I presented the following observation:

In some schools that I visit, it seems like the heart of the issue is curriculum…how engaging the curriculum is and everything. What I find is—one school I went to—they want to do all this character development stuff. It’s easier to focus on behavior stuff instead of actual good teaching. They want to focus on ... they had this leadership development and all this, and I’m like, “If you just work on the curriculum, half of your problems would eliminate.” Now, it’s not going to go completely away, but I do believe that the more engaging teaching is, the more ... (RSCPD 3)

By sharing this observation of another school, I implied that there is a problem with how this dialogic exchange that was occurring in ‘race space’ CPD focused on behavior management, instead of social justice curriculum and teaching. Moreover, my observation suggests that schools and teachers that focus on “fixing” students of color, seeing them as “problem”, avoid their own problem: weak, unengaging, meaningless curriculum and teaching. Josh and Shay offered affirmations throughout my observation, while Gigi just listened. Josh responded with an explanation of why schools focus on behavior versus curriculum and teaching. Josh postulated that:
It’s harder work. It’s harder work to change that than to do something else. It puts the Band-Aid on it. That’s what we’re doing…That’s a lot of hours of work…Not only teaching someone to do that but getting them to buy into it. (RSCPD 3)

Josh believes that schools are unwilling to put in the hard work, the long hours of reimagining, deconstructing, and then reconstructing curriculum and teaching practices. On the one hand, Josh’s use of the words “we” suggests his recognition of his membership to this oppressive institution called school, and his owning up to partial blame. His use of the word “we” also holds each of us participating in ‘race space’ CPD accountable for our obsession with controlling student behavior. On the other hand, Josh’s use of the word “them” distances himself, and the rest of us, from the large number of teachers unwilling to do the hard work.

Prior to the start of Session 4, Josh, who arrived early, sat down to read the Ayers and Ayers (2011) chapter on the oppressive nature of schools, in preparation for book club. This chapter critiqued schools for demanding blind obedience from students. After silently reading for some time while I finished setting up recording equipment, Josh exclaimed:

One of our character traits from the district—I think it was October—was obedience. We sat around. We’re like, ‘I don’t like that. Can we change that? I don’t like that.’ Nothing ever got done but we thought it was wrong. Then I read this section here. I’m just like, ‘Yeah.’

In essence, reading this chapter confirmed Josh’s “gut feeling” that the district’s program to impose obedience on students was an oppressive practice. During Session 4, we discussed the authors’ critique of school’s emphasis on obedience. Shay also confirmed that “obedience” was the district’s character trait focus for the month of October. Teachers complained how this focus was problematic and limiting. However, Gigi deliberated another point: “This article challenges
us as teachers because I think that as teachers, we’re highly obedient” (Session 4). Gigi felt that the authors were pushing teachers to stop being so obedient. It is worth noting that this dialogic exchange moved from how teachers control students to how principals desire to—and in fact do—control teachers. We griped about principals controlling teachers by thwarting their attempts to act for change in their schools, to the detriment of students of color. We also griped about the gatekeepers who prevent teachers from complaining about school administrators to the district superintendent. These gatekeepers and subordinates to the superintendent want to appear to have everything under control, so they prevent information from getting to him. Through the dialogic exchanges in book club, “obedience” becomes an oppressive mandate, experienced not only by students of color, but teachers as well.

Yet with all of the failed attempts to get to those in power, in order to improve the schooling and educative experiences for students of color, these teachers continued to brainstorm ways to get around the “system.” They offered each other subversive techniques and strategies to work around the system, and engage in activism that is beyond the powers that be, which require them to work with parents to fight for the students that they care about. In a later session, Gigi passionately pleaded “If we’re real teachers of social justice, and we want to make these changes, one of the ways we can empower these changes to happen on a larger scale is through our union work, because it is a way to do it” (Session 8). Gigi charged Josh and Shay to engage in union activism as a way to make change.

While teachers critiqued school for its oppressive nature, their complicity in it was evident. During Session 6, we analyzed a segment of Josh’s attempts at social justice teaching through his Egypt unit. This lesson segment revealed a bold engagement on Josh’s part to discuss race and schooling practices/structures with his self-contained special education class of Black
boys. Josh was also taking a risk here by attempting to promote a dialogic space with his students. However, one of Shay’s first reactions at the end of the segment was “I’d be going nuts during this little six minutes” (Session 6), referring to the student outbursts. However, these outbursts reflected students’ engagement and excitement about the lesson. I showed this segment in order for us to discuss the student dialogue and social justice teaching that was taking place. Instead, the focus became behavior management, placing Josh in the uncomfortable position of having to explain how he manages his students’ frequent outbursts.

The teachers’ inability to move beyond oppressive school structures, such as test preparation, in an effort to engage in social justice curriculum planning was also evident in Session 9. We engaged in book club around Haddix’s (2016) chapter critiquing urban teachers for focusing on behavior management when teaching students of color, instead of teaching for social justice. As the facilitator, I struggled to push teachers beyond classroom management during the dialogic exchanges, but they supported each other in discussing various management strategies and approaches. Additionally, there were many instances where Josh and Shay passionately shared test-taking strategies, which could help their students outsmart state tests. Moreover, when given time to engage in social justice unit planning during Session 9, Josh and Shay discussed test prep strategies and the problems with the test. In contrast, Gigi discussed social justice informed science curriculum possibilities with me.

**Summarizing this Chapter through a Discussion of the Nature of ‘Race Space’ CPD**

‘Race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy through dialogic exchanges around institutionalized racism, racist white people, and whiteness as property, made visible through differential material access among teachers of color and white teachers working in the same school. ‘Race space’ CPD also cultivated social justice teaching through dialogic exchanges
around classroom practice and curriculum planning. Lastly, ‘race space’ CPD cultivated social justice ideological becoming among teachers, through dialogic exchanges that advanced and critiqued the oppressive nature of school.

As shown throughout this chapter, ‘race space’ CPD can be unpredictable and shifting in nature. At times, it was filled with tension, challenge, examination, and uncertainty. At other times, ‘race space’ CPD was supportive, healing, validating, and welcoming to participants in their complexities. Ideological becoming occurs through discomfort, and having an opportunity to spend time outside of systems in an effort to critique it. ‘Race space’ CPD supported the ideological becoming of urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, while also making room for their resistance to paradigm shifts. The interaction between various ideological products and the larger ideological horizon in which teachers exist was made visible in ‘race space’ CPD, shaping the overall nature of ‘race space’ CPD. Each teacher’s individual journey towards cultivating racial literacy, and social justice ideological becoming, was uniquely reflected through multiplicity and complexity.
CHAPTER 5: CULTIVATING RACIAL LITERACY, IDEOLOGICAL BECOMING, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING WITH/IN URBAN TEACHERS

Revisiting Purpose

In Chapter 1, I shared a personal vignette from a PD series on race that I experienced as a middle school teacher of color committed to social justice. Above all else, I remember the silence of teachers, as well as Mrs. Kedzierski equating her experience of poverty as a white person with the racialized and classed experiences of Black students. At the time, I did not realize how this experience would profoundly shape my research agenda. It prompted me to re-imagine schools as places where theory and research are integrated into practice; where teachers can be vulnerable, reflect, and grow; where taboo topics, such as race and racism, are unpacked, discussed, acted upon, and transformed. Thus, this dissertation interrogated teacher learning and classroom practice around race, racism, and social justice through professional development.

With the theoretical groundings of critical race theory (CRT) in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005), ideological becoming (Bakhtin, 1981; Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1928/1994; Freedman & Ball, 2004; Voloshinov, 1994), and Third Space (Bhabha, 2004), I designed ‘race space’ Critical Professional Development (CPD). Through this initiative, I aimed to support in-service urban teachers committed to social justice in learning about race, racism, and social justice teaching. The field is not well-informed as regards supporting teachers who are committed to social justice, who require different support from those teachers who do not already embody a commitment to social justice (Picower, 2011).

The purpose of this ethnographic case study of ‘race space’ CPD was to understand how to support such teachers in racial literacy cultivation, ideological becoming, and social justice teaching in ways, that lead to better interactions with, and learning for, students of color. Thus,
this research study explored the following broad question: what is the nature of ‘race space’ CPD? Specifically, among urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, I investigated how a ‘race space’ CPD cultivates: a) racial literacy; b) social justice teaching, and; c) ideological becoming. In Chapter 4, I discussed the ways in which ‘race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy, social justice teaching, and ideological becoming. In this chapter, I discuss how my findings reveal ‘race space’ CPD’s nature as a Third Space, where ideological becoming is possible, and endarkened feminist epistemologies were employed to respond to teacher needs. I also discuss how this study offers deeper engagements with CRT. I end this chapter by presenting implications and future directions for this research.

**Theoretical Synergy in Actualizing a Third Space within ‘Race Space’ CPD**

As shown in Figure 6, an analysis of the findings from this ethnographic case study revealed that a Third Space was actualized in ‘race space’ CPD. Third Space was actualized in this ‘in-between’, through interactions among participants and ideological products that birthed ideological creations. Participants brought their lived experiences from their first and second spaces into this ‘race space’ CPD. Ideological products from society writ large (e.g., Trump representing anti-social justice and anti-marginalized groups ideology), and ideological products around critical race theory and social justice understandings interacted in this space. These interactions birthed ideological creations (e.g., dialogue and resistance). Moreover, herein, the processes of racial literacy cultivation and social justice ideological becoming were able to emanate (refer to Figure 6). Third Space wrestles with the “beyond” of individuals “in order [for them] to return in a spirit of revision and reconstruction, to the political conditions of the present” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 4). Thus, as shown in Figure 6, processes cultivated in ‘race space’ CPD were meant to inform teacher enactment of social justice teaching in classrooms, and
activism in the world, towards racial and social justice. Figure 6 also shows how, as facilitator, I employed endarkened feminist epistemologies to interpret these processes and the Third Space itself.

**Figure 6.** Actualizing a Third Space via ‘Race Space’ CPD

‘Race Space’ CPD: Actualizing a Third Space

Through the actualization of a Third Space within ‘race space’ CPD, participant and facilitator ways of knowing/acting were both welcomed and called into question, for the purposes of interrupting and revising their performances of the present. Professional development conducted physically outside schools of does not necessarily guarantee the creation of a Third Space. The actualization of Third Space was contingent upon what actors (e.g., teachers) actually did in the ‘in-between,’ and the ideological creations that emerged there. A community of trust, mutual respect, and support was formed over time amongst all participants in ‘race space’ CPD. Thus, the community that was created foregrounded Third Space. ‘Race
space’ CPD became a space where Shay could be vulnerable about her fear of school administration, and where others could challenge her to resist oppressive schooling conditions and act on behalf of students. In this Third Space, Shay could also be vulnerable and transparent about how she believed schools denied her equitable access to teaching resources, as a teacher of color. For Shay, Post-it chart paper—a mere artifact—represented an ideological product that is whiteness as property. Shay observed that white teachers at her school had this material to use for instruction, and the teachers of color did not. When we offered other explanations besides race as to why Shay did not have the same resources as her white colleagues, she did not accept our premise and stood firm on her marginalization in school. As we challenged Shay, she challenged us to think more deeply about how whiteness as property shows up in school, as well as on the nuances of whiteness.

In a similar vein, in ‘race space’ CPD, as a Third Space outside of schools, Gigi shared how she believed the Parquet Public School District intentionally targeted her, as a community activist, by assigning her to split her time between two nontraditional high schools. She was able to be transparent about her frustration in having few students in her classes, and her lack of motivation to teach. Nevertheless, Josh challenged Gigi to see the possibilities for social justice teaching in a teaching space with so few students, and in a school where there is little to no interference from administrators. Shay offered the following tongue-in-cheek response to Gigi’s being bored in having few students: “I know somebody who would love that. They would love to switch with you” (Session 3). Josh, Shay, and I did not accept Gigi’s justifications for not teaching. As with Gigi, Josh challenged me to persist in my social justice teaching, despite the resistance I, as a teacher educator of color, received from my class of white women. In this moment, ‘race space’ CPD actualized a Third Space of healing for me. With my sentiments
welcomed, affirmed, and challenged—interrupting feelings of hopelessness—I could go back to my teaching context and continue to charge others to teach for social justice. I, as facilitator, was also a participant; thus, suggesting a non-hierarchal participation and interaction that existed amongst all of us in ‘race space’ CPD.

As the actualization of a Third Space suggests, teachers need space for self-reflection around social justice understandings (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Ball, 2009; DeMulder et al., 2014; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Navarro, 2018), and so do facilitators (DeMulder et al., 2014; Shockley & Banks, 2011). A recurrent theme in the literature is the need for collaborative spaces to examine and explore issues and strategies for improving practice (Abu El-Haj, 2003; C. C. Johnson & Marx, 2009; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Navarro, 2018; Picower, 2011; Shockley & Banks, 2011). Significantly, ‘race space’ CPD became “a space of intervention in the here and now” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 10) for all participants. The supportive and collaborative nature of ‘race space’ CPD allowed Josh to ask content specific questions, and to ‘try out’ ideas for social justice themed units as he taught them in his classroom. In this Third Space, we engaged in meaning-making for the purposes of acting in the present of our first and second spaces. Specifically, ‘race space’ CPD acted as “a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present” (Bhabha, 2004, p. 10). In the case of in-service urban teachers committed to social justice, this ‘inbetween’ allowed them to reflect, dialog, reimagine, create, and prepare for their performance of politics (Bhabha, 2004) in the present; that is, how they teach/interact with students of color in schools and how they act for racial and social justice in the world. Moreover, teachers could work through some problematic areas outside the classroom in order to be better inside the classroom.
Findings from this dissertation revealed that teachers must have also space to grapple with how their racial identities shape their responses to students of color, in ways that are contrary to their intended purpose. In ‘race space’ CPD, the ideological products of students of color (e.g., Jalen’s claim that “White people hate Black people”) were centered in order to cultivate racial literacy. As Figure 6 shows, Third Space is actualized when the ideological products of students of color, or marginalized peoples, signify from the periphery of authorized power (Bhabha, 2004); in this case, that is teachers, schools, and whiteness. Analyzing the ideological products of students of color around racial consciousness contributed to the cultivation of racial literacy of each of us. Third Space, like CRT, privileges the historically displaced (Bhabha, 2004) for the purposes of meaning-making. As does Shay, we must trust students of color when they articulate their suffering in schools in detail (Dumas, 2014). Perhaps Josh would have responded to Rakeem and his other Black students, who embraced their Black identity, differently, had he had an opportunity to engage a dialogue that allowed him to come to terms with what it means to be white. Within ‘race space’ CPD, Josh was able to examine his emotions around students’ of color articulations on racist white people. Additionally, ‘race space’ CPD provided space for Gigi to be transparent about her complicated racial understandings. She simultaneously defended the goodness of her white identity, while acknowledging how her whiteness privileges her in a system that oppresses all others. ‘Race space’ CPD cultivated racial literacy by allowing time and space outside of schools, for Shay, Josh, and Gigi to grapple with distances to and from their racial frames of reference, in efforts to both personalize and depersonalize the racial consciousness of students of color.

**Third Space emerging from the interplay of various ideological products.** ‘Race space’ CPD, as an ideological horizon (see Figure 6), cultivated social justice ideological
becoming among participants through book club, a consciousness-raising exercise, and meaning-making around social justice curriculum planning. Within each of these practices emerged the interplay of various ideological products through the sharing of artifacts and dialogic exchanges among a group of people. There existed a rich interactional matrix, constituted by the range of languages and embodied practices of participants within this Third Space, which helped to mediate conversations about justice. For example, through the dialogic exchanges in book club, “obedience” becomes an oppressive mandate experienced not only by students of color, but by teachers as well. Josh reported that “obedience” was a PPS character trait for the month of October, and he and his colleagues did not like it. We then discussed how schools often want students to be obedient. However, Gigi deliberated another point, noting that an article read for a ‘race space’ CPD session “…challenges us as teachers because I think that as teachers, we’re highly obedient” (Session 4). Thus, as Figure 6 suggests, ideological products presented in ‘race space’ CPD prompted ideological creations, such as the notion of teachers resisting.

According to Bakhtin (1994), “The utterance is filled with dialogic overtones, and they must be taken into account in order to understand fully the style of the utterance” (p. 86). The utterances that arose in Third Space through deep dialogue are only comprehensible when considering how various ideological products from first space and second space imprint them. For instance, one ideological product that figured prominently in ‘race space’ CPD was Trump, because we began ‘race space’ CPD two days after he was elected president. Thus, the ideological and material turmoil, conflict, and uncertainty we felt regarding the direction of the nation in that moment imprinted the space. Shay’s students even associated anyone who they considered to be racist as being a Trump supporter, suggesting that ‘Trump supporter’ was synonymous with ‘racist.’ This indicates how powerful the Trump utterance was as an
ideological product. According to Shay, her students “just go around and tell teachers, ‘You voted for Trump, didn’t you?’ ‘You voted for Trump’” (Session 7). That “all they do” (Session 7) is complain about racist teachers. Her students’ sentiments here mirrored our sentiments—Gigi, Josh, Shay, and me—when we first began ‘race space’ CPD after the 2016 Presidential Election, as depicted in the opening narrative of Chapter 4. In fact, many white people did go out and vote for a candidate who ran one of the most overtly racist campaigns in recent U. S. history. Furthermore, the Ku Klux Klan openly endorsed Trump. Thus, for Shay’s students, a white person that voted for Trump is racist. Shay reported that one of her students claimed, “‘I don't like him [the science teacher] because I know he voted for Trump’” (Session 7). In other words, any white teacher who they deem as racist, they also believe voted for Trump.

Within a Third Space, there is a recursive relationship between emerging ideological creations and preexisting ideological products. The interaction amid various ideological products that enter this ‘in-between’ advances its ambivalence. Within ‘race space’ CPD, there were complexities amid the various “social justice” understandings and battles with which each of us entered this space. Tensions emerged when Shay consistently associated the Post-it chart paper I offered her with whiteness. For Shay, social justice meant that she would have access to the same materials and resources she needed to teach her students as the white teachers in her building did. Post-it chart paper represented her battle for equitable treatment as a teacher of color, because she did not have access to this material and white teachers at her school did. In contrast, for me, Post-it chart paper was detached from whiteness and simply a material to be used. There was also a coexistence of conflicting ideas (e.g., the simultaneous advancing and critiquing of oppressive schooling). A preoccupation with behavior management and test preparation coincided with critiques of the school district’s ineffective curriculum, and fixation on
controlling the behaviors of students of color. Throughout ‘race space’ CPD, there existed a prevalent inconsistency in critiquing behavior management while focusing on test preparation in schools, perpetuating such oppressive practices (e.g., Table 16, Dialogic Exchanges 1, 2, 9, 10). The teachers’ complicity in the oppressive nature of school was evident. The interaction between various ideological products and the larger ideological horizon in which teachers exist was made visible in ‘race space’ CPD, shaping the overall nature of ‘race space’ CPD.

Additionally, there were instances of social justice teaching being described as “random” and “going off on tangents” by the teachers (Session 9). These dialogic exchanges presented a meaning-making tension between teachable moments around social justice, and the need for intentional curriculum planning that centers social justice. Indeed, social justice “tangents” prompted Josh’s student, DeAndre, to inquire about the origins of slavery throughout the world, during one classroom observation. However, according to Skerrett (2011), “When issues of race are discussed in infrequent extra-curricular episodes or in bounded units apart from the core curriculum, students receive a hidden curricular message that race and racism are illegitimate or inconsequential educational topics” (p. 321). In essence, race, racism, and social justice must be centered in curriculum and instruction if they are ever to impact students.

**A subversive Third Space for teachers committed to social justice.** ‘Race space’ CPD also became a subversive space. The fact that Shay, Gigi, and Josh worked in the same school district allowed them to engage in pertinent information sharing about policies and accessing resources. They compared and verified their experiences in ways that would not have been possible otherwise. The teachers could compare and legitimize the actions of their administrators and expose fabricated policies, as well as brainstorm ways to get around the “system.” They offered each other subversive techniques and strategies, to work around the system and to engage
in activism that is beyond the powers that be, and which require them to work with parents to fight for the students that they care about. In a later session, Gigi passionately pleaded that “If we’re real teachers of social justice, and we want to make these changes, one of the ways we can empower these changes to happen on a larger scale is through our union work, because it is a way to do it” (Session 8). Gigi charged Josh and Shay to engage in union activism as a way to make change.

It is important to note that each participant brought a different level of schooling and/or district navigational knowledge, which they shared in order to support each other. To illustrate, evident throughout ‘race space’ CPD was Josh’s district navigational expertise in accessing resources for his students, without having those resources sabotaged or hijacked by the district. Gigi’s district navigational expertise was in teacher union rights and union activism. Shay’s schooling “know-how” was in subversively providing students of color with the content they needed to be successful, despite the inadequate instruction they were receiving from some content area teachers. Together, they brainstormed ways to defy, or “work around”, administrators, in order to get resources for their students, and pushed each other to do so.

**Ideological Becoming**

Ideological becoming occurs through discomfort, and having an opportunity to come outside of the systems one is a part of in an effort to critique it. Specifically, one’s ideological becoming is contingent upon that person’s rejection or embrace (Ball, 2009) of ideological products which cause cognitive dissonance. ‘Race space’ CPD supported the ideological becoming of urban in-service teachers committed to social justice, while also making room for their resistance to paradigm shifts. Each teacher’s individual journey towards cultivating racial
literacy and social justice ideological becoming was uniquely reflected in multiplicity and complexity. Below, I elaborate on each teacher’s journey.

**Josh.** ‘Race space’ CPD cultivated ideological becoming for Josh more significantly than for Shay and Gigi. Josh’s racial literacy, ideological becoming around social justice understandings, and social justice teaching was cultivated through his participation in ‘race space’ CPD. Through the consciousness-raising exercise, Josh’s racial literacy around responding to the racial consciousness of students was strengthened. This growth is evident in Josh’s shift from “I just hope I wouldn’t say that, ‘I don’t hate you’” (Session 7) to “I think I might say, ‘I don’t hate you.’ Until now…” (Session 7). Josh’s reexamination of whether he would say “I don’t hate you” suggests that he understands how his personalization of comments by students of color describing racist white people is an operationalization of whiteness. “Until now” means that, through the consciousness-raising exercise, Josh was able to grapple with what whiteness means in the world, according to students of color. Josh was also willing to be transparent about his shortcomings in the area of racial literacy. Josh reminded me that the whole purpose of ‘race space’ CPD was to “Challenge your notions, your identities, where you are, and hopefully come out with something different on the other side” (Session 8). Josh’s advice shows that he was applying what he had been reading in ‘race space’ CPD. He used the ideas presented therein to remind me of what it means to teach for social justice, and to cultivate a social justice ideological becoming. When you can teach what you have learned, ideological becoming has transpired.

Davila (2011) argues that teachers need support in becoming critical guides during these uncomfortable conversations. Many studies show that teachers need support in learning about social justice, and enacting social justice teaching (Davila, 2011; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Philip,
When teachers are unprepared to actually teach for social justice, they may advance dominant historical narratives and deficit perspectives (Davila, 2011). When operationalizing racial literacy, researchers found that in-service and pre-service teachers center race in their instruction in critical ways (Epstein & Gist, 2015; L. J. King, 2016; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Skerrett, 2011). Josh sought out instructional coaching from me around planning his social justice unit, and his enactment of social justice teaching, via email and after my classroom observations. After I provided some instructional coaching, I observed Josh enacting social justice teaching that took on race and racism directly, particularly after the consciousness-raising exercise. Through these lessons, Josh used the biographies of Emmett Till (Classroom Observation 15) and Malcolm X (Classroom Observation 16) to unpack the history of racism in America with his students. Moreover, the ways in which Josh responded to his students’ expressions of racial consciousness during these lessons was starkly different from the way he responded to Rakeem during my earlier observation, when he ignored his understandings of what it means to be a Black person in America. For instance, after watching a short clip on Emmett Till, one of Josh’s students yelled out “racist ass” and Josh affirmed that “it’s okay to be angry” (Classroom Observation 15). Instead of personalizing and ignoring this statement, Josh was empathic, and validated this student’s racial consciousness.

Josh’s reflection on his growth around social justice teaching “in the last like three months” (Session 9) revealed that ‘race space’ CPD heightened his awareness to social justice teachable moments. Through the consciousness-raising exercise, Josh conceptualized his racial frame of reference, and reconstructed it based on a socially mediated co-construction of racial literacy. Still, Josh needed further support in understanding how he benefits from whiteness, because, in a world that privileges white people, he is read as white. Additionally, as Josh
enacted what he learned about social justice teaching from ‘race space’ CPD, he reflected that “I feel like social justice has made me so random in the last three months, but ... I mean, it’s really not random. There is a method to it, or whatever, but... My next steps are how can I make it more organized?” (Session 9). Josh realized that he needed to be sure that his social justice teaching was organized and purposeful.

Gigi. Unlike Josh, Gigi entered ‘race space’ CPD with a sophisticated level of racial literacy and a strong social justice identity. She decided to participate in ‘race space’ CPD for support in infusing her community activism into classroom practice. Espoused social justice stances must translate into actual practice, in order for real social justice teaching to occur (Agosto, 2010; Haddix, 2012; Young, 2011). Furthermore, learning about social justice theories and critical pedagogy does not necessarily transfer easily into classroom practice (Philip, 2014). Apart from sporadic organic social justice teachable moments emerging in conversation, I did not observe Gigi enacting social justice teaching. I offered instructional coaching and ideas for how to center social justice in her biology curriculum. However, Gigi felt that she needed time to process what she learned, and claimed that she would be ready to enact social justice teaching in the following school year, after she had time to plan over the summer.

Picower (2015) described how teachers committed to social justice participating in a teacher inquiry group were enacting social justice teaching, but not engaging in activism in the world. With Gigi, I found an example of the opposite scenario. Known throughout the city for fighting for teachers’ rights, Black Lives Matter, women’s rights, and LGBTQ communities, Gigi was a powerful community activist in Parquet. However, in the classroom, she did not enact social justice teaching. Nonetheless, ‘race space’ CPD did cultivate Gigi’s social justice ideological becoming to some extent, moving her from focusing on how her current teaching
context prevented her from engaging in social justice teaching, to considering the many social justice teaching possibilities unique to her current context. When given time to engage in social justice curriculum planning, she did actually attempt to do so, while Josh and Shay exchanged test prep strategies during that time. Gigi also reminisced about those moments during ‘race space’ CPD, wherein she understood that having an overarching social justice question which is connected to the content can guide her units of study.

While Gigi displayed sophisticated levels of racial literacy around structural racism, whiteness as property, and the power of whiteness, Gigi needed further support in aligning with people of color in ways that do not flatten racialized experiences. For example, when Shay shared how she, as a teacher of color, was denied high quality resources, Gigi seemed to minimize Shay’s racialized experience while centering herself, in claiming that “I have a Black card, so I don’t get that paper either” (Session 7). In essence, she was purporting that acting on behalf of Black people in any way results in a lack of access to privileges and resources. It is important to note that Gigi is distancing herself from whiteness, and employing Blackness as a commodity, through her claim to be in possession of “a Black card.” Moreover, it is unclear who granted her the “Black card.” Even more concerning is how she centers herself, a white woman, when a Black woman is sharing her racialized experiences.

**Shay.** On her pre-questionnaire, Shay articulated sophisticated levels of racial literacy, social justice understanding, and what enacting social justice teaching looks like. While Shay trusted the racial consciousness of students of color, she needed support in managing her frustrations with students of color complaining about racist teachers to her all the time. ‘Race space’ CPD encouraged her to continue to try to understand why and how students of color believe they are marginalized. When Shay expressed her frustration with students of color
constantly complaining to her about racist teachers, other interlocutors offered that seeking to understand what constitutes racist white people, according to students of color, was part of her larger antiracist project. Additionally, I did observe her enacting social justice teaching in ways that she learned during ‘race space’ CPD, with a class of mostly ELL students, as they read *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan.

Shay needed support in overcoming real and perceived fears toward acting for social justice, in ways that center and advantage students of color. Shay’s ideological becoming was most evident in her move from real and perceived fears about district policies her administrator fabricated, to being willing to “work around” her administrator. Josh and Gigi instigated Shay’s progression from a fearful “I can’t. I’m scared I’d get in trouble” (Session 7) to a disobedient “Okay. Let me try it. I’ll sneak on” (Session 7) during ‘race space’ CPD. Shay’s dilemma reveals the difficulty of resisting the culture of obedience, control, and standardization that exists in public school districts serving students of color experiencing life in the working-class. Overall, it was difficult for teachers to move beyond oppressive schooling practices, such as test preparation, in order to engage in social justice curriculum planning. This was the case even when we read a book chapter that commented on the tendency of urban schools to focus on behavior management, instead of teaching for social justice.

**Critical Race Theory and Racial Literacy in ‘Race Space’ CPD**

Research studies on teachers learning about race and racism suggest that teachers need to reflect on their racial identity, and how race and racism function in schools (e.g., Brock et al., 2006; Glazier, 2003, 2009; Philip, 2014; Young, 2011), in order to teach for social justice. An ethnographic case study of ‘race space’ CPD revealed the existence of sustained talk about race, racism, racial identity, and social justice. For decades, scholars have acknowledged the racial,
cultural, and linguistic mismatch between mostly white, monolingual, middle class female teachers, and their linguistically and racially diverse students of color (e.g., Nieto, 2005). Moreover, while literacy researchers have studied racial literacy among K-12 students (e.g., Vetter & Hungerford-Kressor, 2014) and teacher education students (e.g., Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015), scant attention has been directed towards cultivating racial literacy through teacher professional development. This qualitative study revealed how teacher professional development can support practicing teachers, who teach mostly students of color, in their racial literacy cultivation. Specifically, this dissertation adds to research on racial literacy and CRT, by explicitly unpacking teacher responses to the racial consciousness sharing of students of color.

Without question, Gigi, Josh, and Shay already displayed racial literacy and social justice understandings upon beginning ‘race space’ CPD. Their racial literacy manifested itself in ways that cultivated my own racial literacy as the facilitator. By valuing the racial literacy displayed by teachers, ‘race space’ CPD moved beyond waiting on teachers to “get it” by welcoming what they did “get.” Rarely do researchers discuss how to honor the racial literacy teachers already display, and use their areas of strength as a springboard in attending to what they still need to strengthen. When we treat all teachers as beginning racial literacy learners, the needs of teachers with sophisticated, if inconsistent, levels of racial literacy are overlooked and left unfulfilled. In her second interview, Gigi expressed that she appreciated the fact that “this wasn’t Racism 101.” In a similar vein, Shay shared that she liked that they were able to “go deeper” (Interview 2).

Gigi, Josh, and Shay have participated in district mandated PDs on race and racism with large groups of teachers from across the district. Similar to much of the literature on teachers learning about race and racism (e.g., Sleeter, 1992), they reported that the majority of their
colleagues were resistant to learning about race and racism as it related to their students of color. The facilitators of these district mandated PD had to spend a lot of time convincing teachers that racism existed. While they found these PDs to be an important step forward for the district, these teachers did not need to learn that racism exists. Ultimately, teachers who display sophisticated levels of racial literacy need a separate space to learn at times, with different learning goals from those of “resistant” teachers. They need affinity spaces with likeminded folks who also share their commitment to social justice, which needs to be both affirmed and supported. However, teachers committed to social justice who display sophisticated levels of racial literacy still need support in cultivating racial literacy. The Picower (2009), Young (2011), and Hyland (2005) studies found that many teachers—even “good” teachers—either do not realize, or refuse to recognize, how they participate in racism and perpetuate whiteness in schools.

**Whiteness as property, from the perspectives and experiences of teachers of color.** In order to support social justice oriented teachers, PD should be conducted in intimate (Navarro, 2018) humanizing spaces (Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Pour-Khorshid, In Press) where teachers can problematize their experiences of marginalization and isolation in schools. Overwhelmingly, teacher educators and researchers have been critiqued for being too preoccupied with helping white teachers “get” race and racism, instead of recruiting, and learning from (and with) teachers of color who are from the same communities as the students which they serve (e.g., Kohli, 2009; Philip, 2014; Picower, 2009). The findings of this dissertation present another way to understand whiteness as property, from the perspective of teachers of color who work alongside mostly white teachers. During ‘race space’ CPD, teachers discussed whiteness as property in terms of the differences in the instructional materials and resources that white teachers possessed in the Parquet Public School District, as compared to the materials that teachers of color possessed in
the same district. Specifically, Shay saw whiteness as property, and identified whiteness in a mere artifact, such as Post-it chart paper. Shay and Gigi described their personal experiences as teachers in schools, and with colleagues, that revealed differential privileges and benefits, or lack thereof, based on race. Shay insisted that she does not receive access to Post-it chart paper “Because they want to oppress our kids” (Session 7). In other words, Shay believed that racialized lack of access to resources is intricately bound up in the oppression of students of color in schools. Shay and Gigi construct racial identity as having access to certain material and property, and they described personal experiences, in schools and with colleagues, which revealed differential privileges and benefits—or lack thereof—based on racial identity and one’s relationship, and solidarity, with racialized people.

A recurrent theme in educational literature is how teachers of color may experience racism from white colleagues in schools. Moreover, educational literature often compares working-class urban schools to middle-class suburban schools, in terms of inequitable resources. However, rarely do we discuss inequitable racialized access, and ownership of materials and space, in any given school, as experienced by teachers of color. And even when we do, how can we prepare teachers for the hidden gatekeepers within schools, who claim ownership of public spaces within schools? For example, Shay expressed how another (white) teacher at her school would not “allow” her and her students to use the computer lab, a communal space. Moreover, teachers are judged by the aesthetic quality of their classrooms and by the instructional materials that they use. So, what does it mean when one simply does not have access or cannot afford to such materials? And, how are teachers of color from working-class backgrounds, who are in the process of transitioning to the middle class, able to afford such materials? More importantly, what does social justice and racial equity look like among teacher colleagues in any given
school? What is equity and what is equality, as related to the students they teach and instructional resources within the same school district, within the same school?

**Complicating racial learning.** We must be in constant critical race praxis, where we actively work towards antiracist practices for students of color (Stovall, 2011; Stovall et al., 2009). In essence, racial learning must prompt humanizing and emphatic interactions between teachers and students of color. While Gigi, Shay, and Josh displayed sophisticated levels of racial literacy, they needed support in cultivating their racial literacy in responding to the racial consciousness of students of color. This need was evident in dialogic exchanges where teachers grappled with their racial identity, as they unpacked the racialized comments of students of color. Josh’s responses to students of color revealed that, even when teachers are willing to engage in social justice teaching and take up race and racism, they still need support in cultivating their racial literacy. A critical discourse analysis of Josh, Shay, and Gigi’s dialogue during the consciousness-raising exercise revealed that their racial literacy was being cultivated. Through this consciousness-raising exercise, we prioritized the racialized experiences of students of color, in order to examine the relationship between racial identity and racism, as CRT advises.

Racial learning became more complicated within ‘race space’ CPD during dialogue around one’s intimate and personal relationships with people of color. While Gigi displayed sophisticated levels of racial literacy, her claim to have a Black card was unsettling. Gigi has real intimate and personal relationships with people of color. However, there exists a tension in not thinking critically about race and racism, and how they operate in society, even if one is related to, or in relationships with, people of color. Moreover, it is unclear who granted Gigi the “Black card.” Even so, does this mean she is not white? The complication of people in relation to others
was evident in racial understandings expressed. Sadly, even with a “Black card”, Gigi actually maintained the racist status quo through her nonteaching of students of color.

Shay further developed Jalen’s (second grader from the consciousness-raising exercise) interpretation of who is white. White people who are unwilling to surrender their privileges are truly white, according to Shay. Interestingly, this point was never taken up or explored further during ‘race space’ CPD, and I wondered the extent to which Josh and Gigi would be willing to do this. What privileges would white folks who are committed to social justice be willing to surrender? Josh’s and Gigi’s racial literacy was cultivated through the tension between being conscious of their historical (and current) racial position as members of an oppressor group, and not constructing themselves—as individuals—as oppressors. As Shay jested about Josh, as related to whiteness as a social construct, “He’s already white. He doesn’t want to be extra white” (Session 6). “Extra white” is holding onto all of the privileges, power, and property that whiteness brings.

**On Facilitation: The Endarkened Feminist Epistemology of a Black Feminist Pedagogue**

Rarely do teacher educators who facilitate professional development discuss the interaction between what teachers already know, and what they are trying to “teach” them. Increasingly important is what facilitators themselves learn in working with teachers, and how this can inform not only their future work with teachers, but also their own social justice ideological becoming, and racial literacy cultivation. As a Black feminist pedagogue, armed with endarkened feminist epistemologies, it was evident that my work with teachers during ‘race space’ CPD further cultivated my own racial literacy, and supported my overall social justice ideological becoming. It was important that I was thoughtful and responsive to their stated and unstated needs. Moreover, it was important that I kept the overall purpose of the PD at the
forefront. I realized that this PD not only aimed to improve the educative experiences of students of color, but to improve their schooling experiences as well. Failing to pick up on the complexity of teachers committed to social justice and their learning raises the likelihood of failing to respond to their needs, to the detriment of students of color.

Certainly, the field of teacher professional development needs more studies of facilitators, facilitation processes, and the politics and ideologies advanced by facilitators (Molle, 2013). The ever-present and historical experiences of Black women, as an intersectional marginalized group, can shed light on the nuances, complexity, and intricacies of people as they learn within the context of ‘race space’ CPD. Furthermore, situating endarkened feminist epistemology in CRT interrogates the theoretical implications of the relationship between *I*-researcher and *them*-researched in studies of race in education. My standpoint on the nuances of my reality helped me to humanize—and empathize with—the complexity of the experienced realities of others. Black feminist pedagogues operate from their whole beings, from their hearts and spirits, from a place of love, and *in* community with others (Dillard, 2000, 2012; hooks, 1994). I affirmed Gigi’s anger at being targeted by the school district for her community activism. Still, as a Black feminist pedagogue, I was compelled to move forward, and to labor for the good of my community and myself (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1994), and challenge her to teach *in spite of*. Black feminist pedagogues work for the good of humanity and for the liberation of all peoples (Collins, 1998, 2000; Henry, 2005; Joseph, 1988; Omolade, 1987). Employing Black feminist methodologies, characteristics, and stances, this dissertation provides empirical evidence as to why Black feminism and endarkened feminist epistemologies are important, as we think about how to support teachers in teaching students of color and in working with colleagues, especially those of color.
The structure of this ‘race space’ CPD allowed teachers to play a role in shaping the direction and focus of the PD. As the facilitator, I listened to teachers and worked with them to shape this space, based on their needs in the areas of racial literacy, social justice teaching, classroom practice, and curriculum planning. For example, we engaged in a consciousness-raising exercise, based on one classroom observation I had done of Josh teaching a social justice focused unit on Egypt to his class of Black boys. My hope for this consciousness-raising exercise was that Josh, Shay, and Gigi would grapple with their responses to students’ of color comments about racist white people, and consider how their racial identity shaped their responses. After sharing the narrative, I expressed that I was conscious of how my racial identity as a Black woman shaped how I felt, and how I was positioned, in teaching a class of mostly white women. Therefore, I needed to be mindful of how I responded. As the facilitator of ‘race space’ CPD, it was important that I modeled the type of hard reflective racial work that I expected the teachers to do.

During my facilitation of ‘race space’ CPD, my own struggles in urging my master level students to engage in social justice teaching, as a teacher educator of color, were weighing on me. I felt comfortable enough with the teachers to be transparent about my frustration, and the sentiments of hopelessness that I had towards this group of students. I was perplexed that my efforts to engage in social justice teaching, and to encourage other teachers to teach for social justice, were not bearing fruit. Josh challenged me to remember why I chose to encourage elementary teachers to engage in social justice teaching in the first place, which connected to why I choose to create and facilitate ‘race space’ CPD. It is important for Black feminist pedagogues to remember why we do what we do, as others will not always appreciate, and may even resist, our efforts. The resistance that I was receiving was to be expected because I was
challenging my master students’ identities and long held beliefs. It was clear that I was no longer just the facilitator and expert; I was also a participant grappling with my own social justice ideological becoming, and my own journey to center social justice in my teaching. I was vulnerable in sharing these struggles, and my attempts to work through them.

Challenges and challenging as facilitator. A. J. Rodriguez et al. (2005) described the difficulties of managing frustrations as facilitators, when working with teachers who lack a sense of urgency to improve their classroom practice, in teaching students of color. One of their biggest frustrations was when teachers did not make good on acting towards the professional goals that they themselves articulated at the beginning of the project. I was really angry and frustrated with Gigi saying that she was bored multiple times. Similar to Anyon (1994), at times I felt helpless as a facilitator, considering all of the larger issues present in each school, and within the district. Still, as a Black woman, I felt a sense of urgency and labor that was distinct from the solidarity of “we” as collective. Thus, hearing Gigi complain about being bored, and observing the nonteaching that was happening, angered me. Anger can be used to provoke others to act for social justice (Lorde, 1984). I could not understand how Gigi could be such a strong community activist, claiming to want to enact social justice teaching, and all the while not seeking out instructional coaching from me to do so. Pennington et al. (2012) called for “the need to understand and privilege the needs of the cared for (students of color) over the needs of the ones caring (White teachers)” (pp. 766-767). Gigi did not seem to center the educational needs of her students, though she is well aware of structural racism. Moreover, Gigi amplified her individual situation, instead of examining how she is complicit in systemic oppression. Additionally, Gigi saying she had a “Black card” confused me. Since we are both woman, are we the same now, because she has a “Black card”? While Gigi has established deep personal relationships with
Black people throughout her life, Blackness is not a commodity to be granted to someone. As previously stated, it is unclear as to whether Black people granted Gigi a “Black card”, or whether she granted it to herself because of her relation to Black people.

Overall, I attempted to push the teachers further by stating “No, give kids a good education, and give them the freedom to do what they want to do” (Session 8). As a Black feminist pedagogue, I attempted to push them beyond equitable education within the existing system, towards reimagining what schools could be. My move here was not only an attempt to cultivate their racial literacy, but also an attempt to cultivate social justice ideological becoming. I employed endarkened feminist epistemologies, and embodied Black feminist pedagogy, in order to evoke a radical educational imagination for Black children. I argued against just working to prepare students for participation in the existing system. Additionally, as the facilitator, I challenged them on their beliefs. As facilitator, I urged the teachers to connect their social justice teaching to meaning-making, with intentional curriculum planning, as well as being sensitive to organic social justice teachable moments as they arise in their classrooms. I rebutted Gigi’s concern that social justice teaching, when characterized as going off on a tangent, is not content rich, and is exclusive of the content that will be tested. In this instance, and others, I fervently worked to promote being intentional about social justice teaching, through thoughtful and purposeful curriculum planning that centers social justice.

Through my observation of a character development program at another school, I implied that there was a tension within ‘race space’ CPD, in terms of focusing on behavior management instead of social justice curriculum and teaching. Moreover, my observation suggests that schools (and teachers) that focus on “fixing” students of color, seeing them as “problem”, avoid their own problem: weak, unengaging, meaningless curriculum and teaching. As the facilitator, I
struggled to push teachers beyond classroom management during the dialogic exchanges, but they still supported each other in discussing various management strategies and approaches. When teachers did not engage in social justice curriculum planning, and instead exchanged test prep strategies, it complicated the practice and notion of co-facilitation, because time was not being used in the ways teachers themselves stated that they needed.

Even as a Black feminist pedagogue with endarkened feminist epistemologies, I still did not always “get it right”, in terms of facilitation. While I am ashamed to admit this, it is evident that I missed Shay’s point in my dismissal of her association of Post-it chart paper with white people. In doing so, I did not prioritize the distinctive racialized experiences of Shay as a person of color, in order to examine how race and racism operate. Shay’s consistent association of the materials that I offered her with whiteness clearly annoyed me. As a Black feminist pedagogue, I did not want to be associated with whiteness in any way. I wonder what Shay needed in this moment. It seems as if she needed to be affirmed in her experiences.

**Implications**

**Teacher Professional Development**

‘Race space’ CPD was not district mandated professional development. Gigi, Josh, and Shay all chose to participate in ‘race space’ CPD. It must be noted that their administrators and colleagues hold Josh, Gigi, and Shay in high regard as teachers. Their voluntary participation in this research project, and their view of their participation as “an opportunity”, as Josh put it, is a testament to their desire to continue to grow in their teaching craft. If teachers like these exist, should districts really be mandating PD which is unresponsive to the real needs of teachers? As various scholars (Little, 1989; Powell et al., 1992) have advised, these teachers had autonomy and choice in the professional development that they received through this research project.
Creators of professional development should follow this example in terms of allowing participant choice and autonomy in this way.

Without a doubt, teacher autonomy and choice shaped their commitment to participating, and their willingness to be vulnerable, in ways that made their complexities more visible. Moreover, studies of teacher professional development revealed that teachers articulate the type of professional development that they need (Abu El-Haj, 2003; Irby et al., 2013; L. L. Johnson et al., 2018; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Powell et al., 1992). These studies argued that teacher perspectives should help to shape professional development. There were many instances in which Josh helped to shape the direction and focus of ‘race space’ CPD. His suggestions were based on the realities of practicing teachers trying to enact social justice teaching, and to engage in social justice curriculum planning, within the constraints of public schooling. As Anyon (1994) and Kinloch and Dixon (2018) argued, teacher professional development must acknowledge and consider the realities of professional practice in order to be effective. Firstly, we should not assume that teachers know nothing about the topics we are presenting on. In the same ways that we ask teachers to be responsive to student needs, PD should be responsive to teacher needs.

During his second interview, Josh shared that he appreciated the small group setting, where there was trust and mutual respect. This project accomplished a trusting space by providing in-depth support and professional development to teachers who work mostly with students of color. We should return to the roots of teachers continuing their education through small group inquiries, as opposed to these massive “Staff Developments”, or district mandated PD sessions. Within these small groups, there should also be space for teachers to unpack their personal lives, teaching, and school realities, before jumping into what they need to learn. We
should also provide teachers with space to plan and create after they have had enough time to grapple with PD content, and the ideas it advanced. Implications include extended time and space in professional development initiatives for learning around race, racism and social justice. In order for these spaces to actualize, there has to be trust and mutual respect between the teachers themselves, and between teachers and facilitators.

**Teacher Education Programs**

To achieve racial justice in schools for students of color, teacher education programs must recruit and sustain more faculty of color and preservice teachers of color (Kohli, 2009; Merseth et al., 2008; Philip, 2014; Picower, 2009; Wilder, 2000). Even then, this research study challenges teacher education programs, and those concerned with the long-term professional development of teachers, to rethink how they support teachers in urban schools. Learning about race in teacher education programs means more than taking a single class on multiculturalism; what needs to be understood is the how to learn about race in ways that impact classroom practice. Many of my masters students shared that my course was the first time they had learned about critical frameworks. Students should not only learn about these topics through the labor of teacher educators of color. White teacher educators should center race, racism, and social justice in their instruction as well.

**Urban Public-School Teachers**

This research is important because teachers and educators are at the center of battles between white supremacy and antiracism: as textbook writers/reviewers, as plaintiffs in court cases, and as agents in schools and classrooms. This project also challenges urban teachers to re-imagine how they act in schools, urging them to “do” school differently, in the sense of honoring students, and teaching them in meaningful ways. When teachers are unprepared to teach for
social justice, they may advance dominant historical narratives and deficit perspectives, which are ultimately harmful to students of color. Through this project, teachers were provided with a space to process and understand their own racial identity, and to learn how race and racism function in schools, in order to teach for social justice. In addition, teachers were able to grapple with how their commitment to social justice translated into classroom practice. Teachers must teach students, no matter what their teaching situation is, because the students are the ones who suffer when they do not teach. Moreover, some teachers are adamant that it would be excessively challenging to engage in social justice teaching in their schooling contexts, as promoted during professional development (DeMulder et al., 2009; Phillips & Hollingsworth, 2005; Young, 2010). Still, urban public school teachers must be in critical race praxis around what it means to teach in the most equitable manner, within an inequitable system.

**School Administrators**

Strikingly, Young (2010) found that district pressures to improve test scores hindered teacher application of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). While the district expressed a desire for CRP, they required teachers to use scripted curriculum that compromised their ability to do so. Undoubtedly, it is important that the entire school is on board, and helps to implement anti-racist training, in order for it to be successful (Scanlan, 2010). Indeed, principal support is a powerful factor in such initiatives. Teachers need to be supported by their administrators, in order for change that is in the interest of social justice to occur (Scanlan, 2010; Young, 2010). Vaught and Castagno (2008) maintained that the districts in their study overall were unwilling to address the prevalent structural racism, and instead blamed individual teachers, and pathology among teachers, for the subpar education that students of color were experiencing. Assuredly, an unwillingness to change on the districts’ part stifles teacher change.
As school districts and administrators work towards structural changes, they should seek out opportunities for small group professional development for their staff— as this is most effective, and follows the historical tradition of teachers continuing their education— with facilitators over a long period. Specifically, they should seek out professional development dealing with race and racism in schools, as well as in day-to-day, moment-by-moment interactions with students of color. These interactions are informed by our limited understandings of how racism is enacted, as school personnel simultaneously resistant to, and complicit in, the oppressive nature of school. New strategies around teaching content will not be valid if we who practice them are also enacting oppression and racism, and if we do not unearth the ways in which we fail students of color on a quotidian basis. Educators must not only do better; we must do our best, evoking radical imaginations of the educational possibilities of our most marginalized students. Josh, for one, stated he believed that schools are unwilling to put in the hard work and long hours of reimagining, deconstructing, and then reconstructing, curriculum and teaching practices.

**Educational Researchers**

The field of educational research needs more studies around how to create productive structures for having complicated conversations about race. Current events have shown that race, racism, and social justice are subjects that can no longer be avoided. Moreover, Hyland (2005) charged social justice researchers to “find ways to work with small groups of teachers in intense long-term partnerships to begin to counter the racism that is embedded in the schools in which they teach and even within their own definitions of successful teaching” (p. 458). We need more studies that detail the nuances of being responsive to the stated, and unstated, needs of teachers. Moreover, we need more research on facilitators, and how their positionality influences teachers’
racial learning. Researchers must make apparent teacher learning around these topics, in a way that directly translates into classroom practice, if it is ever to truly benefit students of color.

**Limitations**

One limitation of this study is that it does not compare ‘race space’ CPD to Parquet Public School District mandated PD. Such a comparison would show how ‘race space’ CPD supported teachers differently from the culturally responsive district trainings they were receiving. According to Little (1989), “Teachers’ opportunities for intellectual growth and career advancement are bound closely to the conceptions of teaching and professional development held by districts” (p. 168). Furthermore, bureaucratic control of professional development “denies the growth of a professional culture” (Powell et al., 1992, p. 282) among teachers.

Another limitation of this study is time. It may take more time for ‘race space’ CPD to influence the classroom practice of teachers. Some teachers, like Josh, jump right in and implement their learning immediately. Others, like Gigi, need time to process before implementing their learning in the classroom. Shay wanted specific strategies, but still engaged in impromptu social justice teaching. In essence, each teacher had different ways of processing and enacting their learning.

**Future Directions for this Research Study**

At this stage of my research study, I hope to engage in data analysis of each teacher as a separate case, in order to detail their individual racial literacy, social justice ideological becoming, and how they enacted social justice teaching over time. I wonder how do we not become complicit—and help people not be complicit—when immersed in such an oppressive institution as school. In addition, I want to detail each teacher’s role in shaping the space. I am interested in how my definition of social justice ideological becoming compares to how social
justice ideological becoming manifested differently for each person in the study. I am also interested in studying the role book club played in cultivating the racial literacy and social justice ideological becoming of teachers. In essence, how did book club influence ‘race space’ CPD? Lastly, I am interested in how each of us employed narrative to display and/or reject racial literacy cultivation, and social justice ideological becoming.

**Conclusion**

Schools cannot simply give lip service to social justice goals; they must reform and restructure schools so that they are humanizing and transformative spaces for both students and teachers. To do so, we must attract, retain, and support teachers who are committed to social justice, teachers who care about the most marginalized students. Leaving those teachers to fend for themselves because they can “handle” the students is unsustainable. They are isolated and become weary. We must provide those teachers humanizing support.

This research takes social justice and racial theories, ideologies, and research, and compares them to classroom practice, providing an important connection between educational scholarship and classroom practice that has not been clearly visible in the past. This work is significant, because it will inform the field of teacher professional development of the support teachers committed to social justice urgently need; teacher learning over time as it translates to classroom practice; and the types of social justice education that urban students desire, or require.

As a researcher, I desire to work for educational transformation, in ways that hold me accountable to the subjects of my research. With this in mind, I dream of a world where the educational experiences of marginalized students translate into their actual lives, in ways that prompt them/us, to transform the world. In order for this to happen, we need educators who are
willing to take on this challenge, by reimagining how they act in schools. In essence, we need educators who “do” school differently. If we focus on cultivating racial literacy and social justice ideological becoming among practicing teachers, then students of color may be able to experience more just, and transformative, schooling.
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Appendix A

Teacher Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your family.
2. Tell me about your community.
3. Tell me about your K-12 schooling experiences.
4. How would you describe the person you were then?
5. What was going on in your life then?
6. If you recall, could you tell me how you learned to handle race and racism?
7. How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about race and racism changed since then?
8. What is your educational philosophy?
9. Tell me about your teaching experiences.
10. Could you describe the events or circumstances that led up to you working at this school?
11. Could you describe a typical day of teaching?
12. Could you describe the type of support you desire as a teacher?
13. What social justice issues are you most passionate about and why?
14. Tell me how you go about teaching for social justice. What do you do?
15. What is your understanding of social justice, critical literacy, and social action?
16. How would you describe your engagement with social justice and social action in and outside of school?
17. Tell me about your interactions with people of color in and outside of school.
18. Describe the teacher you hope to be two years from now.

Last Interview

19. Could you tell me about how your views on teaching for social justice may have changed since you have participated in the ‘race space’ CPD?
20. What do you think are the most important ways to support teachers who espouse social justice?
21. Could you tell me about how your curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches, and social action many have changed since you participated in the ‘race space’ CPD?
22. Do you plan to continue this work? If so, how?
Appendix B

Student Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about how you see yourself.
2. How do others see you?
3. Tell me about your family.
4. Tell me about your community.
5. Tell me about your schooling experiences.
6. Have you had any experiences with race and racism in and outside of school? If so, tell me about them. If not, say more about that.
7. If you recall, could you tell me how you learned to handle race and racism?
8. How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about race and racism changed since then?
9. Could you describe the type of education you believe you deserve?
10. Could you describe the events or circumstances that led up to you attending this school?
11. Could you describe a typical day in X’s class?
12. Thinking about X’s class, are you receiving an education? Can you explain what you mean?
13. Could you describe the type of support you desire as a student?
14. What social justice issues are you most passionate about and why?
15. Tell me how you go about fighting for these issues. What do you do?
16. What is your understanding of social justice, critical literacy, and social action?
17. How would you describe your engagement with social justice and social action in and outside of school?
18. Tell me about your interactions with white people in and outside of school.
19. Describe the person you hope to be two years from now.

Middle and End

20. Could you tell me about how your views on social justice and education may have changed over the course of the school year?
21. What do you think are the most important ways to support students in receiving a social justice education?
22. Have you noticed any changes in X’s teaching? If so, tell me about them. If not, tell me what has stayed the same.
23. Is there something else you think I should know to understand X’s class better?
Appendix C

Teacher Pre- and Post-Questionnaire

Name: _________________________
Date: _________________________

1. What is social justice education?

2. What does it mean to teach for social justice?

3. How does an understanding of social justice influence curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches, and social action?

4. What is racial justice in classrooms?

5. What does it mean to teach for racial justice?

*The post-questionnaire will include the five questions in addition to the sixth question listed below.

6. How, if at all, does a ‘race space’ CPD support social justice understandings, racial justice in classrooms, and social action?