

LEARNING TO WALK THE WALK: NARRATIVE EXPLORATION OF  
DIVERSITY TRAINING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Today's higher education classrooms are made up of an increasingly wide variety of students with varying life and cultural influences, learning styles, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and spiritual beliefs. A large and increasing proportion of the student population in the United States come from homes that are culturally and linguistically diverse. If the benefits of diversity in higher education are to be realized, close attention must be paid to the institutional context in which diversity is enacted. While it is well established that the ability of teachers to build cultural awareness is a critical aspect of their work, especially in urban and highly diverse settings, the kinds of experiences that help them build cultural awareness is less clear. In an effort to advance the research relative to diversity training and the use of culturally responsive pedagogy among faculty in higher education, this research uncovers the lived experience of one faculty's participation in a diversity training program. Specifically, this study seeks to explore the experiences of a White female participating in a diversity training workshop in terms of the development of her personal practical knowledge. The premise of this dissertation is that this White teacher

was able to build cultural awareness as a result of using narrative inquiry self-study as a mechanism for self-discovery. The author learns about her own racial identity and about the role that her personal values, beliefs, and attitudes play in her personal and professional interactions with respect to the needs of students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. Insights gained into the influential role of faculty development in developing the teaching pedagogy of faculty is also presented. Insights gained from this research serve to inform faculty and administration about one White female faculty member's experiences with diversity and culturally responsive professional development.

## APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled “Learning to Walk the Walk: Narrative Exploration of Diversity Training for Higher Education Teaching,” presented by Lorie Holt, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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I am excited to finally be able to write these lines. For me, it means the finish line is so near in this very long journey. There are many days that I—and others—didn't believe it would come. The pursuit of my Ph.D. degree and the completion of this dissertation is a true testament to perseverance and never giving up.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mom and dad, Donald and Mary Peuser, neither of whom attended college. My dad was especially proud of the fact that I was the first in our family to attend college and graduate with not one but eventually four degrees. My mom, while not always as enthusiastic about my decision to work full time and attend college—

feeling I was doing so at the expense of spending more time with her and my own family— came to understand my intentions in earning an advanced degree. Both were alive when I started my doctoral studies, but neither were alive to witness my graduation. I believe in my heart that they were my two strongest supporters and would be very proud of the person and the scholar I have become.

It goes without saying that none of my accomplishments would have been possible without the support of my husband Steve and our three children, Marlo, Ryan, and Kyle. I hope they all have learned from me that learning is a lifelong pursuit and that most all things can be achieved with hard work and perseverance, no matter your age.

## PREFACE

As with many people who aspire to earn an advanced degree, education has had a consistent and persistent presence in my life. Some know exactly what they want to do from a very early age. Others take the longer and more adventurous journey in an effort to decide what they want to do when they grow up. I am one of those others. My journey has been a long and winding road that has taken me in many different directions. While bumpy at times, that road has never taken me down a dead end; I am continuously learning something new about myself and my future.

Growing up in a rural community as the daughter of a farmer and stay-at-home mom, I had (what I perceived as) one of the best childhoods anyone could ask for. My family was poor by society standards, but I had no idea. I lived in a tight-knit rural farming community. Kids sometimes missed school so they could help their families with harvest. Life was about faith, family, and working hard to earn a living. For me, attending was fun. While I was not the brightest of students, I certainly welcomed the opportunity to be around my friends. Because I lived in a rural community and attended a small school with a student population of less than 400, all of my classmates had lives similar to mine, or at least I thought they did. I lived a simple childhood.

From the moment that my high school counselor advised my parents not to send me to college, as I was “not cut out for it,” I knew education would be a priority in my life. I would be a potential first-generation college student. My pursuit of a higher education was exploratory at first. By the time I decided to become a health care professional and complete my Associate’s degree, I had already completed more than enough hours to earn a Bachelor’s degree. After years of study, I said, “no more.” I distinctly recall telling my peers

there was no way I was ever going back to school. Thus came lesson number one: Never say never.

When I entered the teaching profession, I found myself in a world for which I had little preparation. My tenure as a faculty member has taught me so much about the profession of health care and has taught me even more about the profession of teaching. I started out as a health care professional who teaches. Through my many experiences, both good and bad, I am now an educator who teaches about the health professions.

As an educator, I learn as much from my students as I hope they learn from me. When I was new to teaching, I found myself educating students in a manner that was much like what I had experienced as a student. My previous experiences as a student were strict and directive. I learned a number of lessons about teaching the hard way, and I am sorry to say they were often at the expense of my students. It is with the help of many years of teaching experience that I have come to understand just how little I actually knew about teaching. Like most others in higher education, I was hired for my content expertise rather than for my teaching expertise. I, along with others, have struggled to understand the relationship between my own personal teaching styles and the learning needs of my students.

Who we are has everything to do with our teaching, learning, and practice. While it might be true that we as teachers are responsible for teaching specific content and that the student must demonstrate acquisition of that knowledge, the process by which we teach the student is a direct result of our own personal perspectives and practical knowledge and experiences (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). I have come to recognize that there are many ways to teach explicit and implicit knowledge to our students, and that no one way

works for all students. This has led me to understand the role cultural awareness can play in the educational process.

My journey towards becoming a culturally aware individual has been an informative one. I have always been fascinated with human behavior and interaction. My first real exposure to individuals different from myself came when I was 17 years old and started working as a performer at a local amusement park. In this environment I worked with individuals who were different from me in race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation and whose experiences were different from mine growing up in a rural community. It was an enlightening time, and one of the best and most exciting of my life.

My journey in learning more about cultural diversity continued with my participation in several workshops that piqued my interests. Following these first experiences, I immersed myself in the literature on teaching and learning and tried to absorb as much as I could about the topic. At the time, there was a call in the healthcare profession to develop culturally competent healthcare providers, so my personal interests dovetailed nicely with the needs of my profession. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to learn from some very wise individuals about what it means to be culturally aware. My most defining moment came when I learned about the concept of “White privilege” (McIntosh, 1988). I can remember exactly where I was in the classroom. We were sitting in a circle and were sharing stories about what we knew about Martin Luther King and what he stood for. Of course, I had little real knowledge or understanding of Martin Luther King and was nervous about speaking. Most of the students in the classroom were students of color. I was one of the few White females in the class, and I was certainly the oldest of the students. The faculty member who was teaching the class was what I perceived to be as a strong, smart Black woman who had

great stories about what it meant to be a Black woman in another country and in the United States. When she suggested to me and others in the class that the reason we likely did not understand the significance of Martin Luther King was because of the White privilege that we experience every day of our lives, I was dumbfounded. This concept called “White privilege” impacted me profoundly. I took the realization of my own personal privilege of being a White female so personally that I was moved to tears. I felt a sense of great shame come over me. From that moment forward I conceptualized all that I did, said, and thought in a different way. I am so thankful that I had this “aha” moment, because it has helped me to become a more thoughtful and respectful person and teacher.

As an educator, I think we all would like to believe that we can make a difference in our students’ lives. The reality of the situation is that many of us do, but not in the manner that we might hope for. In order to be effective educators and role models to our students, we must understand that we most certainly need to concern ourselves with who our students are and what makes each of them unique human beings (Ladson-Billings, 2006a). Whether or not you believe that race, gender, class, language, or religion belong in the classroom, the fact is that they do exist, and to ignore them is a disservice to the students (McIntosh, 1988). Acknowledging and respecting the characteristics that make up who we are and who our students are can only aid us in being effective and successful teachers and students of life.

A very wise faculty member once said to the class, “You are either a racist or you’re a recovering racist.” While at the time that struck a nerve, I would like to believe that I have risen above being a racist. Deep down, I knew that statement to be true. The choices that we make as educators, our words and our actions, shape our students in ways that are limited only by our imagination.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Today's higher education classrooms are made up of an increasingly wide variety of students with varying life and cultural influences, learning styles, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and spiritual beliefs. Enrollment in degree-granting institutions increased by 27% between 2000 and 2017 (NCES, 2019), with the percentage increase in the number of students age 25 and over being larger than the percentage increase in the number of younger students. The percentage of males and females making up undergraduate enrollment were similar: 44% and 56% respectively. However, the number of females in post-baccalaureate programs has exceeded the number of males (NCES, 2019). Simultaneously, the browning of college classrooms has occurred. The percentage of American college students who are LatinX, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, or American Indian/Alaska Native continues to increase with the LatinX population of students growing the most (NCES, 2019). College completion rates vary widely along racial and ethnic lines, with Black and LatinX students earning credentials at much lower rates than White and Asian students—a trend that has seen little change in the last decade (Shapiro et al., 2019).

A large and increasing proportion of the student population in the United States comes from homes that are culturally and linguistically diverse (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). This demographic change has created cause for concern, as research suggests that a student's race, ethnicity, cultural background, and other variables (e.g., poverty, religious beliefs, gender, and educational preparation) significantly influence student achievement (Harry & Klingner, 2006; Orosco & Klingner 2010; Skiba et al., 2011). While most

literature on academic inequalities focuses on students in the primary and secondary grades, these inequities also exist in higher education.

If the benefits of diversity in higher education are to be realized, close attention must be paid to the institutional context in which diversity is enacted (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). In other words, it is not enough to simply bring together a diverse group of students, although this is an important first step in creating opportunities for students to learn from diversity. Beyond bringing students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds together, campuses are challenged with providing learning environments and course work that promote cross-cultural and collaborative learning opportunities. Courses covering historical, cultural, and social bases of diversity and community and opportunities for students to interact across racial and other social differences are critical to the success of developing cultural competency (Milem et al., 2005). A widely held view in higher education is that racial diversity has a positive and strong effect on students' levels of cultural awareness and their development of democratic citizenship (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002).

Students also bring with them some notions of culture that often serve to influence their lived experiences with the college environment. Several definitions of culture may reflect their views. Gay (2010) explained culture as referring to a “dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives others” (p. 9). Berry and Candis (2013) regarded culture as “events (singularly or collectively engaged) specific to a group of individuals with shared beliefs, values, traditions, customs, practices, and language” (p. 44). On the other hand, Nieto (2010) made the point that culture is always changing. She defined culture as “the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and

worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class and religion” (p. 136). Adams’ (1992) early definition of culture captures the influence of culture and learning for students in a classroom setting at every level by suggesting that:

Culture plays a part in shaping the ways in which students learn and communicate, how they relate to their peers and instructors, their motivation levels, and their sense of what is worth learning. . . . It is important that educators become aware of the ways in which the traditional classroom culture excludes or constrains learning for some students and learn how to create environments that acknowledge the cultural diversity that new students bring. (p. 7)

While this passage targets the perceptions of students, this same passage could be applied to faculty as they try to adapt to an ever-changing academic environment, suggesting that experience can be seen as curriculum. How students respond, engage in, or learn from events, people, and their environment can all be viewed as curriculum (Pinnegar & Erickson, 2010). Culture is central to learning and plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking processes of individuals (Ladson-Billings, 1994a). “Culture is at the heart of all we do in education, whether that is curriculum, instruction, administration, or performance assessment” (Gay, 2010, p. 8). For purposes of this inquiry, culture refers to the dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives, as well as the lives of others (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). While this reference to culture is somewhat dated, its essence can be found in more recent definitions of culture and it captures the spirit of what culture is inside and outside of the classroom.

## **The Problem**

The term culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) is used here to refer to “students who may be distinguished from the mainstream culture by ethnicity, social class, and /or language” (Perez, 1998, p. 6). As such, this term may refer to students who are from racially/ethnically underrepresented groups, students whose primary language is not English, and students who have low socio-economic status or who differ from the mainstream culture in any way. CLD students bring their own collection of values, priorities, experiences, and knowledge into the classroom (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009, Ladson-Billings, 2006a). Moreover, graduation rates continue to remain lowest for those populations farthest culturally from the pedagogical practices utilized by most faculty in U.S. colleges today (Shapiro et al., 2019).

In the early 1970s, Bourdieu penned the theory of social reproduction in which he introduced the idea of cultural capital to explain social inequalities in society (Bourdieu, 1973). “Cultural capital, comprising the norms, values and practices of society, is like economic capital, a resource that can be used. It includes for example, informal interpersonal skills, habits, manners, linguistics, educational credentials, and lifestyle preferences” (Zepke & Leach, 2007, p. 657). Students with easy access to the various sources of capital, specifically cultural capital, often fare better in academia (Dumais & Ward, 2010). Students who by virtue of their ethnicity, age, gender, socio-economic status, lifestyle, and beliefs, who do not hold appropriate cultural capital, are at risk of experiencing cultural disjunctions. When students’ cultural practices are viewed as inappropriate or different, they are likely to experience stress and discontinuity. Bennett (2001) found that when CLD students had a high cultural identity, the impact of academic problems was

minimized, helping the students to persist and attain their education. Testa and Egan (2014) highlighted that the experiences of CLD social work students in Australia included struggles with English fluency, and many participants expressed a lack of familiarity with local knowledge and values, a lack of grounding in Western conceptual frameworks, and an unfamiliarity with academic discourse as reasons they struggled in their academic pursuits. Outcomes of this research also suggest that traditional, individualistic teaching and learning pedagogy taught exclusively through the lens of a Western paradigm could have the potential to disadvantage CLD students' progress through their studies.

CLD students claim that teachers' practices influence their persistence in higher education (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007). Yorks (2004) reported that around a quarter of 2,151 student participants in a United Kingdom study felt their unhappiness with teaching and personal support influenced their decisions to depart early. Astin (1993a) suggested that student orientation towards teachers and teaching "produces more substantial direct effects on student outcomes, almost more than any other environmental variable" (p. 342). Prebble and colleagues (2004) identified teaching and teachers as key retention factors in numerous studies, while Kim, Collins, Rennick and Edens (2017) examined how international students, as compared to their domestic peers, tended to report less satisfaction with the quality of instruction and courses in their major. In this same study, learning involvement appeared to have the most positive and consistent effect across the measured outcomes, revealing that students' engagement in classroom activity was positively associated with cognitive skill development, interpersonal skill development, and civic attitudes. Outcomes of this study suggest that academic engagement with faculty and CLD students improves academic outcomes.

While most literature on academic inequalities focuses on students in the primary and secondary grades, these inequities also exist in higher education. Howard (2006) suggested that three statistical realities are currently intersecting in academia:

(1) our teacher workforce is mostly White, (2) our student population is highly diverse and growing in students of color, and (3) students of color are precisely the students most at risk of being caught on the negative end of the achievement gap. (p. 4)

Ibarra (2001) supported this notion, suggesting that CLD students described often having to negotiate environments that are inconsistent with their own ways of learning, cultural norms, and personal priorities.

Addressing the unique needs of CLD students is one of the many challenges facing educators today. Most teachers are inadequately prepared and have minimal relevant content knowledge, experience, or training to address CLD students' unique learning needs (Au, 2009). This inadequate preparation can create a cultural gap between teachers and students, and it can limit educators' abilities to choose effective instructional practices to meet the needs of CLD students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Shultz, Neyhart and Reck (1996) found that White teachers in the United States have very limited experiences with diverse populations and that they frequently perceive diversity in a negative way. Gay and Howard (2000) also spoke about the potentially harmful ramifications of educators who fail to acknowledge, embrace, and incorporate diversity into the fabric of their teaching: "If educators continue to be ignorant of, ignore, impugn, and silence the cultural orientations, values and performance styles of ethnically different students, they will persist in imposing cultural hegemony, personal denigration, educational inequity and academic underachievement upon them" (p. 25).

It is well documented that many faculty members do not feel adequately prepared to infuse diversity topics into their courses and curriculum (Ambe, 2006; Sleeter, 2008). They also often feel unprepared to address emotionally and socially difficult issues surrounding the topics of diversity that arise in the classroom. Ambe (2006) also suggested that most faculty members' resistance to transforming pedagogy is not based on racism or classism but rather on a lack of knowledge about its execution. It has been suggested that the most important responsibility of individual faculty members is to enhance the student learning experience (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Without engagement among faculty, most top-down student success initiatives are doomed to fail, either because of a lack of appropriate preparation, limited reach, or because of outright opposition (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005).

Zepke and Leach (2007) surveyed teachers who taught CLD students about how they accommodate diversity in their teaching and found that many of respondents felt they recognized diversity in their classrooms, welcomed it, and adapted their teaching style to value that diversity. However, not all experienced classroom diversity in such a welcoming manner. A sizeable minority of respondents rejected the notion of different treatment for diverse students or adapting their practices to recognize cultural differences in the classroom. One participant in the study stated: "I treat all student regardless of ethnicity equal, anything different (treatment) would set one up for the accusation of favoritism" (p. 660). Others in the study expressed the need for students to assimilate into their learning environment, stating: "I specifically treat all students in a 'race neutral' mode. I assess by need only, not by race. It works better if they understand our culture and can integrate into

our academic style” (p. 661). This sentiment is one that is likely felt by many others in higher education.

The need for teachers in higher education to develop teaching approaches that maximize student learning from varying backgrounds has never been greater than it is today. Some theoretical models on developing effective teaching practices and classroom elements exist in the literature on adult learning and college teaching; however, most of these outcomes are based on faculty self-report (Chavez & Weisenger, 2008). Unlike K-12 educational systems, where much research and cross-cultural theory on teaching strategies are available (Banks, 1993b; Banks & Banks, 2004; Nieto, 2010), very little empirical research and theoretical work have been conducted in the U.S. on teaching CLD students in collegiate classroom (Banks & Banks, 2004).

In an effort to advance the research in diversity training and the use of culturally responsive pedagogy among faculty in higher education, this research uncovered the lived experience of one faculty’s participation in a diversity training program. Specifically this study sought to answer the question: What are the experiences of participating in a diversity training workshop in terms of the development of my personal practical knowledge? In this study, I examined how as a result of participating in this training program, I learned about my own racial identity and about the role that my personal values, beliefs, and attitudes play in my personal and professional interactions with respect to the needs of students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. I also showcase how I gained great insights into the influential role faculty development plays in developing the teaching pedagogy of faculty. The insights gained from this research will serve to inform faculty and administration about

one White female faculty member's experiences with diversity and culturally responsive professional development.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this overview of the theoretical framework for my study, I explore three main strands. I discuss literature pertaining to multicultural education, culture and teaching, and storied lives. I further outline how these strands support my investigative work.

#### **Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education was born out of the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, a foundation built on advocacy and resistance. The field of multicultural education has evolved over the years, shifting from focusing on political issues involving a few specific individuals or groups to a focus on issues and events involving a variety of different groups (Gay, 2010). Banks (1993b) cited this time of change as a movement designed to make some major changes in the education of students.

Many see multicultural education as the lens through which people view the position of students and teachers, their resulting understanding and beliefs, and the attached emotionality that can affect the classroom. Multicultural Education is also seen as a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity and affirms our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in a global world (Blumenfeld, 2010). Banks (1995) cited multicultural education as “a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women studies” (p. xii). This wide-reaching definition speaks to the grand scope of multicultural education.

## **Culture and Teaching**

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), often used interchangeably with culturally responsive teaching (CRT), describes a pedagogy that “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, p. 382). Gay, a scholar in multicultural education, defined CRT as

using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of students. It is culturally validating and affirming. (2010, p. 29)

Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull (2008) identified three aims in an effort to develop culturally responsive teaching practices: “(1) recognition of one’s own cultural beliefs, biases and assumption; (2) acknowledgement of others’ ethnic, cultural, and other differences; and (3) understanding of the ways that school reflect and perpetuate discriminatory practices of the larger society” (p. 270).

Many have advocated for teachers to develop an understanding of how they think before focusing on the teaching strategies they will utilize in their classrooms (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2006b; Shor, 2012). Gay (2002) suggested that when teachers reflect deeply about what they believe about groups of people who are different from themselves, they often discover that their beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives toward others easily affect their teaching paradigms. They demonstrate what they believe as they teach in their own classrooms. By using CRP, teachers identify their personal perspectives about others and how they will teach CLD student in their classrooms. Teachers who

embrace the philosophy of CRP are often teachers who believe they can make a difference in the lives of their students.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) summarized the complexities and interconnected understandings and skills that are involved in culturally responsive teaching:

Being a culturally responsive teacher is not simply a matter of applying instructional techniques, nor is it primarily a matter of tailoring instruction to incorporate assumed traits or customs of particular cultural groups...culturally responsive teachers have a high degree of sociocultural consciousness, hold affirming views of students of diverse backgrounds, see themselves as agents of change, understand and embrace constructivist views of learning and teaching, and know the students in their classes. It is the combination of all these dispositions, knowledge, and skills that enables them to design instruction that facilitates student learning. (p. 27)

Bennet (2007) suggested that some people refer to CRT as “just good teaching” (p. 272). In a time when students were not from highly diverse populations and backgrounds, and teachers and students were from similar cultures, good teaching would have been considered enough in the classroom. Today, with increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, teachers’ conscious effort of matching good teaching strategies with the right situations is critical.

### **Storied Lives**

A narrative perspective holds that human beings have a predisposition to “story” their experience. At the very basic level, stories consist of events, characters, and settings often arranged in a temporal sequence that implies both causation and significance. These stories often provide information about how things work and what meaning events have and provide for ways of knowing (Schön, 2017). Much of the practical knowledge teachers acquire from teaching arises from their lived stories.

## **Personal Practical Knowledge**

A widely held belief is that teachers' pedagogical knowledge is strongly influenced by their experiences as learners (Hill, Rowan & Ball, 2005; Kleikmann et al., 2013). The transformation from learning experiences to pedagogical knowledge is the outcome of interpretation that takes place through the filter of the teacher's prior experiences, personal characteristics, and personality (Verloop, VanDriel, & Meijer, 2001). What results from these interpretations is not only uniquely constructed pedagogical knowledge, but also attitudes and affective responses rooted in the experiences upon which the pedagogical knowledge was built (Nieto, 2010). Teachers may or may not be consciously aware of the contributions his/her learning experiences have made to this pedagogical knowledge.

Not all learning experiences contribute equally to a teacher's pedagogical knowledge (Dewey, 1938/1997). Early evidence suggests that some of the experiences teachers had as learners play a more influential role than others (Nespor, 1987). Nespor (1987) referred to these prominent experiences as "critical episodes" (p. 320). Critical episodes are the crucial experiences or inspirational teachers that create rich, detailed memories in a learner's mind and that later serve to guide his or her teaching practices and interpretations of classroom events. Nespor also argued that while learners construct powerful memories from critical episodes, they may not engage in the kind of reflection necessary to develop full or accurate understandings from them. Horwitz (2008) asserted that understandings about teaching constructed from learners' observations of teachers and teaching may be restricted in nature due to their lack of perspective and sophistication, resulting in pedagogical knowledge that is constructed from personal learning experiences that may or may not be well considered.

## **Literature Review**

In this section, I discuss the relevant areas of literature that informed this study. I draw on the literature related to teacher development and diversity training in higher education. These areas of literature were important in understanding my personal and professional development relative to diversity.

### **Faculty Development**

Since the mid-20th century, faculty development has grown in response to increasing societal and institutional demands for more effective teaching and educational practices (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). The literature generally describes the goal of faculty development as trying to improve teaching through a variety of means aimed at enhancing teachers' motivation to adopt teaching approaches that lead to improved student outcomes (Minter, 2009; Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006). It remains unclear how that relationship improves teaching in ways that matter to student success. The changing nature of faculty work, especially concerning teaching and learning, is closely related to the wide interest across society in student access, persistence, and success. There are strong calls for faculty members to use high-impact, evidence-based practices (Beach, Sorcinelli, Austin & Rivard, 2016).

In attempting to understand best practices in faculty development, developers have focused on providing learning opportunities for faculty to improve their pedagogical skills. Development activities such as workshops, seminars, consultations, and use of resource materials, peer feedback, grants, and leaves have been employed. Research about these efforts suggest that most of the outcomes were analyzed by looking at participant satisfaction as indicators of success rather than actual changes in teaching behavior or

student learning outcomes, which would be stronger indicators of successful faculty development programs (Beach et al., 2016).

### **Diversity Training**

Most universities and colleges have embraced the goal of having a more diverse and inclusive community. The fact that most institutions of higher education now include diversity as a compelling part of their vision for excellence is evidence of their commitment to honoring diversity (Williams, 2013). The vision of excellence that incorporates the importance of diversity can also be exemplified in statements by both the American Council on Education (2012) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2013).

Diversity training is different from other types of training in that its goals are to change attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors relating to how people think and interact with people different from themselves (Bezukova, Jehn & Spell, 2012). Its ultimate goal is to shift the normative behavior of an individual or institution toward inclusion, and critical reflection is considered the learning goal of most diversity training programs. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) explained, “we can think about our experience—muse, review, and so on—but to reflect critically, we must also examine the underlying beliefs and assumptions that affect how we make sense of the experience” (p. 328). Crucial to this study is my engagement in critical reflection as a means of identifying and understanding my beliefs and assumptions and how those impact my practices as a teacher.

### **Methodology**

As discussed previously, the demographics of students in higher education are changing, and faculty are often challenged with learning how to facilitate the learning of CLD students. Diversity training is one source of development that faculty have engaged in

to better prepare themselves for working with the increasingly diverse student population. To add to the knowledge base about teacher development and diversity training, I utilized a self-study research design to explore my experiences of participating in a diversity training workshop and how that training has influenced my overall development of personal and professional cultural knowledge, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally sensitive practices. This section includes a brief discussion of narrative inquiry and self-study research design. I end the chapter with a description of the role of the Institutional Review Board in this study.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Within the scope of qualitative research, there are several approaches. Creswell and Creswell (2017) described four different approaches to qualitative research spanning case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, and narrative research. The aim of narrative inquiry “is to create an interpreted description of the rich and multilayered meaning of historical and personal events...the search is for truths unique in their particularity, grounded in first-hand experience” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 259). Narrative inquiry is an appropriate research strategy for this study because it is characterized by the opportunity to uncover a deep and meaningful understanding of personal experiences.

Narratives were first used by Connelly and Clandinin as a means to shed light on the personal stories of teachers. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described narratives as:

a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people’s lives, both individual and social. (p. 20)

Connelly and Clandinin built upon Dewey's three-dimensional narrative structure approach to include temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Directing attention temporally points narratives toward the past, present, and future of those under study, always understanding that experiences are fluid and in constant flux. Sociality details the personal and social aspects of a storyteller's experience, while the landscape of the storyteller is attended to in the place and location of those experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

At its core, a narrative perspective suggests that human beings have a predisposition to "story" their experiences; that is, to assign a narrative interpretation on those experiences (Doyle & Carter, 2003). These authors suggest that stories consist of events, characters, and settings that are arranged in a temporal sequence that imply both causality and significance. A story often carries information about how things work and the meanings events have. For example, someone tells a story to someone, who then recalls the events and often assigns meaning to what the characters are thinking and feeling. That story then can contain information about presumed intentions and motivations both of the storyteller and of those on the receiving end of the story (Doyle & Carter, 2003). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) wrote:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story...is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. (p. 385)

Narrative can thus be seen as both a methodology and the phenomenon of a study. As a method, it begins with the experiences as expressed in the lived and told stories of participants. Narrative inquiry has been used a medium for faculty development by creating

a space for teachers to explore their teaching pedagogy (Latta & Kim, 2009). As a phenomenon it is the meaning and understanding that is derived from those stories (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). “Narratives help to illuminate the intricacy of specific phenomenon and the paradigms that shape people’s experiences based upon how they identify themselves” (Wang & Geale, 2015, p. 196).

Narrative inquiry provided me with an insider’s view of my own personal experiences of participating in a diversity training program through reflective journals and interviews, which allowed me to develop narratives about my lived experiences over time. Moreover, narrative inquiry helped me to understand and make meaning of my stories in the context of my personal racial identity, cultural awareness, and pedagogical practice.

### **Self-Study**

Self-studies are a common route of research for teachers as they try to analyze their craft in search of ways to better understand their practices and improve their skills (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004). However, diversity-focused self-study research is scarce (Loughran, 2005). Loughran stated that it might be due to the sometimes isolating and intense nature of self-discovery of a self-study which enables “teacher educators to look into their practice with new eyes so that their understandings of teaching and learning about teaching become more meaningful applicable” (p. 13). This type of self-discovery can often be seen as intrusive by teachers.

This self-study narrative inquiry explores my initial steps in an effort to become more culturally aware and to explore culturally responsive faculty development programming. In designing this study, I anticipated that bias and beliefs that I hold based on past experiences would surface. Even as I seek to gain insights through the process of

looking deeply at my own practices, more questions have surfaced. Bullough and Pinnegar (2004) noted that in self-studies, conclusions are hard-won, elusive, and generally tentative. The aim of self-study research is to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than to confirm and settle. In addition, self-study research is not static; it requires reflection on previous work as well as in process reflection of teaching (Schön, 2017). Therefore, by participating in this self-study, I shed light on my experiences with a diversity training program to uncover information about my own personal and professional cultural knowledge, culturally relevant awareness, and culturally sensitive practices. In storying and re-storying my experiences, the experiential narratives that I collected as data led to changes in my teaching practices and further development of my skills and knowledge.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for this study included making use of the following data sources: observation field notes from a professional development experience, which included reflections on experiences, thoughts, and emotions as a result of participation in a professional diversity training program. Reflective field notes from coursework and previous diversity training experiences provided insights into my personal cultural identity, cultural perspectives, and culturally responsive pedagogy development, as well as self-efficacy regarding cultural awareness and supporting the needs of culturally diverse students. In addition, a personal interview by a critical friend provided background and context for my experiences related to cultural awareness and CRP professional development. Strategies for addressing validity and reliability issues in this study included the use of crystallization and attention to narrative inquiry markers of rigor, such as attending to verisimilitude (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). SSIRB approval was secured prior to conducting this study. Data were

analyzed using a constant comparative approach uncovering common narrative themes and exploring the meaning of the themed data across the dimensions of time, space, and interaction (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

### **Chapter Summary**

A paradigm shift is taking place in American higher education that includes a shift not only in student demographics but also in the way in which students are instructed. This paradigm shift has prompted educators to participate in self-reflection as a means for raising self-awareness and for considering the use of multicultural education or culturally responsive pedagogy to engage students and to better achieve student success.

In this chapter, I outlined my research problem and purpose. I explained my research question and embedded my investigative discussion within an overview of relevant research. I also described the methods of data collection and analysis that were used in this study.

### **Overview of Dissertation Chapters**

Following this introductory chapter, the theoretical framework for this study is presented in detail in Chapter 2. The areas of research that are relevant to this study include: multicultural education, culture and teaching, and storied lives expressed through the development of personal practical knowledge (PPK). Chapter 3 provides a review of the literature used to inform the study, including the topics of faculty development and diversity training.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used in this study, including the process of data collection and analysis. I also elaborate further on the design of this study as well as address the limitations of this study in regards to validity and reliability. In Chapter 5, I present the findings of the study, and in Chapter 6, I share conclusions and implications for diversity

training and culturally responsive professional development, personal and social implications for this study, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The first chapter of this dissertation explained the current climate for classrooms in higher education and the disparities that exist among students both in terms of learning and academic achievement. Acknowledging the challenges that many CLD students face in higher education as well as the lack of preparation on behalf of faculty in working with these students provides a platform for understanding the role of multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy in higher education today.

In this chapter, I discuss the three significant theoretical strands that provide the foundation for my work. As student demographics in higher education continue to change and faculty struggle to understand how to engage culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classrooms, the theory of multicultural education provides a lens for understanding these intersections. Multicultural education theory provides a deep understanding of the historical inequities that have existed in academia for years as well as the role social justice plays in higher education. Building upon the theory of multicultural education, culture and teaching provides a model for teacher positioning and paradigm in an effort to frame their teaching practices to improve the learning of all students, but most notably those students on the fringes in their classrooms. In addition, the notion of storied lives as a means for expressing personal practical knowledge development is included. Multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy served as the lens through which this study was developed and assisted me in gaining a better understanding of my work as a faculty member in higher education. The use of stories provided a map for understanding the

dynamics of the relationship between teachers' personal, practical, and professional knowledge.

Chapter 2 is organized into several sections. First is the discussion of the history of multicultural education, followed by its aims and relationship to social justice. Presented next is the role of multicultural education and the pedagogy it supports, followed by the connection of multicultural education to constructivist theory. In the second half of Chapter 2, culture and teaching are explored with an emphasis on culturally relevant pedagogy as it relates to academic achievement, cultural competence, critical consciousness, and cultural and racial identity as well as cultural awareness. The relationship between culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching is also examined and its significance in the development of this study. Finally, the theory and research related to personal practical knowledge is presented.

### **Multicultural Education**

Over the past several decades, issues of diversity have moved from being positioned on the fringes to becoming central concerns for institutions of higher education throughout the country (Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2012). The changing demographics of the United States pose a challenge to all in academia. Students are called upon to be sensitive to issues of diversity that will affect their success as professionals in a given field, and faculty are challenged to deliver a curriculum that includes diversity perspectives in all facets of the curriculum (Smith et al., 2012). The following section explores the history of multicultural education and the role that it plays in higher education.

## **History of Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education became a prevalent educational framework during the wake of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. When members of underrepresented groups emerged as a growing population in this country, multicultural education developed in an effort to aid teachers respond to issues created by the changing demographics of their students (Arslan & Rata, 2013). The 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (347 U. S. 483) ruled that separate schools for Black and White students was unconstitutional and overturned the 60-year-old *Plessy v. Ferguson* (163 U.S. 537, 1896) decision of separate but equal schools for Black and White students, the case that laid the path for multicultural education.

According to Gay (2004a) the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* succeeded in forcing into the foreground of public consciousness an issue that America had preferred to forget. Patterson (2001) suggested that the intended outcomes envisioned by the Supreme Court justices at the time would result in bringing African American and European American students closer together by attending the same schools where they would have equal access to resources. It was anticipated that this would ultimately weaken racial stereotypes, promote interracial understanding, and eventually positively affect society. The justices believed that European Americans would learn to look beyond their stereotypes of African Americans and begin to see them as equals. According to Gay (2004a), the decision by the Supreme Court was perceived and enacted in a manner that provided for equal educational opportunities to be created through the mere presence of African American and European Americans in the same schools Gay noted that simply placing students in the same physical locale was seen as a means for effectively integrating the students. She further

argued that the failure to go beyond the physical integration of students might likely have been the shortfall of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* movement.

More than 30 years of research on students in higher education suggests that peer interactions during college affect various dimensions of student growth that include cognitive skills (Perry, 1970), content knowledge, academic skills, altruism (Kuh, 1993), values (Astin, 1993a) and attitudes (Alwin, Cohen, & Newcomb, 1991). It is also clear that enhancing the structural diversity of a student body, while necessary, is not sufficient to produce the outcomes noted above. Substantial and meaningful interaction is central to the notion of how diversity affects learning and the development of social responsibilities (Hurtado, 2001).

Initially introduced in response to a political movement, multicultural education framed inequality in the classroom. However, the field of multicultural education has evolved over the years, shifting from focusing on political issues involving a few specific individuals or groups to a focus on issues and events that involve a variety of different groups. Banks (1993b) cited this time of change as a movement designed to make some major changes in the education of students. Multicultural theorists and researchers believe that many school, college, and university practices related to race and ethnicity are harmful to students and reinforce many of the ethnic stereotypes and discriminatory practices in U.S. society. Gay (1994) cited this shift in the shape of the multicultural education movement that has been developing over the past 30 years as being in response to pedagogical concerns over those related to the curriculum. She also suggested that much of contemporary scholarship emphasizes the instrumental value of multicultural education and concentrates on how to effectively teach diverse students as well as what to teach them.

## **Aims of Multicultural Education**

General agreement exists that the major goal of multicultural education is to assist all students to be effective in a pluralistic democratic society. For some, multicultural education has been viewed as the lens through which people view the position of students and teachers, their resulting understanding and beliefs, and the attached emotionality that can affect the classroom. Others consider multicultural education as a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity and affirms our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in a global world (Blumenfeld, 2010; Gay, 1995). Banks and Banks (2004) cited multicultural education as “a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women studies” (p. xii). This wide-reaching definition speaks to the grand scope of multicultural education and is the definition used for the purposes of this research.

Despite the inroads made by multicultural education and the progress students from underrepresented backgrounds have made on college campuses, the experiences of these students can still be those of isolation, alienation, and insult in the classroom (Marchesani & Adams, 1992). The effects of how race and ethnicity are viewed in the world are embedded in the U.S. educational fabric, and much of the traditional curriculum devalues the contributions and knowledge of others, further marginalizing underrepresented students (Marchesani & Adams, 1992). Contributions of those from marginalized groups according to traditionally accepted Euro-centric criteria is rarely covered (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008). Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey (2008) suggested that it is rare

that marginalized voices and their knowledge and experiences are accepted as valid. It is more common for those contributions to be measured against the standards of the dominant culture. Multicultural education challenges the traditional norms of the academy and challenges the Western cultural paradigm that assumes the universality of knowledge (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 1995). Essentially, multicultural education has emerged as a philosophical guide for teachers and administrators to acknowledge the limitations of Eurocentrism.

A world that privileges Western voices, knowledge, curriculum, and customs often serves to disenfranchise people of diversity (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008). Students who are marginalized because of race or social situation may feel isolated, sad, or angry when the curriculum does not reflect their views or circumstances. This is because marginalized learners are often invisible on their campuses and in their classrooms except for times when the study of topics concerning diversity occurs.

Multicultural education serves to challenge personal worldviews and relationships to others (Gay & Howard, 2000). It is intended to challenge individuals to connect themselves to uncomfortable concepts such as prejudice, privilege, and oppression and challenges the use of comments such as “I don’t see color” and “I treat all my students the same” (Howard, 2006). The development of self-awareness that is needed to engage in multicultural education requires us to think deeply and engage in uncomfortable self-reflection, strive for humility in the face of the unknown, and admit to prejudices and assumptions. All of this works to build relationships with people who are different from oneself (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2010).

## **Multicultural Education and Social Justice**

Multicultural education supporters recognize the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for students to participate in a democratic society where principles of social justice are upheld (Banks & Banks, 2004; Levinson, 2009). Multicultural education as a process pervades all aspects of school practices, policies, and organizations, and works to ensure the highest levels of academic achievement for all students. The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) provided the following statement on the role of multicultural education in relation to social justice:

It helps students develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups and prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in organizations and institutions by providing the knowledge and skills for the redistribution of power and income among diverse groups (National Association of Multicultural Education, 2020, para. 2)

The goals of multicultural education are to prepare students for the realities of an independent workforce, including the building of a global economy and workforce (Banks & Banks, 2019). Goals also include working to increase awareness and understanding of one's own and other cultures, religions, and political systems; to provide students with the global view of the world as well as with the skills necessary to make informed judgments about world problems and the role of their country in the work and the promotion of world peace (Banks, 2016).

Multicultural education is seen as a transformative process that requires educators and students to examine the issues, biases, prejudices, and assumptions that they personally carry into the classroom and use these to inform their curriculum and learning (Gay & Howard, 2000). One of the primary tenets of multicultural education is the need for

individuals to examine their own socialized stereotypes and assumptions about marginalized groups to which they do not belong (DiAngelo & O'Sensoy, 2010). This socialization shapes relationships at all levels, and this self-awareness can take a lifetime of practice, reflection, and personal courage. The need for educators to face the history of oppression and how that history continues to impact students today is something that many in education often fail to internalize.

### **Multicultural Education Pedagogy**

Many understand multicultural education to be little more than content integration, simply exposing students to racial groups different from themselves. In an effort to better define the extensive field of multicultural education, Banks (1993a) identified five dimensions of this pedagogy. The five dimensions include: “(a) content integration, (b) knowledge construction (c) prejudice reduction, (d) equity pedagogy; and (e) empowering school culture and social structure” (p. 5). Content integration begins with introducing people of color into the curriculum, while knowledge construction involves teachers helping students to understand the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, and perspectives that are presented in the content being introduced. It is at this level that both students and teachers begin to question the truth of knowledge. Equity pedagogy challenges teachers to change their methods of instruction to enable students from diverse backgrounds to learn better. The fourth dimension, entitled prejudice reduction, involves efforts to help students develop positive racial attitudes both inside and outside of the classroom. The final dimension of empowering school culture and social structure aims to create a school culture that is equitable. Banks (1993a) suggested that there are five concepts that need to be interconnected in order to be effective. To implement multicultural

education effectively, teachers and administrators must attend to each of the five dimensions of multicultural education. They should use content from diverse groups when teaching concepts and help students to understand how knowledge in the various disciplines is constructed; help students to develop positive intergroup attitudes and behaviors; and modify their teaching strategies so that students from different racial, cultural, language, and social-class groups will experience equal educational opportunities. The total environment and culture of the school must also be transformed so that student from diverse groups will experience equal status in the culture and life of the school.

While multicultural education pedagogy is often shaped by these dimensions, teachers bring their own stories of culture to their teaching practices and thus implement their own cultural beliefs into the curriculum, often ignoring the cultural differences of their students, resulting in a type of cultural mismatch between teacher and student (Gay, 2018; Sleeter, 2008). Banks (1993a) argued that teachers who developed cross-cultural competency improved their teaching abilities, attitudes, and understandings in diverse cultural settings. He further suggested that teachers who are conscious of their own cultural identity as well as that of their students and who recognize the impact this has on their curriculum are more likely to become cross-culturally efficacious teachers who can use the attributes of a diverse classroom to promote learning. They also often become advocates for those who are from cultures other than the dominant culture. Culturally competent teachers are seen as having the ability to navigate through the diverse cultures of their students, and they become the bridge that connects the students' home culture with their school culture (Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2010).

## **Multicultural Education and Learning Outcomes in Higher Education**

Many have theorized about the positive impact multicultural education can have on student learning outcomes in higher education, and empirical studies support this notion (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, 2007). Gurin and colleagues (2002) hypothesized that a curriculum that exposes students to knowledge about race and ethnicity acquired through a multicultural curriculum and classroom environment with interactions with peers from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds fosters a learning environment that supports active thinking and intellectual engagement. Utilizing two longitudinal databases and controlling for relevant student background characteristics and institutional characteristics, the authors found a positive relationship between diversity experiences and educational outcomes. Actual experiences students had with diversity consistently and meaningfully affected important learning and democracy outcomes. At the heart of multicultural education is the intent for students to engage in social justice. In the Gurin et al. study (2002), the results supported the hypothesis that diversity experiences help students develop the skills to participate and lead in a diverse democracy. Diversity experiences had a significant positive effect on citizenship engagement as well as racial/cultural engagement.

In a similar study, Hurtado (2007) conducted a research project of 10 public universities examining links between campus diversity experiences and democratic outcomes. This study not only explored frequency but also quality, context, and variety of interactions with diverse peers, and the impact of campus facilitated programming and curricula focused on diversity and civic engagement. Hurtado discovered that students who reported positive, informal interactions with diverse peers had higher scores on measures of critical thinking about people and their behavior, cultural and social awareness, and

perspective taking. Significant changes were also associated with increases in students' democratic awareness. Most notable in this study was identifying that student participation in intergroup dialogue was associated with increases in students' perspective-taking skills, the development of a pluralistic orientation, interest in poverty issues, and a belief that conflict enhances a democracy rather than detracting from democratic ideals. The outcomes of this study support the ideals of multicultural education in that students who engage in a multicultural education are more likely to be active participants in a democratic society.

A 2014 longitudinal study conducted by Cole and Zhou examined whether and to what extent involvement in various diversity experiences help students in higher education become more civically minded. Using Banks' (1993a) five dimensions of multicultural education framework, Cole and Zhou utilized data sources of freshman surveys, senior surveys, and student transcripts during the three-year project. After students participated in at least one required multicultural courses, student perceptions of interracial interaction, racial awareness, campus racial harmony, and student-faculty interactions were collected. Outcomes of this study support the existing body of evidence that diversity experiences have a positive impact on students' civic outcomes. Specifically, this study shows that Banks' conceptual framework, which has been used extensively in K-12 settings, is also useful in higher education. Racial awareness workshops and multicultural courses have been shown to enlighten students through content-based knowledge that increases cultural awareness, reduces prejudice, and promotes racial understanding (Bowman, Brandenberger, Hill, & Lapsley, 2011; Gurin et al., 2002).

Additionally, Bowman et al.,(2011) explored whether and how undergraduate diversity experiences of a single Catholic university are associated with the well-being and

social concerns after students graduate. In a longitudinal sample in which data were collected over a period of 13 years, outcomes suggest that even 13 years after graduation, college diversity experiences had a measureable impact on college graduates. Participating in a racial/cultural awareness workshop had a significant indirect effect on graduates, and taking an ethnic studies class had a marginally significant effect on graduate wellbeing, even if participants engaged in these courses 15 years before. These outcomes support the long lasting effects and importance of fostering attitudes, values, and behaviors in the undergraduate years.

In a more recent study and in contrast to the studies mentioned above, Castagno (2013) explored how faculty understood and engaged in multicultural education in two very different school contexts. This research highlights how teachers' understanding of multicultural education varies between what is called "powerblind sameness" and "colorblind difference." Teachers in this study held two general understandings of multicultural education; some believed that students learn differently and it is the responsibility of the teacher to employ teaching techniques that address all students' learning styles, while others believed improved human relations was the goal of multicultural education. Both of these approaches to multicultural education reinforce powerblind sameness. Castagno suggested that engaging in multicultural education as powerblind sameness protects Whiteness by reinforcing the notion that multicultural education is just "good teaching" and while most educators are well intentioned, Whiteness is protected despite their best intentions.

Using a case study approach, Mayo and Larke (2011) explored how one institution systematically educated its faculty to transform their courses to embrace a multicultural

curriculum. Faculty participated in a Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Institute with the intent of transforming college courses on an ongoing basis. The institute participants engaged in an intensive review of best practices pedagogy and strategies to facilitate multicultural curriculum transformation, including content about multicultural perspectives related to teaching strategies, classroom dynamics, and assessment. Over the course of three years, faculty who participated in the Multicultural Institute ranked the program to be from good to excellent. Faculty found collaboration and interactions with other faculty members was the most valuable part of the experiences. This study serves as an example of how to enhance the ability of faculty to utilize multicultural course transformation to prepare multiculturally literate students to live and work in a global society. These studies exploring the impact of multicultural education in higher education speak to the importance of faculty being well prepared to facilitate learning experiences in their classrooms to prepare students to live and participate in a global world upon graduation.

### **Constructivism and Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education theory places emphasis on personal development and empowerment, social reform, and critical analysis and is fundamentally a constructive, reconstructive, and transformative endeavor (Gay, 1995). Theories of constructivist learning gained favor when alternate assumptions about truth, knowledge, and research emerged. Theorists Piaget (1950) and later, Vygotsky (1978) suggested constructivism is based on the assertion that the integration of pedagogy into teaching practice is essentially rooted in a process of creating meaning.

Constructivism is less a single theory than a collection of perspectives, all of which share a common assumption that learning is how people make sense of their experience.

Constructivism views learning as the construction of meaning from experience and is foundational to understanding much of what is known as adult learning theory and practice (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). It portrays the learner as an individual who is able to conceptualize thoughts within an interactive learning environment and describes ways of knowing in which learners reflectively construct new understandings, especially in the context of their personal experience (O'Connor, 1998). In essence, learners construct knowledge for themselves when each learner individually constructs meaning from interactions between their experiences and their ideas.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) reported that constructivist learning is a process through which students generate meaning in response to new ideas and experiences they encounter in school; the emphasis is on student learning rather than performance. In constructivist learning, students use their background knowledge and beliefs to make sense of new information (Piaget, 1950). Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggested the knowledge students bring to school, derived from personal and cultural experiences, is central to student learning. Villegas and Lucas further suggested that to overlook students' personal and cultural experiences is to deny student access to the knowledge construction process.

Subjects that are abstract such as multicultural education are often best learned through this model, where the learner builds upon awareness rather than a prescriptive list of learning outcomes. Constructivism can be used by both students and teachers to develop their understanding of multicultural education. The use of Constructivist methods for learning can be particularly effective at creating awareness of how culture impacts a situation both directly and indirectly (Nieto & Zoller-Booth, 2010). The use of constructivism in multicultural education is a growing concept that is being applied in varied

learning settings with the intent of deepening a learner's understanding of a subject, developing a learner's cultural awareness, and empowering the underrepresented learner in their education (Au, 1998).

In a study, Han and colleagues (2014) explored what it means to be a culturally aware educator in higher education; they found that a common theme to all of those displaying this competence was the adherence to a constructivist teaching philosophy. These educators described their role as being one in which they acted as facilitators of learning, not one in which they lectured or participated in what Freire (1970b) described as the banking method of education. The banking method of instruction is a paradigm of teaching that emphasizes "the sage on the stage" mentality, in which the teacher holds all the knowledge and they choose what knowledge is to be shared with the students, who act as a sort of depository of information.

Multicultural education as a theoretical framework served to inform much of my study. As a new faculty member in higher education with little knowledge or understanding of educational methodology, the pedagogy of multicultural education helped me to better understand the intersections of culture, diversity, and curriculum; and as a faculty member seeking to expand personal cultural awareness and promote inclusiveness both inside and outside of the classroom, multicultural education provides background theory in support of the development of culturally responsive pedagogy practices.

### **Culture and Teaching**

School desegregation efforts of the 1960s and 1970s elicited a reform movement in education to change educational practices that hindered the achievement of students of minority group backgrounds and reinforced the discriminatory practices and stereotypes of

American society (Banks, 1995). Multicultural education served as a means to change educational practices, and from this early foundational work two distinct strands of research emerged that are distinct from multicultural education. One focused on teacher posture and paradigm, as expressed in the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994a, 1994b, 1995a, 1995b, 2008, 2014) known as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). The other focused on teacher practice, as embodied in the work of Geneva Gay (2002, 2010, 2013, 2018) and is known as Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Pedagogy relates to attitudes and disposition, whereas teaching relates to competence and practice (Aronson & Laughner, 2016). Common threads in both areas of study are social justice education and the curriculum as a vehicle for social change.

In this section of the theoretical framework, I examine the connection between multicultural education and CRP. More specifically, I discuss CRT as it relates to teaching in higher education. I also explore the ways in which pedagogy reflects the intersection of culture and teaching and how teachers' personal practical knowledge is exemplified in the storied lives that they live. Cultural awareness, critical consciousness, and cultural racial identity all serve to inform culturally relevant educators and are explored in detail in the following paragraphs.

### **Cultural Awareness**

Niemann, Romero, and Arbona (2000) defined cultural awareness as a reflection of an individual's cultural knowledge. This cultural knowledge constitutes one's language, history, traditions, and role models of that culture, all of which can be viewed as the general components of differences in cultures. Being aware of cultural biases and values necessitate an understanding of one's own cultural heritage, sensitivity to oppression, racism,

discrimination, and stereotyping that can affect one personally and/or professionally. In addition, cultural awareness requires understanding racism and racial privilege as it impacts the individual.

Cunningham (2003) identified two leading principles of cultural awareness: an understanding of the aspects of cultural identity and the generalization of culture that must neither be stereotyped nor over-simplified. She further stated that cultural identity is fundamental to people and should be valued, whether it is from the majority or underrepresented groups. Asher (2007) suggested that currently in the field of education, cultural awareness should take place through dialogue and practice; that is, asking, listening, seeing what is different, and what is contradictory. Arredondo (1999) suggested that cultural awareness also encompasses the client's worldview. Awareness of the client's worldview includes one's own negative as well as positive responses toward any racial or ethnic group and familiarity with the sociopolitical effect (e.g., poverty, racism, stereotyping) on the self-esteem and self-concept of the client's worldviews.

In the United States, individuals with a Euro-American worldview continually have validation of their beliefs and values since they function within a common cultural context (Sue, 2001). Some of the Euro-American cultural worldview characteristics are individualism, competition, universality, and a Christian religious view. In contrast, the cultural aspects of numerous other racial and ethnic groups have worldviews from Eastern philosophy made up of collectivism and inter-dependences, oneness with the universe, and a deep involvement with the group as opposed to self-development and self-growth (Bankart, 1997). Having a keen understanding of one's own cultural bias and worldview has the potential to change a teacher's practices in meaningful ways.

## **Critical Consciousness**

Beyond the individual characteristics of academic achievement and cultural awareness, “students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores and intuition that produce and maintain social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 162). This broader perspective encourages students to view themselves as agents of change, and to question issues such as educational equity, health disparities, and overall quality of life. Sociopolitical consciousness begins with teachers recognizing sociopolitical issues of race, class, and gender in themselves and understanding the causes before incorporating these issues in their teaching (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Students live in a broader community outside of the classroom that educates them all the time. Teachers have sociocultural and sociopolitical obligations to the communities they serve. They also have an obligation to find ways for “students to recognize, understand, and critique current and social inequalities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 476).

Freire (1970b) brought forth the notion of “conscientization,” which is a process that invites learners to engage the world and others critically. In a classroom of culturally relevant teachers, students are expected to “engage the world and others critically.” Students are able to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities. Those faculty who do not identify and/or accept that social inequities exist are challenged with employing CRP practices (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016).

## **Cultural /Racial Identity**

Racism is seldom mentioned in school, and therefore it is not dealt with. Yet, it is impossible to be untouched by racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, or ethnocentrism in a

society characterized by all of them. Ladson-Billings (1994a) stated, “Culturally relevant teaching is about questioning (and preparing students to question) the structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in society” (p. 128). Therefore, part of the mission of CRP becomes creating the space and encouragement that legitimizes talk about racism and discrimination and all other “isms” (Nieto, 2000).

There is a well-established history of racial-identity theories (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Helms, 1990; Tatum, 1992). These racial identity theories promote a belief that race is a socially and psychologically constructed process (Howard, 2006). Helm (1990) defined racial identity from a social constructivist point of view which suggests it “refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common heritage with a particular group” (1993, p. 3). Racial identity seems most often to be a frame in which individuals categorize others, often based on skin color or language. According to Lawrence and Tatum (1997), the teacher who does not acknowledge his or her own racial identity will struggle to recognize the need for CLD students to affirm their own identity; the teacher will also not be able to serve as a role model for students struggling to understand the complex racial realities around them. Moreover, the critical importance of developing one’s racial and cultural self-identity is reinforced by Vavrus (2002) when he suggested that teachers understanding of their own racial identity works to affirm the identity of their students.

Racial identity development is also significant among members of culturally and racially underrepresented backgrounds (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Cross, 1999). There is a need to consider ethnic identity development among all racial groups, which focuses on what people learn about their culture from family and community. A sense of

ethnic identity is developed from shared culture, religion, geography and language of individuals who are often connected by strong loyalty and kinship as well as proximity (Torres, 1996). Phinney (1990) developed an ethnic identify model in which she proposed that underrepresented ethnic groups must resolve two basic conflicts that occur as a result of their membership in a non-dominant group. First, non-dominant group members must resolve the stereotyping and prejudicial treatment of the dominant White population toward non-dominant group individuals, thus bringing about a threat to their self-concept. Second, most ethnic minorities must resolve the clash of value systems between non-dominant and dominant groups and the manner in which underrepresented members negotiate a bicultural value system (Phinney, 1990).

Critics of Phinney's ethnic development model suggest that she fails to include the critical aspect of "immersion" into one's own culture as a means for developing an ethnical identity (Quintana, 2007). Cultural immersion provides an opportunity for individuals to experience culture to its fullest by being actively engrossed and engaged in a culture other than one's own (Nieto, 2006). Sometimes these immersion opportunities do not come without some discomfort to the individual. The process of examining one's own identity can be uncomfortable, and those who oppose racism might find themselves marginalized (Delpit, 2006). Focusing on race and ethnic identity will purposely challenge the way in which teachers think and operate and often will bring stress along with it.

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Framework**

The term "culturally relevant pedagogy" has been used interchangeably with other pedagogical terms such as culturally compatible, culturally congruent, culturally diverse, culturally responsive, culturally appropriate and most recently, culturally sustaining

pedagogy. While there are many variations of terminology, all focus on curriculum and pedagogy. CRP as initially described by Ladson-Billings (1995b) is a pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates the cultures of origin of the student in an effort to improve learning outcomes. Ladson Billing (1994b) defined CRP as one “that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes” (p. 382). Ladson-Billings (1995b) also described a framework for CRP encompassing three components: long term academic achievement for all students; achievement of cultural competence by

helping students to recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture where they are likely to have a chance of improving their socioeconomic status and making informed decisions about the lives they wish to lead” and sociopolitical consciousness which includes a teachers obligation to find ways for students to recognize, understand and critique current and social inequalities. (p. 476)

The framework of CRP provides a useful lens through which to view curricula (Charner-Laird, 2006). A part of helping students develop positive social and cultural identities is giving credence to the culture students bring to the classroom.

CRP fights inequities and helps to challenge the status quo. Ladson-Billings (1994a) emphasized the importance of utilizing students’ culture as a vehicle for learning to develop or maintain cultural competence. The basic tenets of CRP are often built upon a pedagogy of opposition, suggesting that changes to pedagogy can often go against everything an educator has come to know. Spindler and Spindler (2013) suggested:

Teachers carry into the classroom their personal cultural background....Students likewise come to school with personal cultural backgrounds that influence their perceptions of teachers, other students, and their school itself. Together students and teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of meanings, enacted in individual and group behaviors, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal. (p. xii)

CRP teaches to and through the strengths of the student and treats the cultural practices students develop in their homes and communities as critical learning resources rather than barriers to success in school (Gay, 2002). Gay (2002) suggested these resources are central to the student's cultural identities, communities of origin as well as their academic success. This link between culture and student learning in the classroom is derived from evidence that cultural practices shape thinking processes, which in turn serve as tools for learning within and outside of the classroom (Nieto, 2006).

Culturally relevant pedagogy primarily seeks to influence attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions, describing an attitude a teacher might adopt that when fully embodied would determine planning instruction and assessment. The concept of culturally relevant pedagogical practice is framed by a review of both qualitative and quantitative studies that explore the ways in which pedagogy highlights the intersection of culture and teaching. For purposes of this study, pedagogy is defined as the construction, production, transfer, and assessment of knowledge (Giroux & McLaren, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995b).

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (2016), students are most often taught from the middle-class, Eurocentric framework. This framework shapes school practices and is characterized by behaviors, standards, and practices that undermine students of color, favoring norms established by White people for White people. Personal teaching approaches are often rooted in the norms of the dominant culture. Society's predominant worldview and cultural norms are deeply ingrained in how we educate students, and we often do not consider the possibility that there might be other approaches that are legitimate and effective at teaching and learning in higher education.

Much of the work in CRP is built upon core basic principles. One principle is that culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education, whether that is curriculum, instruction, administration, or performance assessment. Gay (2010) asserted that some teachers believe that education has nothing to do with culture and or heritage. She argued that even without being consciously aware of it, culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, and these in turn affect how we teach and learn. A second assertion made by Gay is that many educators have good intentions about not being academically unjust and discriminatory toward ethnically and racially different students. She argued that teachers understand and even endorse the importance of being aware of cultural differences in classroom interactions (2010). However, good intentions and awareness often fall short of bringing about the changes needed in education programs and procedures to prevent academic inequities among diverse students.

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

As was discussed earlier, CRP focuses on teacher posture and paradigm, and CRT centers on teacher practices. There are commonalities between CRP and CRT (Aronson & Laughner, 2016). Both use constructivist methods to develop bridges connecting students' cultural references to academic skills and concepts. Both frameworks engage students in critical reflection about their own lives and communities, and both facilitate students' cultural competence. The most significant link between the two frameworks is the commitment to social justice education and seeing the curriculum as a means for social change.

Gay (2010) defined CRT as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning

encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 31). Gay also described culturally responsive teachers to have six dimensions: socially and academically empowering teachers that set higher expectations for their students; teachers who are multidimensional who engage students’ cultural knowledge, experiences, and perspectives in their teaching practices; teachers who validate every student’s culture; teachers who are socially, emotionally, and politically comprehensive in their curricula; teachers who transform schools and societies by using students’ strengths to drive the curricula; and teachers who are emancipatory and liberating from oppressive educational practices and ideologies (Gay, 2010).

Milner (2011) explored how a White teacher was able to build cultural competence in ways that allowed him to be a more effective teacher in an effort to maximize learning opportunities in the classroom. Three recurrent themes emerged in this research: relationships, multiples layers of identity, and teaching as a communal affair. The teacher in this study rejected a “one size fits all” approach to teaching and learning by developing deep knowledge about the students and their needs. He took the time to get to know his students and let them get to know him. Personal narratives became a central feature of this teacher’s practices. This teacher acknowledged that race permeated his classroom in many ways and shared with his class his experiences of being called a racist by some of his students, which shaped his thinking and practices related to race. As a result, the White teacher in this study was able to develop congruence with his highly diverse learners because he developed cultural competence about them and concurrently deepened his own knowledge and understanding of himself.

Similar principles can be applied to many teachers who need to be prepared to work with students of various races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Whether racial, ethnic, or cultural, any differences between students and teachers can result in a misunderstanding of student behavior, academic ability, and teacher expectations (Irvine, 2003). It is important to note that simply because a teacher is the same race or culture as their students does not mean they are automatically culturally responsive (Nieto, 2013).

Gay (2010) asserted that many educators still believe that good teaching transcends people, place, time, and context. She also stated that good teaching has nothing to do with the class, race, gender, ethnicity, or culture of students and teachers. Gay revealed this attitude in the expression, “Good teachers anywhere are good teacher everywhere” (p. 23). Individuals who subscribe to this belief fail to realize that their standards of “goodness” in teaching and learning are culturally determined and are not the same for all ethnic groups (Gay, 2010).

In addition, culturally responsive teachers have a “high degree of sociocultural consciousness, hold affirming views of students’ diverse backgrounds, see themselves as agents of change, understand and embrace constructivist views of learning and teaching and know the students in their classes” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, pp. 27-28). It is the combination of all these characteristics, knowledge, and skills that enables them to design curricula that facilitate students’ learning. CRT is the kind of teaching needed for all students from primary grades to graduate school (Ladson-Billings, 2016).

### **Academic Achievement**

There exists a strong literature base on the negative success rate of students of color which is often attributed to “cultural differences” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 2006a; Gay &

Howard, 2000; Giroux, 1992). The notion of cultural difference suggests that student failure is a result of a cultural mismatch between student and the school. The way in which academic success is achieved varies, but what is often required are students who have the literacy skills, technological skills, and social and political skills to be active participants in a democratic society (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). CRP emphasizes that students learn that which is most meaningful or relevant to them. Much of the research using CRP and/or CRT as a research framework began in the mid 1990s shortly after Ladson-Billings published *Dreamkeepers*, which established culturally relevant pedagogy that built upon but was distinct from multicultural education.

In contrast to the literature on the negative success of students of color, there is an abundance of literature linking culture and learning (Nasir & Hand, 2006; Rogoff, 2003) and quite a bit of research investigating CRP and CRT in the classroom (Gay 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2016) . However, much less research exists that systematically documents CRP/CRT's impact on student learning. Sleeter (2012) suggested that there is a deficit of research connecting its use with student achievement and that the research that has been conducted is limited in scope.

It would stand to reason that racial and ethnic diversity in a student body that fosters opportunities for diverse students to interact and learn from each other both in and out of the classroom would yield improved student learning outcomes. Across varying studies exploring the relationship between diversity experiences and educational outcomes, researchers have found similar results showing that a wide variety of individual, institutional, and societal benefits are linked with diversity experiences (Astin, 1993a, Hurtado, 2001; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Terenzini et al.,

1994). Hurtado (2001) in particular examined the impact of diversity on students' self-perceived improvement in the abilities necessary to contribute positively to a pluralistic democracy. The outcomes suggest a positive relationship exists between student growth on various educational outcomes when a diverse student body and faculty exist. The most consistent finding was that students who report having had the opportunity during college to study with someone from a racial/ethnic background different from their own reported growth in all areas of educational outcomes. This body of literature speaks volumes about the impact of diversity on student learning and engagement.

In contrast, Egalite, Kisida and Winters (2015) explored the impact of achievement when students are assigned to teachers of different races/ethnicities in grades three through ten. In this study the authors found small but significant positive effects when Black and White students were assigned to same-race teachers; specifically lower-performing Black and White students appeared to benefit more when assigned to a race-congruent teacher. It is important to note that this study was conducted with students in primary and secondary grades, while the Hurtado (2001) study was conducted using college students. An age differential could likely be a reason for the perceived differences in student achievement.

In 2016, Aronson and Laughler conducted a synthesis of the literature linking CRP and CRT to positive student outcomes. After an exhaustive search, 40 research articles from varying disciplines linking CRP and/or CRT to student learning outcomes were identified. Across the disciplines of science, mathematics, social studies, and English language arts, common outcomes in academics were identified. CRP/CRT repeatedly demonstrated positive impacts in academic skills and concepts. Improvements in student motivation,

student interest in content, and the ability to engage in discourse pertinent to that content as well as increased confidence were all noted.

In addition to student learning outcomes, research has shown that teachers who apply CRT practices are able to make a significant difference in the academic achievement of their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). In a study conducted by Coghlan (2011), it was found that those teachers most effective in improving the learning outcomes of their students exemplified the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching. The most predominant characteristic found among these highly effective teachers was their ability to see students from cultures different from their own, both as individuals and as members of a cultural group.

### **Challenges in Higher Education**

Research on college students suggests that peer interactions during college affect a number of dimensions of student growth and development, including cognitive skills (Perry, 1970), content knowledge and academic skills (Kuh, 1993), values (Astin, 1993b) and attitudes (Alwin et al., 1991). It stands to reason that interactions with diverse peers elicits development in more than one way, as discussed previously. It is also clear that while enhancing the structural diversity of a student population encourages student interaction, it is not sufficient to produce these same outcomes (Hurtado, 2001). Many colleges and universities seek to address issues of social justice through curricula, recruiting larger numbers of diverse faculty and students, and employing inclusive educational environments (Smith et al., 2002). Yet college teaching, with a focus on how courses are organized and taught on a daily basis, is slow to change. This is not for a lack of theoretically and practical advice from a range of disciplines.

One can imagine the struggle that many teachers face in an effort to employ CRT strategies with their students. Most faculty when they enter higher education have little background in educational methodology, let alone working with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Sleeter, 2008). Gay (2010) identified some common misconceptions faculty have about education that still exist today. First, many teachers believe that education has nothing to do with cultures and heritages; and secondly, there are too few teachers who have adequate knowledge about how conventional teaching practices reflect European American cultural values. Nor are they sufficiently informed about the cultures of different ethnic groups. Third, most teachers want to do the best for all their students, and they mistakenly believe that to treat students differently because of their cultural orientations is racial discrimination. Fourth, there is a belief that good teaching is transcendent; it is identical for students, settings, and circumstances. Fifth, there is the claim that education is an effective doorway of assimilation into mainstream society for people from diverse cultural heritages, ethnic groups, social classes, and points of origin.

Another common value that many educators in higher education embrace is the notion that “respecting the individual differences of students is really what counts in effective teaching, not race, ethnicity, culture or gender” (Gay, 2010, p. 24). While respecting individual differences is important, it is difficult to understand how educators could recognize and nurture the individuality of students if they do not know them. Ignorance of people different from oneself might breed negative attitudes, anxiety, fears, and the temptation to turn them into images of ourselves. The individuality of students is deeply entwined with their ethnic identity and cultural socialization. In reality, ethnicity and culture are significant filters through which one’s individuality is made manifest (Gay, 2010).

There seems to be a degree of incongruence between the teaching approaches preferred by students and the way faculty in higher education may prefer to conduct their classes. White students and students of color seem to recognize the benefits that collaborative and participatory teaching methods have for their learning, leading one to wonder why lecture is the sole teaching method used in so many courses (Blumberg, 2009; Cleeton & Gross, 2004). It appears that faculty in lecture-only courses may miss opportunities to address diversity and to promote examination of differencing perspectives in class. Recent research supports that all students benefit from pedagogical practices that reduce the amount of lecture and increase opportunities for more active and collaborative learning (Hurtado, 2001; Knight & Wood, 2005). Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, and Nielson (1995) found that student learning and appreciation of diversity issues seemed to occur when faculty used developmental, reflective, and collaborative learning strategies rather than relying upon lecture format.

A growing body of academic articles about CRT for a primarily homogenous group of White, female, monolingual teachers to become culturally responsive in supporting diverse learners has emerged (Banks et al., 2005; Gay, 2010; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001, 2012). However, much of the existing literature defines, describes, and outlines principles of or advocates for CRT in higher education (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Nieto, 1999, 2000; Sleeter & Grant, 1994) rather than providing empirical evidence for what does or does not work in classrooms across higher education or evidence highlighting the process that faculty undertake in an effort to engage in CRT in higher education today (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990).

## Storied Lives

### Secret, Cover, and Sacred Stories and Ways of Knowing

Teacher knowledge is understood as summative and lifelong, built through experiences in social context as participants in professional development programs and as members of communities of practice. In order to recognize and document the activity of teacher knowledge through the perspectives of teachers, it is necessary to gather descriptive accounts of how teachers come to know their knowledge and how they use that knowledge within the contexts of where they teach (Schön, 2017).

Clandinin and Connelly (1996) developed a language for uncovering layered meaning within the voicing of storied experiences. They described three different types of stories—secret, cover, and sacred—for understanding how teachers acquire knowledge about their practices. Secret stories are the stories that are often lived out in the safety of individuals' personal environments. These stories are only told to others in safe places where individuals do not feel they will be judged or that they have to defend themselves. Often there is a disconnect between sacred stories that are handed down over time and the stories that teachers live by. When this occurs, teachers often feel the need to create new stories that validate their lived experiences in spite of the sacred story. These stories are called cover stories. "Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher or sacred stories are marginalized by whatever the current story of school is to continue to practice and to sustain their teacher stories" (Clandinin & Connolly, 1996, p. 25). They are typically told by individuals outside their safe space in order to try to demonstrate their competence and hide any fears they might possess. It is in these stories that teachers portray themselves as experts in their discipline and give the impression that they might know more than they really do.

Lastly, sacred stories have their basis in theories that are thought to lead behaviors and practice. They are “elusive expressions of stories that cannot be fully and directly told, because they...lie too deep in the consciousness of the people” (Crites, 1971, p. 294). Sacred stories are also typically anonymous and shared. They are socially constructed and often have a powerful influence over our values and beliefs (Dwyer & Garvis, 2012).

It is important to note that the stories mentioned above are often told and retold over-and-over again. Clandinin and Connelly view the re-storying of experiences as essential to teachers’ personal and social growth (1996). The use of these various forms of stories illuminates the complexity of specific phenomena and the paradigms that shape teachers’ knowledge based on how they identify themselves; they also can create tensions as they often appear in the form of “competing stories” and “conflicting stories.”

As was mentioned, Clandinin and Connolly (1995) write of sacred stories, cover stories, and secret stories as a way of understanding how the stories of individuals “bump up” against the stories of others, of institutions, and of society. The notion of tension captures the feeling of the internal turmoil that many teachers might experience in their teaching as they find themselves pulled in different directions by conflicting stories and the difficulties they might face in learning to recognize and manage those opposing forces. As teachers move between classroom spaces, they experience tensions as their personal practical knowledge bumps against the storied knowledge context of the out-of-classroom place. One of the aims of my study was to understand how my teaching knowledge and teaching practices might have been shifted due to participation in a diversity training program. Within this study, I attended carefully to such bumping moments of tension as a means of shedding light on my own developing personal practical knowledge as seen

through the telling and re-telling of stories. While personal practical knowledge is a narrative means of understanding educator professional development that integrates personal and professional experiences and knowledge, in the following sections I consider further literature pertaining to faculty professional growth.

### **Teacher Knowledge**

Teaching is used here, in its broadest sense, to include “the aims of the curriculum, the methods of transmitting the knowledge those aims embody, the assessment of student, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the instruction with which they are provided” (Ramsden, 1992, p. 9). Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse (1999) suggested that just as students experience learning in different ways, university teachers experience teaching in different ways. Their perceptions of their teaching context, the way they approach their teaching, and the outcomes of those approaches vary between individuals in the same context, as well as between contexts. What this suggests is the teachers come into academia with their own set of values, ideals, and beliefs that govern their teaching practices irrespective of their discipline and educational level.

Many faculty who enter academia are hired for their content knowledge and are often seen as experts in their respective fields (Edgerton, 1990). They often enter with little knowledge about or training for teaching. “Faculty become specialist by virtue of their mastery of a field of knowledge. They become ‘professors’ when they are employed by our institutions [of higher education] and assigned classes to teach” (Edgerton, 1990, p. 1). Edgerton also suggested that some academics teach students without having much formal knowledge of how students learn, while others, despite their lack of formal preparation as teachers, over time acquire the skills and expertise necessary to become excellent teachers.

Parker Palmer (2007) further described teachers as employing practical knowledge in the following way: “we teach who we are.” This phrase suggests that educators bring to their classrooms and curriculum a wealth of personal and professional knowledge and experiences. This knowledge and these experiences most likely shape the learning environment of students.

Teacher knowledge, often a result of personal experience, is knowledge which is not something objective and independent of the teacher to be learned and transmitted, but rather is the sum total of the teacher’s experience. Schwab (1978) conceptualized the idea of teaching to include “practical knowledge,” which he believed was knowledge that was gained as a result of human experiences. Practical knowledge is the kind of knowledge that is required in order to do a particular kind of activity well. It is composed of theoretical, factual, and experiential types of knowledge and is typically aimed at a particular activity such as teaching. A practical knowledge focus is one in which the relationship between knowledge and action or practice is key. Schwab’s concept of experience shaped the background for Connelly and Clandinin’s understandings of teacher knowledge as personal, interpersonal, created in time, and lived out in time and spaces (1995a).

### **Professional and Personal Practical Knowledge as Teaching Guideposts**

Connelly and Clandinin (1995b) proposed that teacher knowledge can often be seen as a narrative construction composed in each teacher’s life and is made visible in their practices. Teachers hold a certain type of “practical knowledge” when they enter the profession, which they described as “that body of convictions and meaning’s conscious or unconscious that have arisen from experience (intimate, social and traditional) and that are expressed in a person’s practices” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995b, p. 7). Connelly and

Clandinin (1988) also shaped the notion of “personal practical knowledge,” positioning teachers as knowers with curriculum development grounded in the knowledge of self.

For each of us, the more we understand ourselves and can articulate reasons why we are what we are, do what we do, and are headed where we have chosen, the more meaningful our curriculum will be (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 11)

A teacher’s knowledge and beliefs about what to do, how to do it, and under what circumstances can affect the way in which students come to know a subject matter. A teacher’s personal practical knowledge and knowing has the potential to affect every aspect of a teacher’s practice and serves as a sort of guidepost in teachers’ personal teaching practices.

In addition to personal practical knowledge, teachers also possess professional knowledge that can be described as the spaces, places, and temporality of school contexts. Professional knowledge shapes effective teaching, what teachers know, what knowledge is seen as essential for teaching, and who has the capacity to produce knowledge about teaching.

This professional knowledge is also described as existing in two different places: “In classroom and Out of classroom” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995b, p. 14). In classroom places are described as safe places, places where teachers live out their stories of who they are and who they are becoming as they interact with students. Out of classroom places are described as prescriptive, professional places shared with other teachers, and as places where teachers are expected to hold certain expert knowledge.

Conceptualizing a landscape where professional knowledge is included provides a way to contextualize teachers’ personal practical knowledge that also helps to understand the dynamic interplay that exists in teacher development. The inclusion of what Clandinin

and Connelly (1995) coined as secret, sacred, and cover stories provides a useful map for understanding the dynamics of the relationship between teachers' personal practical and professional knowledge.

Concepts from the scholarship of Multicultural Education, CRP, and Personal Practical Knowledge were used in this theoretical framework to frame a White female faculty's understanding of her attitudes about cultural diversity and teaching practices. An understanding of cultural diversity's place in the curriculum, knowledge of the learning styles of diverse students, and the ways in which personal reflection of this understanding were also sought in an effort to structure the classroom environment and interact with students that are culturally and linguistically diverse.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter on theoretical framework presented the role that multicultural education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and personal practical knowledge as exemplified in lived stories played in the development of this investigation. This theoretical framework provided me with insights into facets of my own personal knowledge and experiences. Given the increasing number of culturally and linguistically diverse students who are entering higher education and the lack of formal education that I and many educators have in teaching pedagogy, personal and professional development in the area of culturally relevant pedagogy seems warranted. Multicultural education theory as a transformative constructivist learning approach has helped me to see students with a different lens and see my role as an educator in a new way. Culturally responsive pedagogy provided me with a better understanding of the theory, skills, and knowledge needed to work with all students, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students. The theoretical perspective of

personal practical knowledge and storied lives has informed me about my development as an educator and helped me to better understand why I do and say the things that I do. All of these aspects were touched upon in this chapter and set the stage for the aims of this study in which I sought to gain insights into the development of my personal practical knowledge development by participating in a diversity training program. Within that context, I critically reflect upon my values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

In Chapter 3, the literature review, I discuss a review of relevant literature related to faculty development in higher education and highlight a review of diversity training in higher education.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter on the theoretical framework, I reviewed the central theories that framed this study. In this literature review chapter, I examine pertinent research conducted in areas related to the current study. In particular, I discuss literature regarding faculty development and diversity training.

The aim of my research was to explore my experiences of participating in a diversity training workshop. In particular, I examined the development of my own personal and professional knowledge and practices, with a concentration on issues of culture and identity. Thus, it is important to draw specific connections to related research. A review of the literature regarding teacher development and diversity training in higher education was conducted. Overall, the body of literature that I reviewed was important for my study as it provided a background for understanding the professional development of faculty in higher education and the manner in which faculty develop their understanding of diversity and its role in curriculum. This chapter is framed according to the thematic sections of faculty development in higher education, and diversity training in higher education.

#### **Faculty Development**

Today's classrooms look radically different from those of just a decade ago. As the student population becomes increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, language, and socio-economic level, teachers are challenged to meet the academic, cultural, and community needs of tomorrow's citizens (Edwards, 2013). However, the demographics of most educators do not reflect the diversity of the classroom. There exists a monoculture nature of the teaching workforce in higher education (Edwards, 2013). Edwards suggested

that the changing dynamics of the classroom require changes in the preparation and ongoing development of teachers. Many White educators simply have not acquired the experiential and educational background that would prepare them for the growing diversity of their students (Sleeter, 2008). To develop teachers who are prepared to meet the challenges of today's classrooms, teachers must engage in ongoing critical reflection and learning in order to create a productive learning environment that meets the needs of all students. Stewart (2007) argued that the world of today's student is far different from the one of just ten years ago. With an economy in which one in every five jobs is tied to global trade (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.) the U.S. higher education system is challenged to prepare faculty who are able to educate students for an increasingly global society.

### **Professional Development for Faculty in Higher Education**

The concept of providing opportunities for faculty in higher education to improve their teaching skills is not a new one. Faculty professional development has been a component of the educational system for centuries (Camblin & Steger, 2000). Faculty development can be beneficial at any point in one's career, and at no time more than now are faculty being summoned to increase their skill set in an effort to attract and retain students. The growing consumerist attitude of college and university students, the explosion of the computer age and a technology savvy society, the call for accountability from universities and their faculty in terms of outcomes assessment, and the enrollment of an increasingly diverse student population has prompted many institutions of higher education to ramp up their faculty professional development efforts in an effort to address the growing demands on the academy (Camblin & Steger, 2000; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2007).

Faculty professional development is one means of aiding faculty in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in academia today. McMillin and Berberet (2002) defined faculty development as the following:

the process of nurturing the continuous learning, growth, and vitality of the faculty person (in all his or her roles) as a key member in meeting the aims/goals of the organization, including long lasting student learning and institutional agility in responding to internal and external forces (p. 34)

Although multiple definitions of faculty development can be found, most share similar sentiments and emphasize the enhancement of faculty performance and the improvement of the quality of teaching in a college or university setting (Alstete, 2000; Camblin & Steger, 2000; Wallin, 2003).

In its broadest sense, faculty development can be seen as “an institutional process, which seeks to modify the attitudes, skills and behavior of faculty members toward greater competency and effectiveness in meeting student needs, their own needs, and the needs of the institution” (Francis, 1975, p. 720). While not all faculty development programs strive toward the full range of goals implied in this definition, most will agree that the phrase loosely refers to a variety of activities that colleges undertake to enhance individual or institutional capabilities.

Camblin and Steger (2000) traced the origins of faculty development to sabbatical leaves dating as far back as the 1800s. For many decades after that, faculty development generally focused on advancing competence and mastery in one’s discipline, with the idea being that the more one knows about a subject, the better one could teach it. By the early 1900s, faculty expectations began to include expertise, viability, and national recognition within their specific discipline. Eventually, the opportunities and need for external funding

prompted institutions to increase the emphasis on research as a large part of faculty members' academic obligation (Leslie, 2002). Yet, as faculty are experiencing greater pressure to apply for and receive research dollars for their institutions, the focus on teaching may have faded (Austin, 2003).

Furthermore, O'Meara and Jaeger (2007) noted that by the 1980s, the general public had become increasingly dissatisfied with the state of higher education. This prompted the higher education community to make a serious reassessment of their responsibilities in providing a quality education for students (Blumberg, 2009; Melear, 2003). As a result, the performance expectations and standards of faculty in all three areas of professional life—teaching, research, and service—changed, and faculty development took on greater significance within the academy (Rosser, 2004).

The latter part of the 1990s became a pivotal time for reassessing faculty development strategies (Camblin & Steger, 2000). The rising costs of higher education, shifting demographics, competition for student admissions, and a general change in professional expectations put the quality of education, and ultimately the quality of teaching, in the spotlight. The awareness that faculty development needed to expand beyond merely enhancing an individual's expertise in a given discipline to include personal and professional development within the institution and within the community began to dominate the faculty development scene. Faculty development targeted to the multiple roles expected of faculty members was recognized as key to academic vitality and success (Austin, 2010).

There exists much information concerning the structure and organization of faculty development but little research that assesses program effectiveness, and well-designed

research studies that measure outcomes of faculty development programs are in even shorter supply (Sydow, 2000). When faculty development efforts are assessed, the methods used to determine effectiveness are not typically measures of changes in behavior or outcomes, but rather focus on participant self-reported satisfaction and attitudinal changes (Murray, 2002).

Gibbs and Coffey (2004) conducted a three-year international study that examined the training of university teachers to identify any changes in teachers' behavior and approaches to teaching and students' approaches to learning that could be attributed to professional development training programs. Their findings supported the idea that faculty development can increase the extent to which teachers adopt a student focus and can improve different aspects of teaching, as judged by the students. As with much of the research conducted in the area of faculty development, this assessment is based upon faculty self-reporting and not empirical evidence of student learning.

One comprehensive source of information about the effectiveness of faculty development initiatives to enhance teaching is the 2006 systematic review by Steinert and colleagues. While somewhat dated, this report provides a synopsis of faculty development outcomes, including articles that received the highest ratings for quality of research design from among that entire sample of studies that were critiqued for inclusion in this systematic review. Outcomes of this review support the following outcomes: participants reported a positive change in attitudes towards teaching as a result of their involvement in faculty development activities; participants reported increased knowledge of educational concepts as well as specific teaching strategies and gains in skills such as assessing learners' needs, promoting reflection, and providing feedback and self-perceived changes in teaching behavior were consistently reported. While this review focuses on faculty development in

healthcare education, the findings can be applicable to faculty development effectiveness across disciplines.

Faculty development is not a concept in itself. In fact, the case has been made that there is not a single clearly defined theory that supports faculty development (Alstete, 2000), nor is there a “grand or unifying theory” (Wallin, 2003, p. 319). However, educational researchers and faculty development professionals apply various theoretical foundations to their interpretations of what makes the concept of faculty development work. Examples of several theoretical schemes include motivational theory and learner-centered theory.

### **Motivational theory**

Motivation theories of learning predict that faculty, like other adults, generally require motivation to learn (Maslow, 1954; McClelland, 1965). Many teachers have a strong motivation to do an excellent job simply because of their commitment to and enjoyment of teaching. However, many faculty do not perceive a need to improve or do not see their potential for improvement. This attitude may reflect their lack of knowledge that methods can be helpful rather than lack of interest in excellent teaching (Skeff, Stratos, & Bergen, 1992). Wallin (2003) suggested that the guiding force behind faculty members striving to improve their professional and academic lives is some type of motivation. Intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation have been widely studied, and the distinction between them has shed important light on both developmental and educational practices. In a 2012 study by Estes and Polnick, the researchers sought to investigate productivity in higher education faculty as it related to motivational theory. Outcomes of this research supported expectancy theory predictions, in which faculty member’s productivity is often reflective of the confidence they hold in their abilities to achieve a certain level of research or teaching

effectiveness. Declines in productivity can be attributed to the idea that faculty members do not value the outcomes from sustaining higher levels of productivity, thus negatively affecting their motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) suggested that “to be motivated means to be moved to do something” (p. 54). In their review of classic definitions and new directions in motivation theory, they reiterated the distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from a person’s need for feeling competent and self-determining and refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, while extrinsic motivation suggests a person can feel externally moved to perform an action because it leads to a discrete outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Wallin’s (2003) review, effective faculty development programs grounded in motivation theory provide appropriate motivators, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, to ensure success for the participants.

### **Learner-Centered Theory**

If faculty development is viewed as faculty learning, then research on how people learn and on adult learning can be applied to assessing and enhancing faculty development. Learner-centered approaches to faculty development embrace the concept of active learning. Faculty who are actively engaged in the content will be able to learn and retain the information, and they can take that knowledge beyond the classroom and utilize it for practical purposes. In learner-centered pedagogy, the mission and purpose is to elicit discovery and construction of personal knowledge (Barr & Tagg, 1995). McCombs (2002) explained that learner-centered theory places the learner in the center of instructional decision-making by recognizing the individual needs and characteristics of each learner and acknowledging a shared responsibility by teacher and student for knowledge acquisition in a rigorous and challenging environment. Froyd and Simpson (2008) hypothesized that

approaches to faculty development should mirror the learner-centered teaching approaches currently implemented in many classrooms. Utilizing best practices of teaching and learning in the classroom makes sense to reflect those practices in faculty development opportunities. Daley (2003) suggested that providing faculty the opportunities to “develop the ability to learn from experience, to integrate knowledge and to think reflectively” (p. 29) is the strength of a learner-centered approach to faculty development.

Empirical studies provide evidence for the value of faculty development. In evaluating many faculty development programs, teachers rate the experience as useful and they recommend their experience to colleagues (Mygdal, 1994; Skeff et al., 1992). Assessment of faculty development also suggests that such programs can improve teachers’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These assessments include improvements in self-reported knowledge, retrospective rating of knowledge and skills, and teacher self-efficacy (DeWitt, Goldberg, & Roberts, 1993; Keenan, Seim, Bland, & Altemeier, 1990; Skeff et al., 1992).

Significantly, it has been through faculty development opportunities that I have come to understand more about my personal teaching knowledge and practices and the learning that students experience as a result. Faculty development further has the potential to transform faculty into excellent educators both in and outside of the classroom. The following targeted look at diversity training directly contributed to the review of literature that supported my inquiry scope and focus.

### **Diversity Training in Higher Education**

Developing inclusive classrooms and educational environments has become a top priority across higher education as racial and ethnic diversity among college students increase. The conception of diversity training followed affirmative action efforts in the

1960s and 1970s that changed the demographic composition of many organizations, including higher education. These early “sensitivity trainings” were often responses to, or preventative measure against, discrimination lawsuits (Paluck, 2006). Diversity training experienced another surge in demand after the 9/11 attacks and again most recently with the recent events that have occurred on many college campuses across the country (Leonard, 2002). Incidents such as the case of a gay Rutgers University student’s suicide after being harassed by fellow students (Schwartz, 2010) or the killing of New York police officers and the incident in Ferguson, Missouri, which all resulted in civil unrest both on and off many college campuses. These incidents epitomize how lives can be at stake when differences between people are not accepted. As a response to these societal conflicts, diversity training has the potential to make a positive impact because at the heart of diversity training is the goal of addressing prejudice, stereotyping, and other biases (King, Gulick, & Avery, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, diversity training is defined as a distinct set of program goals aimed at facilitating positive intergroup interactions, reducing prejudice and discrimination, and enhancing the skills, knowledge, and motivation of people to interact with diverse others (Pendry, Driscoll, & Field, 2007). Diversity training differs from other types of training in that it challenges the way one views the world and deals with issues that may seem emotional or subjective (Hanover & Cellar, 1998; Law, 1998). However, the goals of most diversity training programs include harmony, inclusion, justice, and transformation (Rossett & Bickham, 1994).

Diversity training has often been utilized to supply information and raise awareness of the problems associated with misunderstandings or mishandlings of diversity. In addition, most diversity training has been conducted based on implicit assumptions about the value of

overcoming ignorance by expressing one's hidden assumptions, or feeling empathy for an oppressed group or individual (Paluck, 2006). Some programs focus on traditionally recognized group characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, and sexual orientation, while others expand the meaning of diversity to include ability, philosophical or political views, working styles, and so forth (Paluck, 2006). The main goal of campus-based diversity training is to learn about diversity and prejudice and apply concepts through experiential learning and structured opportunities for intergroup contact (Avery & Thomas, 2004; King et al., 2010).

While the good intentions of conducting diversity training are well recognized, many question whether there is good evidence to support the notion that diversity training and education really work. Reviews on diversity training and education conclude that evidence is mixed. At the worst, diversity training has been shown to do just the opposite of creating positive change and reinforces stereotypes and prejudice among its participants (Robb & Doverspike, 2001). Other evidence supports the notion that diversity training can be effective. There are studies that support suggesting diversity training can reduce prejudice, enhance multicultural skills, and improve engagement (Anand & Winters, 2008; Rudman, Ashmore, & Gary, 2001). The use of a wide array of theoretical models and evaluations has done little to address the opposing effects of diversity training.

As with faculty development, empirical evidence that specifically explores the impact of diversity training for faculty in higher education in terms of student outcomes is scarce; however, much can be gleaned from those studies conducted in pre-K through 12 education and corporate settings. Edwards, Carr and Siegel (2006) explored the impact of differentiated instruction for teachers as an approach for meeting the academic and related

needs of diverse learners in pre-K through 12th grade. Two significant effects of diversity training in relation to differentiated instruction noted in this study were the positive impact of training workshops and the significance of previous personal experiences with differentiated instruction. Results of this study confirm the need to prepare teachers to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

In 2014, Maasum, Maarof and Ali explored teachers' understanding and level of cultural competence and the effects of training in raising awareness about multiculturalism in international classrooms. Training workshops utilized three main activities that included the exploration of self-awareness, awareness of cultural backgrounds, and the exploration of instructional strategies and resources to support teaching diverse learners. Outcomes suggested there was a positive impact from these training opportunities in terms of teachers' cultural awareness and competency that support a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Researchers conducting narrative literature reviews of diversity training have reported evidence of beneficial results for attitude, knowledge, and skill- based change, although these results are not consistent (Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008; Engberg, 2004; Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Paluck & Green, 2009). The most common outcome evaluated within diversity training is affective based (Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008), but research results are mixed. Some research has suggested that training is not a viable option for changing attitudes toward others (Bendick, Egan, & Lofhjelm, 2001). Other researchers have found positive effects for diversity training on attitudes (Hollister, Day, & Jesaitis, 1993; Pruegger & Rogers, 1994; Robb & Doverspike, 2001). However, most studies have focused on attitude change, and very few studies have investigated diversity trainings impact on behavior.

Kulik and Roberson's (2008) review of diversity training research suggests that there are two broad categories of research that describes diversity training outcomes. The first is training designed to disseminate information in an effort to inform others of the organization's diversity strategies and expectations. The cognitive-based approach to training seeks to increase trainees' awareness of their biases, prejudices, and stereotypes. The second category is a more skills-based approach seeking to change behaviors both through increased awareness and skills training. Kulik and Roberson suggest that there is more evidence of the success of dissemination and skill training than there is of awareness training.

A 2013 meta-analysis conducted by Kalinoski, Steel-Johnson, Peyton, Leas, Steinke and Bowling examined the effects of attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors based on outcomes of diversity training. Kalinoski et al. hypothesized that diversity training would have a stronger effect on cognitive-based and skill-based outcomes and that diversity training that provides greater opportunity for social interaction would have stronger effects on affective-based outcomes, contrasted with training providing less opportunity for social interaction. Results from the 65 studies that were included in this analysis suggested that diversity training had a positive effect on attitude, cognitive, and behavior or skills with the great effect on cognitive and skills-based outcomes. Outcomes of the meta-analysis also supported the hypothesis that diversity training that included opportunities for social interaction yielded greater affective-based outcomes that targeted feelings rather than knowledge or skills. Implications of this study suggest that attention should be focused on the nature and type of diversity training utilized.

More recently, Bezrukova, Jehn and Spell (2012) conducted a critical examination of literature on diversity training. They found a myriad of different forms, shapes, and combinations of diversity training in terms of design elements both in educational and workplace settings. Results of their review suggested that outcomes of research has focused more on short-term attitudinal effects and suggested that investigating the changes in long-term behaviors and thinking that result from diversity training are needed. Building upon this 2012 literature review, Bezrukova, Spell, Perry and Jehn (2016) conducted a meta-analysis reviewing more than 260 studies on diversity training that were conducted over the last four decades, looking not just at college campuses but also at various workplaces. They found that while training programs can change how people think (cognitive) about racial differences, they tend not to be as effective at changing how people act (behavioral), and cognitive learning will often persist whereas the behavioral learning will likely subside over time. Racial attitudes have deep roots, the researchers explain. If a diversity workshop manages to sway a person intellectually, emotional biases can often undo that work in short order—especially if the person returns to the same culture that created and reinforced those biases in the first place. Bezrukova et al. (2016) also found no strong evidence to suggest that diversity training changes people’s attitudes over the long term. They did find, however, that training has sometimes changed people’s minds. While their biases might remain intact, people can learn new ways of thinking about things like race. That thinking can sometimes lead them to act against their instincts.

My participation in diversity training experiences has been transformative and instrumental in transforming my way of thinking about others. While diversity training can be presented in varying forms and have varying impact on individuals, it has the potential to

be a life changing experience for many. Reviewing theory about diversity training serves as a means for understanding my personal experiences and the subsequent outcomes of my varying training experiences and informed my study as well.

### **Chapter Summary**

This review of relevant literature began with an overview of faculty development and highlighted the many ways in which faculty experience professional development. This body of literature informs varying aspects of teacher development. The literature about diversity training in higher education is directly significant for this inquiry for highlighting facets of faculty members' journeys in becoming culturally aware individuals and academicians. Overall, the literature reviewed in this chapter was critical for my study. It provided a scaffold for this investigation into my experiences with training to become a diversity trainer, including unpacking some of my previously held knowledge, experiences, and practices with regards to diversity.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the self-study narrative inquiry methodology used in this study and deals with my research positioning within the investigation. I discuss the purpose of the study and describe data collection and analysis methods. I focus on my use of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space for data analysis, which refers to the context, temporal periods, and the social and personal interactions that are presented in the data.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to explore my experiences of participating in a diversity training workshop, examining my own practices. In particular, I examined the development of my own personal and professional knowledge and my practices as a White female, with a concentration on issues of culture and identity. Included in this exploration is an analysis of some of my previously held knowledge, experiences, and practices concerning diversity. Using a self-study approach, I engaged in reflective practice that provided me with a better understanding of my cultural beliefs and values, teaching practices, and professional development.

#### **Research Question**

1. What are my experiences of participating in a diversity training workshop in terms of my personal practical knowledge development?

#### **Research Methods Overview**

Utilizing a constructivist worldview, qualitative research seeks to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Creswell suggested that qualitative research methodology is often

used when “we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants”

(p. 48). Creswell defined qualitative research as:

the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem...the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study (p. 44)

Qualitative research as a tool is not so much concerned with measurement of variables as it is concerned with qualities of phenomena in terms of meanings or significance that persons attribute to beliefs and practices. The following sub-section highlights some of the supportive constructs of narrative inquiry for shaping this research.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is the primary research method used in this research due to its concentration on experience and its focus on story as both the phenomenon and method. Narratives are not simply stories of individuals moving through and reflecting on experiences. They are social and relational and gain their meaning from a collective social history (Johnson & Golombek, 2013). Since the collaborative relationships involved in narrative inquiry often stretch over months and even years, the shared meaning-making could be seen as professional development for the teacher involved in the project and the researcher, as well as others (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Narrative inquiry in education has the potential to “create a new sense of meaning and significance” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 42) for teachers’ experiences and thus bring new meaning and significance to the work of teachers within their own professional landscapes.

Narrative inquiry starts with the notion that we, as human beings, are living organisms who lead storied lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). As a self-reflective process, narrative inquiry builds on the professional experience of the researcher. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) considered the reflective process of narrative inquiry, stating that narrative enhances understanding of an event. However, the narrative process is not simply the recollection of events as they happened. Narrative as a self-reflective practice synthesizes emotions, values, feelings, and ideals that make the process meaningful and the experience worthwhile. Narrative inquiry has the potential to become a personal endeavor for the researcher to find his or her voice and talk about what mattered to them in the stories that they live by and unfold over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006).

The aim of narrative inquiry “is to create an interpreted description of the rich and multilayered meanings of historical and personal events...the search is for truths unique in their particularity, grounded in firsthand experience” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 259). Narrative inquiry is thus often seen as a broad form of research that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time, and that takes into account the relationship between individual experience and cultural context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). It means understanding what we have lived and how that lived story shapes our lives.

Narrative inquiry conducted by teachers individually or collaboratively tells the stories of teachers’ professional development within their own professional worlds. Such inquiry is driven by teachers’ inner desire to understand that experience, to reconcile what is known with that which is hidden, to confirm and affirm, and to construct and reconstruct understandings of themselves as teachers and of their own teaching (Johnson & Golombek, 2002).

Narrative inquiry has been used as a tool for research in teaching for several decades, and it is often used as a medium for teacher professional development (Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Teacher's narratives reveal the knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and understandings that they have developed over time and guided their practices, and it can help to trace professional development over time as well.

Narratives can reflect the struggles, tensions, victories, and rewards of their lives as teachers. These narratives serve as a means to make sense of their own personal worlds while allowing others to learn from those experiences. Narratives as told and interpreted within narrative inquiry also allow teachers to reflect on their perspectives, understandings, and experiences that guide their conceptions of teaching and their practices, and that simultaneously change how they make sense of new experiences (Golombek & Johnson, 2017). These narratives are not to be understood as abstract theory but are to represent "knowing-in-action" (Schön, 1983).

Golombek and Johnson (2017) suggested that for teachers' narrative inquiry to be considered professional development, systematic and intentional reflection on the part of teacher educators needs to be acknowledged and made explicit. By engaging, reconciling, and socializing teachers in the practice of narrative inquiry, they may gain understanding into the processes of professional development. Narrative inquiry as a means of professional development allows teachers to organize, articulate, and communicate what they know and believe about teaching and who they have become as teachers. Latta and Kim (2009) explored how narrative inquiry can be used as a medium for professional development in an effort to create space where teachers' practices are fostered through an understanding of others. In this study, the authors researched student teachers exploring questions about the

content and form of their teaching and learning practices and development. Outcomes of this study suggested that teacher narratives reveal an interchange with common features and relationship significances that characterize the development of a critical consciousness of practice, suggesting that professional development that engages narrative inquiry invites educators to create spaces for reflecting on their teacher practices.

In 2000, Conle explored the relationship between narratives in educational research and professional development. Within the context of this study, Conle reflected on how she incorporated narrative inquiry into the courses she teaches and explored how students engaged and responded to its use. An overarching outcome of this reflection suggests that the use of narrative inquiry can have benefits; however, caution should be taken when using narrative inquiry for professional development purposes. The notion that faculty must be educated in the use of narrative inquiry as a tool for professional development is supported in both the studies mentioned above.

**Storying.** Stories, according to Denman (1991), are described as:

the lenses through which we view and review all of human experience. They have a power to reach deep inside us and command our ardent attention. Through stories we see ourselves...our personal experience...we see what it is to be alive, to be human (p. 4)

Bruner (1996) added that narratives, or stories, are the means through which people make sense of their encounters, their experiences, their human affairs. Stories serve as a means for understanding an individual's life and the patterns of behavior that exist. Meaning assigned to stories are constantly negotiated between the storyteller and audience members.

At its core, a narrative perspective suggests that human beings have a predisposition to "story" their experiences; that is, to assign a narrative interpretation to those experiences.

Doyle and Carter (2003) suggested that stories consist of events, characters, and settings arranged in a temporal sequence that imply both causality and significance. A story often carries information about how things work and what meanings events have. For example, someone tells stories to someone, who then recalls the events and often assigns meaning to what the characters are thinking and feeling that often contain information about presumed intentions and motivations both on behalf of the storyteller and those on the receiving end of the story. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) wrote:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. (p. 375)

Narrative and storying can be seen as both a methodology and the phenomenon of study. As a method, it begins with the experiences as expressed in the lived and told stories of participants. As a phenomenon it is the meaning and understanding that is derived from those stories (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). “Narratives help to illuminate the intricacy of specific phenomenon and the paradigms that shape people’s experiences based upon how they identify themselves” (Wang & Geale, 2015, p. 196). Following is a discussion of narrative in terms of stories and storying, experience, and voicing in relation to teachers’ personal practical knowledge.

Bruner (1996) believed that stories are motivated by certain values, beliefs, desires, and theories; that they seek to reveal intentionality behind individuals’ actions. The theoretical underpinning of narrative and storying is the belief that “telling a story about oneself involves telling a story about choice and action, which have integrally moral and ethical dimensions” (Hunter, 2010, p. 44). Narratives are often based on the ideal that as

human beings we often come to understand and give meaning to our lives through story. Narrative inquiry focuses on the meanings of stories as they are portrayed in participant's stories. It is the meaning, and not necessarily a "truth," that is conveyed in the form of stories that are exposed by the inquirer (Wang & Geale, 2015). Stories can often serve to educate us about ourselves and others. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) asserted that "Humans are story telling organisms who, individually, and collectively, lead storied lives. Thus, the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2).

Clandinin and Connelly (1996) cultivated a language for uncovering layered meaning within the voicing of storied experiences. They described three different types of stories: secret, cover and sacred. Secret stories are the stories that are often lived out in the safety of individuals' personal environments. They are only told to others in safe places where individuals do not feel they will be judged or that they have to defend themselves. Cover stories are told by individuals outside their safe space in order to try to demonstrate their competence and hide any uncertainties they might possess, whereas sacred stories have their basis in theories that are thought to lead behaviors and practice. They are "elusive expressions of stories that cannot be fully and directly told, because they...lie too deep in the consciousness of the people" (Crites, 1971, p. 294)). The use of these various forms of stories illuminates the intricacy of specific phenomena and paradigms that shape people's experiences based on how they identify themselves.

In narrative inquiry, the researcher strives to develop a deep understanding of the diverse contexts that are embedded within the participant's life as the researcher collects stories, negotiates relationships and connections, and explores new ways of collaborating with the participant to actively involve him or herself in the research process (Clandinin &

Connelly, 2000). In fact, through engaging with participants, narrative inquirers see themselves and their participants as each telling and retelling their own stories, often negotiating new identities and practices through the inquiry process.

**Experience.** For Dewey (1933; 1938/1997), to study life and education is to study experience. Dewey's theory of experience is based on the principles of interaction and continuity, suggesting that the terms personal, social, temporal, and situational are central to understanding people's experiences. Dewey (1938/1997) advocated that to understand people one needed to examine not only their individual experiences but also their experiences or interaction with others. It is this understanding of experience that shapes the ways in which the experiences are both lived through and subsequently shared with a bigger audience.

Connelly and Clandinin built upon Dewey's (1938/1997) approach to continuity and interaction to develop the three-dimensional narrative inquiry framework for data analysis. This analytical structure includes temporality, sociality, and place. Directing attention temporally points narratives toward the past, present, and future of those under study, always with the understanding that experiences are fluid and in constant flux. Sociality details the personal and social aspects of a storyteller's experience, while the landscape of the storyteller is attended to in the place and location of those experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

**Voicing.** Narratives are about voice and giving meaning to that voice. It is voice that allows for a rich description of human experiences and allows for an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from their experiences. Freire (1970b) stated:

As we attempt to analyze dialogue as a human phenomenon, we discover something which is the essence of dialogue itself: *the word*....Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. (p. 75)

It is through the word that stories are given a voice and storying becomes a reality. The use of storying provides an opportunity for voices to be heard and utilizes story-telling as a means of communicating participants' realities. In addition, stories can serve as a primary means for understanding the pattern of an individual life. "Story make the implicit explicit, the hidden seen, the informal formal and the confusing clear" (Chou, Tu & Huang, 2013, p. 59).

### **Self-reflection and Self-study in Narrative Inquiry**

Reflection played a key role in this research study. I utilized self-reflection as a means to explore my own experiences as a White female within a diversity training program regarding my personal and professional cultural knowledge, culturally relevant awareness, and culturally sensitive practices. My inquiry into my participation in a diversity training program allowed me to seek out the "how" and "why" associated with those experiences.

Since I wanted to make sure that my actions were consistently matching up with my core beliefs, I conducted an intentional and systematic inquiry into my own practice. I chose to utilize the self-study methodology because within its design is the opportunity to reflect and align my values and beliefs about diversity with those of my personal practical knowledge and practices. In the following sections, I discuss both self-study and self-reflection in more detail.

## **Self-Study**

Pinnegar (1998) concluded that “self-study is not a collection of particular methods but instead a methodology for studying professional practice settings” (p. 33). Self-study is the thoughtful, systematic, critical exploration of the complexity of one’s own learning and teaching practice (Dinkelman, 2003; Samaras & Freese, 2006). In an effort to make sure that my actions were consistently matching up with my core beliefs, I participated in an intentional and systematic self-study into my own cultural and teaching beliefs and practices specifically as they related to diversity. I chose this methodology because within its design is the opportunity to gain insight into personal cultural awareness and intentions with my actions, and thereby, to better align them.

Existing definitions of self-study share a common emphasis on reflection. Reflection refers to the systematic, critical examination of one’s actions and the context of those actions (Samaras, 2002). When reflective inquiry is referenced, Dewey’s (1933) foundational definition is often cited: “Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (p. 118).

“Self” is a key element of self-study that distinguishes it from other types of research methodologies, placing emphasis on the “self” within forms of action, and in relation to other people, ideas, and events (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998). Self-study as a research methodology has dominated in teacher education research (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004). Teacher educators bring their personal practical knowledge to their personal stories, and their voice to self-study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988),

According to LaBostky (2004), there are four requirements for practicing self-study. The first is the necessity for the study to be an improvement-aimed, self-initiated, and self-focused, showing evidence that a change has occurred through reframed thinking as well as transformed practice. As noted by Northfield (1996), the most significant outcome of self-study is associated with the way researchers perceive a given situation. The perceptions of researchers are often accompanied by a shift in self-beliefs as well as a deeper understanding of the situation under review. The use of self-study methodology in this research helped me to understand myself and my relation to those around me as a means of uncovering information that might lead to improving my self-awareness and my own teaching practices.

Narrative inquiry self-study was the methodology of choice for this study because this was a study of my own experiences of a diversity training program. Narrative self-study starts with the self to understand the self in society and then draws out possible connections in society, focusing on studying experiences with tools shaped to examine and interpret experience. Self-study also focuses on gaining knowledge about how one's identity impacts and is impacted by one's own practice (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004) in contrast to auto-ethnography as a research method, which seeks to describe and analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experiences. Auto-ethnography serves to study one's own culture and one's role within that culture (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

### **Self-Reflection**

Reflection is an essential component of self-study methodology that often brings understanding to the complex nature of classrooms. Through reflective practices, teachers are able to reinterpret and reframe their experiences from a different perspective (Loughran, 2005). A common theme in self-study literature is teachers' reflections on their own

teaching (Dinkelman, 2003; Loughran, 2005; Patterson & Shannon, 1993). Loughran (2005) asserted that there is a need for teacher educators to pay attention to their own pedagogical reasoning and reflective practices and to create opportunities for them to consider their own practice of teaching. It is thus through the process of reflection that change can occur and practice can be improved. Freese (2005) further argued that reflection is an important part of the teaching process for experienced educators and is critical to gaining knowledge.

### **Methods**

In this section, I discuss the context in which this study took place. I also outline my data collection procedures. I then discuss how I analyzed my data.

### **Study Context**

The diversity training program that I participated in brings together a community of educational leaders interested in creating inclusive teaching programming on their campuses. The program is designed to help participants explore personal values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors and prepare new and seasoned educators in the development of a diversity training program tailored to their institution. The program was created for faculty to engage in complex discussions on diversity, to create a network of teachers and scholars who can serve as a resource for one another on matters of diversity and education, and to encourage participants to incorporate diversity and address the needs of diverse learners in the learning environment.

Experts who have successfully conducted diversity training in the past facilitate the program. The program content offers evidence-based and practical methods that can be easily adapted to a variety of higher education settings. It is the goal of the training experience that participants leave with a better understanding of personal beliefs and values

and a plan for conducting their own training programs. The training program ran for two and a half days, and pre-readings were a part of the training opportunity.

The setting for the diversity training program was at a university located in the Northwest. Due to the sensitive nature of the diversity training program, the name of the training program and all participants remain anonymous in an effort to honor the sacred space in which the training took place.

### **Data Collection**

In the tradition of qualitative research, multiple sources of data were used. Creswell and Creswell (2017) named four types of information in qualitative research: observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. They suggested that gathering field notes as a form of observation by spending more time as a participant than as an observer is critical in the qualitative collection of data, and they cited the use of reflective journal and interviews as additional sources of data. My study incorporated a number of these types of data sources. The following is a brief description of each data source and a rationale for its use.

#### **Reflective Journal**

The reflective journal is used in education as a research tool to capture reflections and insights (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Throughout this study, I kept a daily journal about my experiences in the diversity training program. Before, during, and after each day of the program I wrote down my experiences, thoughts, and emotions from the day. The journal was used as a reflective tool to examine my thoughts and feelings about the program, and it was used as a systematic method to document those thoughts and feelings. Reflective

notes served to record my thoughts, ideas, questions, concerns, and insights that occurred before, during and after the program.

### **Observation Field Notes**

Field notes created by researchers are used in qualitative research to remember and record the behaviors, activities, events, and other features of an observation. Field notes are intended to be read by the researcher as evidence to produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied (Schwandt, 2015). Field notes generally consist of two parts: descriptive information and reflective information.

Descriptive field notes serve to document factual data and the settings, actions, behaviors, and conversations that are observed. Significantly, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) claimed that field notes aid a narrative inquirer to go back and forth between objectivity and subjectivity, which were especially useful in this self-study.

Detailed field notes were taken throughout the course of this research study. As an individual participant who was part of a bigger group, I had the opportunity to interact with different individuals and learn more about their perspectives and experiences as members of the diversity training program. These conversations are reflected in both my field notes and in my reflective journal.

### **Interview**

Interviews are an important part of a qualitative research study. They provide an opportunity for the researcher to investigate further, to solve problems, and to gather data that could not have been obtained in other ways (Cunningham, 1993). Chase (2003) noted that interviews framed as broad questions invite participants to tell their stories. Kvale (2006) defined qualitative research interviews as “conversations that attempt to understand

the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, and to uncover their lived worlds prior to scientific explanations" (Kvale, 2006, p. 281).

Interviews were utilized in this study to elicit stories about my personal experiences. Using a critical friend to conduct the interview, questions were designed to reveal my sense of how events, motives, and interpretations shaped my attitudes, values, and behavior regarding my personal cultural awareness and development as well as my personal practical knowledge. The interview questions were aligned with my research question so that it would be addressed (see Appendix A for Interview Questions). The interview was recorded, transcribed, and reviewed for common narrative themes.

### **Data Analysis**

The process that was used to understand and give meaning to the data collected was a cross between Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to coding and analysis and the Husserlian method of phenomenological analysis (Grbich, 2012). Upon reading and rereading transcripts and written reflections, I looked for closely connected ideas. Those connected ideas were then assigned codes. "Codes are category labels" and they are utilized to categorize data for easier retrieval for data reporting (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 66). Coding was then used to develop themes that represented the major concepts that were found throughout the transcripts and written reflections as common narrative themes. The themes were made up of interpretive codes that defined the themes. The descriptive codes provided detailed definitions for each of the areas within the interpretive codes (Grbich, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Words were read multiple times, codes were assigned and reassigned, and categories were formed, collapsed, and reformed. This process facilitated

making sense out of large amounts of data and grouping them so that the patterns and themes could be established (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

As part of the data analysis, it was critical that I attended to the dimensions associated with narrative inquiry. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) discussed the three dimensions of narrative inquiry, which include temporality, sociality, and place. “Events under study are in temporal transition” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 478). Temporality suggests that there is a past, present, and future for all people, places, things, and events. Carr (1986) stated. “we are composing and constantly revising our autobiographies as we go along” (p. 76). Narrative inquirers attend to both personal conditions “the feelings, hopes, desires and reactions and moral dispositions” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480) and social conditions which are the conditions under which people’s experiences and events unfold. Commonplaces as described by Clandinin and Connelly (2006) are “the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place” (p. 480).

As such, within my data analysis, I searched for common narrative themes using the process for coding outlined above. Then I analyzed the coded (themed) data to uncover meaning in accordance with the three-dimensional narrative inquiry framework (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This allowed me to shed light on the personal and professional meaning of the data within the themes from the perspective of time, interaction, and context or culture.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Critics of qualitative research have often charged that this approach to research is too subjective, in large part because the researcher is often the instrument used to collect and

interpret the data and because qualitative research requires that the researcher get close and personal with the people and situation under study (Patton, 2002). In any research study, the questions of validity and reliability emerge. “Like other qualitative methods, narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) named transparency, verisimilitude and transferability as means to assess narrative inquiry’s quality. There have been some concerns surrounding the rigor and validity of self-study as a research method, but Bullough and Pinnegar (2004) offered several helpful considerations to address some points.

Like any good research self-study must represent rigorous data gathering and analysis. Data sources should be stable and empirical. Methods must be transparent. In making sense of the data, public theory is crucially important. Privileging private over public theory opens the door to romanticism and invites self-justification (pp. 340-341)

As a researcher whose work has been done from a more positivist approach, in which validity and reliability were directed, working in qualitative research has challenged me to appreciate that knowledge is never neutral, unbiased, or even complete. Needless to say, abandoning the stance that knowledge is definitive has been a challenge for me. The traditional use of triangulation in qualitative research as a means for confirming findings by using multiple sources of data has been replaced by crystallization, which seeks to ensure a deeper understanding of multiple forms of data.

Crystallization provides a framework in which to balance claims of truth with recognition of the subjective nature of all knowledge claims. At the same time, surrendering objectivity does not mean that claims to know, recommendations for action, pragmatic suggestions for improving the world, and theoretical insights cannot be made.

Crystallization encourages researchers to gather multiple types of data and employ various

methods, multiple researchers, and numerous theoretical frameworks (Tracy, 2010).

Crystallization works to provide a deep, complex understanding of a topic, always suggesting there is more to know (Richardson, 2000). Building on Richardson's framework, Ellingson (2009) promoted a prescribed approach to crystallization in which

crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (p. 4)

Crystallization was utilized in this study in an effort to explore different ways of knowing as opposed to views of discovery as unbiased, ahistorical, and universally known.

A final consideration of the study concerns the researcher's subjectivity and intimacy with the study. In self-study research, the "researcher's degree of involvement" is an unavoidable implication, for me as both the researcher and the one that is being researched. Being both the "researcher" and the "researched" can be viewed as a limitation; however, proponents of self-study (Loughran, 2005; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009) suggest that this dual role provides the opportunity for deep reflection and thick description of a phenomenon.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I reviewed the characteristics of narrative inquiry. I examined the elements central to my selection of this methodology for the present study. I also highlighted my use of self-reflection and self-study in this research by attending to the literature in those areas. Lastly, I outlined the methods that I used for data collection and analysis.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS DISCUSSION

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive presentation of the methodology utilized in this study, highlighting the role that narrative inquiry and the self-study methodology plays in the context of this study. This chapter presents the data gathered from reflective journals, observational field notes, and an individual interview. Utilizing a constant comparative method of analysis, major themes emerged for the data. Findings from the research are discussed. The chapter begins with a brief review of the role that narrative inquiry and self-reflection played in my research process. Next, I provide an overview of the four major themes that emerged as a result of my research experience. I then include an overview of the ways the themes were indicative of my experiences and how they might inform others.

#### **Stories of Self-reflection and Personal Development**

Narrative inquiry and the self-reflection process assisted me in identifying specific traits about myself as I began and progressed through this self-study. At its core, narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) suggests that human beings have a predisposition to “story” their experiences; that is, to assign a narrative interpretation of those experiences (Doyle, 2003). Reflection is a multi-faceted concept with implications for both participant and the researcher, and when those two are one and the same, it seemed logical to make reflection a central element of this narrative inquiry research study.

Dewey (1938/1970) suggested incorporating responsibility, open-mindedness, and whole-heartedness when reflecting. Schön (1983), who based his work on Dewey’s philosophy, defined a “reflective practitioner” as one who practices those qualities “in

action.” Schulte (2005) adds that teachers enter teaching with preconceived notions about what it means to teach and learn and reflect; and once formed, those assumptions can be difficult to change. In this self-study I attempted to understand my experiences as an individual and as an educator. Dyson and Genishi (1994) suggested that “we all have a basic need for story” and defined story as a process of “organizing our experiences into takes of important happenings” (p. 2). Stories have the ability to expose our innermost thoughts and reflect how we view our personal experiences. The storytelling efficacies of self-study research are important for making sense of the world. Each layer of reflection unfolded, and each layer of analysis revealed much about how I have experienced the world and learned about the importance and praxis of diversity and culturally responsiveness in teaching. My stories aided both my personal development and professional practice. Through narrative inquiry, I was able to examine any preconceived notions that I had about diversity and teaching and examine my stories in this self-study through a three-dimensional lens of sociality, temporality and place. In addition, I reflected on the notions of personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987), identifying tensions and fears that I experienced. In essence, this chapter is organized to highlight how narratives and narrative inquiry have helped me to identify who I am as a person, as a teacher and as an individual pursuing the field of faculty development.

Based on the constant comparative method of data analysis, four major themes emerged from the multiple data sources used in this study: (1) defining and redefining diversity, (2) a continuous state of self-awareness, (3) professional development at personal and professional levels, and (4) personal practical knowledge. This chapter begins with a

look at my understanding of diversity and my constant state of unrest in understanding its true meaning.

### **Defining and Redefining Diversity**

Cultural awareness has been defined as a reflection of an individual's cultural knowledge. This cultural knowledge constitutes one's language, history, traditions, and role models of that culture, all of which can be viewed as the general components of differences in cultures (Niemann et al., 2000). Cultural awareness can be operationalized to include a person's attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors that shape the way the individual thinks and interacts with people of diverse cultures. When it comes to culture, the only thing we all have in common is that we have one, and it shapes who we are.

There is evidence to suggest that teachers' beliefs have significant influences on instruction and/or judgment (Banks & Banks, 2009). It is important that teachers recognize and understand their own culture and worldviews before understanding students' cultures and their impact on their worldviews (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Ladson-Billings and Gay also asserted that reflection is an effective technique for teachers to negotiate cultural differences between themselves and their students.

For years, I struggled to understand diversity and how to become more culturally competent. Looking for answers, I worked on diversity committees at my university, went to diversity forums, and participated in many diversity development opportunities. The more I tried to understand what diversity was and how to manage it, the more confused I became. I often struggled with the notion of my White privilege and how to navigate that privilege so that I could be a resource and role model for others while at the same time showing respect for those with differing principles. As I pursued this research study, I found myself

questioning the origins of my ideas about diversity. Since I led what I believed to be a very average American life, I gave little thought to race growing up. Life exposed me to mostly other versions of myself and the customs and traditions I considered normal. I attended a Catholic grade school and lived in a farming community with people who looked very much like me and my family. I did not give much thought to people who looked different from myself. People of color were just people, and this I assumed was the American experience. I grew up with the sense of being raceless. The way I understood it, race was for other people. The values and beliefs that I adopted over my childhood informed my choices and behaviors I made in my adulthood.

It was not until my early 20s that I really began to understand the complexities of race and diversity. What I have come to understand is that this thinking allowed for a distorted frame of reference built on faulty beliefs. Believing that race is all about biological differences and that racism is about extremists who act out in radical ways that are cruel and that culture and ethnicity are for people of other races from other countries all contributed to my biased views. During this self-study, my beliefs about race, racism, and diversity were challenged, and I found myself often questioning what diversity means and what it means to me personally. Over the years I have studied varying definitions of diversity; all seemed to have had a common thread—the notion of difference.

Through this self-study I found myself grappling with my true understanding of culture and diversity and how they have impacted my experiences. After analysis of my reflective journal, observational field notes, and personal interview I found that the theme of “Diversity and Redefining Diversity” surfaced. It is within the context of this theme that I

began questioning my understanding of the term diversity. On June 21, 2017, during the professional development-training program I reflected on the following:

So as I was telling the other person what I thought diversity meant—I simply said differences. The sentiment is neither positive nor negative but more neutral. And when I speak of difference—that could be any difference—diversity can be used interchangeably with different. The person that I was sharing with had some very definite opinions on what diversity meant—she expressed it as a catch phrase or politically correct term that is often thrown around as an initiative, but rarely does anything become of those initiatives. She felt that often times the term diversity is given lip service and is used as a buzz word but no action comes as a result. After this exercise, I started thinking why I responded the way in which I did. Did I do it because I wanted to be seen as neutral and/or politically correct? I believe my response was in an effort to simplify the word and was likely not true to what I really believe diversity to be. I'm left wondering why I responded in this manner. Diversity is a politically charged term and can often be seen as negative by many and I simply minimized its importance when I really don't think I should have nor did it really reflect what I believe diversity to be. What does diversity mean to me—it does mean being different, but different in a lot of different ways not just race. I don't really see that difference as good or bad and maybe that is because I have never really been on the receiving end of "diversity" as many others have. I am a white middle class female who has experienced white privilege my entire life—what do I know about diversity?

This excerpt reflects my realization that the term diversity is something that I have struggled with over the years and the realization that my ideas about what diversity means have changed over the years as well. It also reflects the notion that as a White female, I have not experienced diversity as many others have, giving me a different perspective, a different lens to look through. My shift in thinking likely occurred as a result of personal and professional experiences as well as professional development opportunities I have participated in. So desperate to be seen as a culturally competent White person and not say or do something offensive, I started seeking out diversity development opportunities. I hoped to gather a better understanding and tips for operating in a diverse world. Yet every workshop I went to left me feeling increasingly aware of how easy it was to say something

offensive, serving only to ramp up my fears of doing something humiliating. For the past 17 years, I have found myself caught in a cycle of seeking wisdom, only to become increasingly more insecure and anxious. The more I become aware of the ways in which I might say the wrong thing and how fed up many people of color are with White ignorance, the more I sought out other people's wisdom.

In my commitment to developing my own understanding of "diversity," I failed to understand how problematic my approach was. Far from the important work of understanding systemic racism and its impact on my life outcomes and perspective, I sought to develop a skill set that would shield me from making offensive mistakes. My drive to learn more was in an effort to not screw up and embarrass myself so I could preserve my well intentioned persona. Still trapped in my White-dominated belief system, I didn't know what I didn't know. Topping this list was the unknown truth about how much humility would be required to truly understand what diversity means and to become an effective agent to foster change.

### **Tempering the Meaning of Diversity**

A subtheme of "Diversity Awareness" that emerged during this self-study was the idea of whether we as a society are diluting the meaning of diversity in order to make people feel better and more comfortable about race and racism. In the 1980s and 1990s many spoke of racism and oppression, and then the lens seemed to shift to the idea of multiculturalism, then to the use of the term diversity, and most recently we hear the term inclusion to describe the plight of social injustice. Depending on who you talk with, many see these terms as meaning the same thing, and others see these terms very differently. During the course of this study from June of 2017 to December of 2019, I reflected on this very issue a

number of times. The following is one of those reflections from the training program written on June 21, 2017:

We discussed the notion of inclusion and what does that term really mean, and are we trying to muddy the waters by using this term instead of diversity. Are we trying to make diversity more palatable for others? Does the use of the term inclusive diminish the importance of diversity issues just to make others feel more comfortable? Inclusion would suggest that we are all equal and that is not a reality.

Language can be powerful. Vocabulary is a tool, and language relies as much on usage as it does words, and usage is dynamic. How we talk about diversity, inclusion, or even equity changes and in some cases, can dilute the very words we use to articulate our ideas and intentions. Marvasti and McKinney (2011) explored what the word “diversity” meant to faculty, students, and staff at a small liberal arts college. Winkle-Wagner and Lock (2013) commented on that very issue in their text, *Diversity and Inclusion on Campus*. In this text the authors theorized on the definitions of these two terms and how they have come to sometimes be used interchangeably. Winkle-Wagner and Lock (2013) suggested that the definition of diversity maybe has not changed as much as the discourse around it has—suggesting that the concept of diversity has been shaped by cultural political forces and that support for diversity has led to enacting the policies and processes of inclusion.

Rethinking my approach to understanding what diversity really is may require the acknowledgement of a flawed assumption that I have—that diversity is a constant and valid construct. I may even need to rethink my use of the very word “diversity” as it can negatively impact others for the following reasons: 1) the term “diversity” means so many different things to different people and for some it might even be meaningless, and 2) using the all-encompassing term “diversity” focuses on ideals versus realities.

When I believe that something is critically important but nobody agrees on what it means, there is going to be a wide variety of misconceptions. Whenever someone talks to me about “diversity,” I ask them what exactly they mean by “diversity.” The breadth of responses can be staggering.

As part of being interviewed for this study on May 8, 2018, after participating in the diversity training program, I was asked what a commitment to diversity might look like to me, and I expressed the following:

So personally, diversity is conveyed by my commitment to be open, to be honest, to be reflective, to be thoughtful and to be mindful. That’s kind of what it looks like to me. It looks like that same way to me professionally. To take those same attributes and apply it to every aspect of my professional career. That kind of openness to people’s stories, people’s ideals, and the motivations behind them. I think we are quick to judge why people do and say the things they do, and we do that without knowing any background. We have no idea what their story is and often our assumptions are wrong.

Stories feed our belief systems (Clandinin & Connolly, 1996). It is not coincidence that the word “story” is contained in the word “history.” Either way, we are talking about human constructed narratives used by people to describe values, places, events, and self. Allowing others to tell their stories can be informative in many ways. Through personal experiences and the training opportunities I have participated in, I have been humbled and have learned to become more of a learner and less of a knower. I have developed an appreciation for listening and controlling my need to do all of the talking. Conversations are the way human beings think together, and given the opportunity and space, most people welcome the opportunity to tell their story. By taking the time and allowing the space for others to tell their stories, I believe we can work towards helping us all to better define and reconcile what diversity is and how we can act upon that understanding.

## **Continuous State of Self-awareness**

The self-reflection process has been one of the most difficult and rewarding experiences on my journey. Educators often do not have time to consider our ways of thinking or to challenge our deeply held beliefs. They spend ample amounts of time in professional development, often to find that there is a new name for an old technique we used to employ. Educators also often learn strategies to increase student achievement. They rarely, if ever, have time to reflect or think. It always seems to be a process of go, go, go...do, do, do. York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore and Montie (2001) described this very phenomenon.

Most educators experience a continuously hectic pace in their daily professional lives. Such a pace is not conducive to reflections and learning. The dominant culture in many schools is one of doing, with little or no time for reflection and learning (p. 2)

The diversity training workshop that I participated in provided me the opportunity to slow down and reflect and learn, and as a result self-awareness surfaced as a significant theme. I have argued for some time now that until educators have an opportunity to explore their beliefs, attitudes, and ways of thinking, it will be difficult to effect change.

Personal and professional self-awareness is widely considered a necessary condition for competent teaching practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Through critical reflection, we deconstruct what we think we know about a subject and then reconstruct our knowledge after acquiring new information or perspectives that challenge us to rethink our behaviors (Yorks & Marsick, 2000). I have been able to make my experiences and knowledge more visible so that I can examine them and share them with others.

My journey to becoming a culturally aware individual and teacher started several years after I began my teaching career. Early in my career, I was just trying to figure out how to develop a lesson plan, run a classroom, and manage myself as an academician. Becoming a culturally aware and responsive educator was far from a priority for me. My first awareness of culturally responsive teaching came when I participated in a faculty development workshop early in my career approximately 20 years ago, which was aimed at creating an inclusive course syllabus. Through this workshop I was exposed to the notion of culturally responsive pedagogy. That workshop was followed by other development opportunities that I sought out to develop my understanding of diversity and the practice of creating an inclusive classroom.

Self-reflections from participating in a diversity training workshop in June 2017 and a personal interview in May 2018 suggest that this road to enlightenment has not always come easy or without tensions.

When I started, I was oblivious. I was very naïve. I came with the mentality that you treat everybody the same and this whole mentality of treat people like you would want to be treated. I probably used that phrase that we hear a lot “I don’t see color” or “I don’t see differences.” Like you should treat everybody the same. So that’s the lens that I had when I started teaching. As with many things, many different aspects of teaching, I learned a lot of lessons the hard way and often times at the expense of my students. I’m embarrassed to say that, but that’s the reality of the situation.

It’s not uncommon for White educators to attempt to treat everyone the same way and ignore differences. This is the color-blind approach, and it suggests that we can erase our racial categories, ignore difference, and thereby achieve an illusionary state of equality (Howard, 2003). In her personal biography, Debby Irving (2014) spoke of her worldview devoid of race. She suggested that she often felt it polite to ignore a person of color’s race, which led to an understanding of her own colorblindness. She wrote, “Colorblindness, a

philosophy that denies the way lives play out differently along racial lines, actually maintains the very cycle of silence, ignorance and denial that needs to be broken for racism to be dismantled” (p. 102). Many of us believe if we uphold the colorblind approach, we will not be perceived as participating in racism. It did not take long for me to bump up against the limitation of my knowledge of diversity. By imposing my culture on my students, I thought I was being helpful. This is one of the many missteps of Whiteness: the ease with which good intentions can instead perpetuate one’s attachment to racial roles. The notion that I didn’t know what I didn’t know in terms of diversity, culturally responsive pedagogy, and inclusiveness resonate throughout this entire self-study.

As my awareness increased as a result of participating in the diversity training workshop, I have been able to recognize and acknowledge growth that has occurred over the course of my educational career as reflected in this reflective journal entry from June 22, 2017.

I am embarrassed about the things that I once believed relative to diversity, oppression, social justice, etc.....Actually it is more a lack of knowledge and understanding more than anything. It is through learning and experience that have allowed me to grow and I am definitely not the same person I once was. I feel like I am more reflective, contemplative, mindful and deliberate in my responses. However at the same time I feel less confident in my abilities to act on offenses and really add to conversations about diversity. This could be a matter of the more I learn the less I know and have an insecurity to walk in others shoes.

The persistent worrying about doing or saying something wrong often immobilizes me.

Worst of all, over time I have started to wonder if I might be doing more harm than good. I now understand that fear of doing or saying something wrong has perpetuated my cultural incompetence. While I have come to understand that I have grown through self-reflection, I have also come to understand that I have much to learn. For many of us to grow in our

understanding of diversity, we have to dig to uncover the beliefs and prejudices that are hidden deep within us and understand that it is through our missteps that we often learn the most about ourselves.

As I reflect on the quotes/proverbs that I identified with I believe I chose those based upon my experiences. I have come to understand that very few things in life are what they appear to be on the surface—in every aspect of life. Do not take things for face value—the truth often lies much deeper. I also believe that we often learn important lessons in the mistakes that we make and we are going to make many mistakes. I know that my journey in teaching and specifically in learning more about diversity and inclusion has been a result of mistakes that I have made and many of those mistakes have been difficult personally and professionally—but have been learning opportunities and opportunities for me to grow personally. (Reflective Journal, June 23, 2017)

Self-examination and reflection have helped me to admit to biases and unhelpful inherited behaviors, and I believe this is one of my greatest tools for personal change. Allowing myself to be vulnerable enough to expose my ignorance and insecurities has taken courage, but doing so has facilitated my personal growth in becoming more culturally aware. Embracing humility has opened my heart and mind and made way for me to develop my understanding of others.

My own personal awareness changed dramatically when I learned about the concept of “White privilege.” I can remember exactly where I was sitting in the classroom. We were sitting in a circle and sharing stories about what we knew about Martin Luther King and what Martin Luther King stood for. Of course, I had little real knowledge or understanding of Martin Luther King and was nervous about speaking. Most of the students in the classroom were students of color. I was one of the few White females in the class, and I was certainly the oldest of the students in the class. The faculty member who was teaching the class was what I perceived to be as a strong, smart Black woman who had great stories about

what it meant to grow up as a Black woman in another country and eventually in the United States. When she suggested to me and others in the class that the reason we likely did not understand the significance of Martin Luther King was because of the White privilege that we experience every day of our lives, I was dumbfounded. This concept called “White privilege” impacted me profoundly. I took the realization of my own personal privilege of being a White female so personally that I was moved to tears. I felt a sense of great shame come over me. This is not an uncommon experience for many White people. McIntosh (1988) described White privilege as an “invisible knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear and blank checks” (p. 30). From that moment forward I conceptualized all that I did, said, and thought in a different way. It is from this experience and others like it that I have come to question my ability to facilitate discussions about diversity, as exemplified in a personal reflection from journal from the June 23, 2017 diversity training program:

Who am I to speak about diversity and inclusion? I am a middle aged white woman from a middle class family. I have been afforded numerous opportunities many of my students never have been, and possibly never will be afforded. I am the picture of privilege. This is what I have told myself for a very long time when the thought of engaging in diversity training comes up. However, when you really think about it, if you look at the racial/cultural makeup of most college classrooms today, if faculty “like me” don’t brooch the sensitive topics of diversity and inclusion who will. This is an image problem that I am going to have to overcome if I want to be successful in engaging faculty and students in diversity/cultural awareness and inclusion.

People often hear the term “privilege” and feel blamed or defensive. Some feel guilty. It is easy to see the privilege we do not have but harder to see the ones we do. The idea that people can be privileged and racist challenges their moral sense of self (Srivastava, 2005).

We all have some sort of privilege, and that affects every aspect of our being. I was no different. Once I became aware of the concept of White privilege, I did feel a lot of guilt and

shame. I felt this way for a long time. Then I went through a phase of starting to own my White privilege. This same sentiment is exemplified in a reflection from my reflective learning journal written on April 24, 2018:

The section on privilege really hit home and had me thinking—especially white privilege. People often hear the term privilege and feel blamed or guilty and anger often becomes the defense mechanism. People don't really understand what privilege is. Everyone has some form of privilege. It's easiest to see the privileges we don't have but harder to see the ones we do. When discussing white privilege I often felt guilty and it took me a long time to move past that guilt and own my white privilege. Now the question being raised is how do I lessen or end my white privilege. I don't think that I will ever be able to end it. It will always be there, what I need to do is find ways to manage or lessen its effects on others and myself. I got to thinking—how do I display my white privilege both consciously and unconsciously?

I do not have to do anything to have skin color advantages conferred on me without my permission, without my awareness. I can choose to write and speak out against it, but at the end of the day, as long as our racial system is intact, there is nothing I can do to give away my privilege. I have it whether I want it or not. The questions becomes what will I do with it.

I am still a white, middle-class female with white privilege. That is the lens that I look through. Right? And that is always going to, that is who I am. So what I am hoping to gain from this is just recognizing that, owning that, and being—what do I want to say—just trying to do better and be more aware of those around me and what their stories are and what their lives might be like. But I cannot change who I am. I have to own it, more than anything. Being aware of where my thoughts are coming from, where my words are coming from, where my actions are coming from. What the motivations are behind them and then being open to somebody else who has a very different lens—acknowledging that is where theirs is coming from. It does not necessarily mean any ill will, or that they are being mean about it, or hurtful about it—it is just their lens. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

Irving (2014) conveyed a similar sentiment as she recalled her struggle in reconciling the discomfort she felt in speaking about diversity as a White upper class female. She wrote about an experience when she spoke up at a conference on diversity with predominantly

Black people in the audience and was called on something she said and how embarrassed and humiliated she was at the time. She wrote:

I realized in this moment that thinking about or dealing with the emotionally fraught subject of racism is a choice for me. I could walk away. I could retreat to my white world, where racism would be off my radar...for me to have walked away in this intensely uncomfortable moment would have been invoking my white privilege. (pp. 163-164)

For years I contemplated the plight of “others,” and I had pangs of guilt. As I became older and increasingly more aware that “others” are treated so differently, my Whiteness felt less and less comfortable. Learning ways in which racial categories had been used to elevate the status of Whites in relation to all other humans has diminished my sense of passive guilt.

This self-awareness about how others view life and how my privilege affects how I treat them also hit close to home. During the course of this self-study in August 2017, I had the opportunity to travel internationally—to experience firsthand what it felt like to be an outsider. My heightened sense of awareness helped me to more clearly see how my personal privilege hindered my ability to grow.

So as this trip comes to a close it has been a great experience. I started this journey with great anticipation and it proved to be different than what I expected. I started with this sense of privilege as we got to go to the head of the line at the airline counter because my husband is a frequent flyer. It felt a bit uncomfortable. I had this sense of entitlement the entire time we were in Costa Rica—for many of the reasons that I have already commented on. The trip ended with the realization that in my very own personal relationships I had developed a sense of entitlement or privilege that I did not even realize I had. It was sobering and saddening. The sense of privilege can be so subtle, intimate and develop slowly overtime that you don't even realize it has occurred. What I have come to understand is that it is a worthy goal to be respectful, appreciative and humble in all situations. Kindness transcends all cultures. (Reflective Learning Journal, August 8, 2017)

## **Position and Positionality**

The notion of position and positionality kept resurfacing during my self-study research: the question of who is in a better position to be more knowledgeable about diversity or be more culturally aware or positioned to be more effective in employing culturally responsive pedagogy. The following reflection written on June 21, 2017 during the diversity training program exemplifies this inner conflict that I experienced:

The most meaningful presentation of the day was one that was done by a black male who is in a position of authority at a local institution. He is a first generation college graduate whose father had a high school degree and was a mechanic and whose mother never graduated from high school. Both parents worked to get their children through college. He came up through the ranks. He is the epitome of what I believe to be an authority on “diversity”—he has walked in the shoes. He also reported being on the receiving end of affirmative action by receiving numerous scholarships to pursue an education, but with that also came the implicit expectation that he would be the spokesperson for black people. He was often called upon by others to represent his “people.” He was very clear in saying that diversity equals racism. His presentation was very impactful and made me really think about my white privilege.

The question about who is in a better position to speak on diversity has surfaced numerous times during this self-study. Obvious tensions exist between owning my White privilege and the credibility needed to be effective in facilitating culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom as well as in diversity training with faculty. As part of this self-study I participated in an interview on May 8, 2018, and in that interview I answered the following question: Do you think being a White middle-class privileged female put you in a good spot in some ways for faculty development, because people might feel more comfortable learning about diversity from you?

I think, maybe some. I certainly don't think that's going to be a selling point for everybody. I frequently question and others have brought this up to me—do individuals of color need diversity training? Well, my experience—Yes. We all need it. Because we all see things through a different lens. Just because someone's skin color is black, brown, red, green, whatever the case may be—does not mean that

they're culturally aware. They have different experiences than I do, and those experiences, I have a lot to gain from, but I have experiences that they haven't had that they can gain from. So I think for some, it might. I think it might be an advantage for white middle class women. It might make them feel a little bit more comfortable knowing that there are others like them or similar to them. I don't think it's going to be a selling point for most people and that's certainly something that I have given a lot of thought to, what kind of credibility could I possibly have. By no means am I an expert. There's a lot of people out there that are more knowledgeable, and more skilled at facilitating these types of dialogues.

Tensions similar to what I experienced related to position and positionality also surfaced in experiences I have had with family. I grew up in a rural area of Kansas and was a first-generation college student. Until I went to college, I really had no understanding of what it meant to live in a diverse world, and my understanding of culture and the role that it plays in our lives was almost non-existent. As I started my journey in understanding what culture, diversity, social justice, privilege, and so forth was, I started recognizing how my family life had impacted my knowledge of these very issues and the tensions that erupted as a result. As my understanding of diversity and my awareness of race and racism developed, I found myself in a precarious position within my family. Because of my journey to become more self-aware of my prejudices and biases and speaking up in personal encounters with my family, I have ruffled some feathers and offended some.

And so my mom is like, "I can never even talk to you. Because you're always judging everything I say." And I hate that she feels that way, but at the same time, I'm like Hey! That's not really cool. So I feel like that's a really hard line to ride. Knowing how to do address comments my family members make in a way that doesn't degrade the person that just said it. That just makes them be more aware. I have a lot to learn there. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

At the same time that I experience this tension of being perceived as the Diversity Queen within my family and always judging them, I also bump up against tensions that persist when I am not vocal enough.

Because they look at me and think, “I can’t say anything to her, because I’ll say the wrong thing.” I feel isolated at times. I do feel like some people just kind of shut down or they avoid me. That’s a part of me that I really need to develop more. Because I feel like I have a responsibility. We all have a responsibility to stand up and say that’s not okay when jokes are made about different people or comments are made. So that’s a real challenge for me. It’s a conflict I have internally about how do I say something and be heard, that it’s not okay. But at the same time not offending and shutting the person down. I feel that’s a really, really hard balancing act. I certainly have not perfected it, and I need to, because I feel like until we start calling people on the carpet, they’re not going to get it. I’m not good about doing that and I need to be a whole lot better. I owe it to myself and I owe it to everybody else to kind of give them a voice. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

Silence can often be seen as agreement. It takes courage and guts to speak up and out. Fear of causing hurt feelings or embarrassment can shut people down. This is something that I have experienced and continue to experience in my own family. My father had some really strong opinions about people of color. My dad often made racist remarks. My mother did the same. My parents are good people and good parents; however, the culture in our family was one of judgment. This makes me wonder how many lies and half-truths I’ve swallowed and in turn inadvertently passed along in my lifetime.

### **Self-Confidence**

As I moved through this self-study, I often found myself questioning my ability to pursue diversity work, as illustrated in the previous reflections. However, I eventually came to a place where I began to acknowledge that I possibly might have something to offer as a person who has been on this journey to understand my own biases, prejudices, privileges, and role in diversity work.

But what I have come to understand is it’s not all about black and white and it’s not all about a color difference. Or an ethnicity difference. It can be so much more than that. And maybe I do have some things that I can add. Some experiences that I have had personally that could add to that conversation. I’m certainly by no means an expert in it and haven’t lived a lot of the injustices that a lot of people have just by

the color of their skin. Nothing about the person, but all about the color of their skin has impacted their life so significantly. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

Recognizing that I do have something to offer gives me hope that I can make a difference in my professional life. I do not feel like what I have to offer is clearly defined at this point, but the following reflection suggests it is one of humility.

If I can seek to be authentic and humble when interacting with students, faculty and others I believe that will go a long way in connecting. I must be humble enough to admit that I may not fully understand and appreciate the challenges of many populations and brave enough to admit and explore my own biases. I must always embrace the notion that I have much to learn and that I can set an example for approaching topics and situations that I am uncomfortable with from a place of compassion, a genuine desire to improve my own understanding, and an acceptance that I may not always get it right. I must not let the fear of getting it wrong or offending others keep me from trying. (Reflective Journal, June 23, 2017)

### **Professional Development at a Personal and Professional Level**

In previous sections I discussed the themes of defining and re-defining diversity and a continuous state of self-awareness. One additional theme emerged as a result of the analysis of reflective journals, observation filed notes, and the personal interview. I discuss here the theme of professional development at a personal and professional level.

The field of faculty development is referred to by a number of interchangeable terms, including educational development, faculty development, staff development, and professional development (Beach et al., 2016). Professional development has been described as the inclusion of varied learning and support activities that inform a person's professional practice (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Effective professional development provides opportunities for teachers to become actively engaged in meaningful reflection, planning, and practice as well as opportunities to engage in dialogue with other involved in similar efforts). Schön (1983) suggested that reflective practice is required to begin looking at

internal beliefs and attitudes before looking at outward results, and this part of the process is best done through carefully constructed professional development opportunities.

### **Level of Comfort**

As a theme, professional development emerges in a number of different contexts. As a participant in professional development activities, the idea of discomfort surfaced multiple times in my thoughts and reflections. Through professional development experiences, I came to understand that to really grow in the area of diversity awareness, one must undergo a certain degree of discomfort. Reflections like this one, from my reflective learning journal dated July 10, 2017, occurred routinely throughout this self-study.

In reading through the learning community norms for this course I found what I often find included in these types of norms set up for a course or workshop. One item that I have often seen included is the notion of expecting some discomfort in this learning process. When I initially heard of this norm, I'm not going to lie, it made me a bit uncomfortable or apprehensive. I was intimidated by the notion that I was going to have to undergo some sort of discomfort in an effort to learn and grow. I guess the first several workshops or courses that I engaged in I did experience some of this discomfort. I think I remember feeling that discomfort most in one or two of the courses that I took relative to diversity/social justice. I think what I felt most discomfort about was my lack of knowledge about diversity and the impact of inequities that have occurred in our history. I came to view history as something set in stone, printed in books, painted in pictures, and taught by teachers who delivered facts. I took it all at face value, constructing for myself a one-dimensional world in which people were right or wrong, good or bad, like me or not.

A similar view of discomfort was expressed in the following reflection:

I have heard on numerous occasions that in order to really develop and grow in diversity awareness that one must embrace the opportunity to engage in uncomfortable conversations and challenge the status quo. I have not found it uncommon to have facilitators begin diversity-training workshops by stating something like "get ready to get uncomfortable." I even remember one presenter who I believe deliberately facilitated a workshop on diversity by creating discomfort in all participants. She challenged and judged every comment that was put forth by those participants. Many in the audience got angry and more felt that the way that she facilitated the workshop was unproductive, counterintuitive to what the literature

would suggest as being best practices for discussing sensitive or controversial topics. (Reflective Journal, dated June 22, 2017)

I really have struggled with the idea that diversity work has to be “uncomfortable” in order to be effective. I acknowledge that personal reflection on the biases and prejudices that we hold is critical for personal awareness and growth and it can be very painful for some. However, I am not convinced that creating environments where conflict and confrontation are the goal creates champions for diversity. However, on the flip side of that argument, I have to acknowledge that I have undergone personal discomfort in my pursuits of becoming more culturally aware. As part of a diversity training workshop that I participated in, we had to watch a video about White privilege. From that video came the following reflection:

I will admit it is disheartening to listen to stories like the one told in this video. Disheartening because I am one of the “white privileged” described. Is the goal for those that have found themselves prospering (whether that be financially, physically, mentally, spiritually, or whatever) to feel guilt about the plight of so many others? I’ve always been one that advocates for listening to your gut to your inner voice and if your inner voice is feeling guilty or unrest, there is a reason for that I believe. What that reason is I think we all have to discover for ourselves. For me, I think I feel this discomfort or unrest because I am sympathetic and empathetic for those that were and continue to be marginalized in this world. I am often then left wondering what is my role in addressing this marginalization? What can I do as a person of privilege to make a difference? I don’t really think I’ve uncovered the answer to this question yet, but I continue to seek the answer. (Reflective Journal, July 24, 2017)

When I first became aware of my White privilege, I was moved to tears. It was painful to acknowledge the many inequities that I have bestowed on others as a direct result of my skin color. So I guess in that context—my journey has been uncomfortable at times.

This notion of discomfort was reinforced even further as I traveled outside of the country in August 2017 and during the course of this self-study, I reflected on those experiences.

The timing was really perfect as it gave me a first-hand view of what it was like to experience a different culture and be in a diverse environment. I have come to the realization that I definitely need to operate outside of my comfort zone more often. I think I now understand that it is through discomfort that we really grow. While I didn't necessarily experience discomfort as a result of this course (much of the content I had heard or experienced before) my travels highlighted many of the concepts presented in this course that provided me with the opportunity to really consider their impact. I have become so comfortable with my current surroundings that I rarely find myself venturing outside of my comfort zone. I need to make it a point to experience new and different things. This trip has also reignited my desire to learn a second language. Probably the reason I was in a constant state of discomfort was because I struggled to communicate with others. (Reflective Journal, August 10, 2017)

Cultural immersion is a method of learning about others through “direct observation and participation in their everyday routines in a naturalistic setting” (Green, 1999, p. 93).

The purpose of cultural immersion is discovery. It allows for in-depth learning about behaviors, needs, and experiences of culturally different others by immersing oneself in the culture of the other for a sustained period. Immersion experiences are varied. They can include reading ethnographies, observing and interacting with culturally different others in their communities, and visiting sites with historical and cultural significance to a particular demographic. There is some evidence to suggest that cultural immersion is an effective method for teaching the components of cultural competence. Boyle, Nackerud and Kilpatrick (1999) noted,

It is commonly accepted by persons active in cross-cultural education that the experience of coming to know persons from another culture on a personal level reduces ethnocentrism. This kind of experience is especially beneficial when it occurs in the context of a structured cross-cultural learning program. (p. 202)

They also noted, “Mio (1989) used experiential learning as an extension of a class on cultural sensitivity and found that students’ educational experiences were greatly enriched by direct contact with members of other cultures” (Boyle et al., p. 202).

## **Self-confidence**

Another aspect of professional development that surfaced as a result of this self-study was confidence in my ability to facilitate development in the area of diversity for both students and faculty. Uncertainty about my ability to facilitate diversity work is something that I have always struggled with. My initial work in facilitating diversity and cultural awareness activities has been very haphazard and based on limited knowledge. I committed many of the offenses leading these workshops that are spoken of in the literature and included in the following reflection for the diversity training session as I recalled early work in my career:

This left me remembering my experiences facilitating diversity awareness and committing many of the mistakes mentioned in this article—I did most of the talking; I presented all kinds of statistics thinking that was going to motivate people to awareness; I presented my viewpoints more than listening to others—I didn't necessarily give others a voice; I used students of color to represent their race. While my intentions were good, I totally failed in facilitating conversations about diversity. I hopefully have learned from my mistakes over the years. (Reflective Journal, June 19, 2017)

I never could shake the sense that perhaps I had done more harm than good. I tried to imagine how I could have worked differently to make the experiences more meaningful.

This lack of confidence continues even years later.

My head is spinning and I am feeling very overwhelmed. How am I going to be able to do this topic justice? I have so much to learn. Most individuals of color get this—live this. There is so much I don't know—I haven't experienced what others have and others seem so much more “evolved” than I am.” I'm just not sure I should be pursuing this type of development. (Reflective Journal, June 20, 2017)

This reflection highlights a tension that I have experienced for years. The notion of having a White middle class woman speaking about diversity. Years ago, following a program that I presented on diversity awareness, a Black gentleman approached me and very pointedly

asked me what I could possibly know about diversity as a White female. I was taken back and was really not prepared to respond to this person's accusations. I think it was at that point I began questioning my ability to do this type of work. This tension surfaced time and time again in my reflective journal during this self-study.

I again am feeling very inadequate and underprepared or under credentialed to facilitate training myself. I am always left wondering, how can I possibly consider being a faculty developer in the area of diversity? ...I have little to no experience and really little to no background to support my efforts. While I have attended numerous workshops and engaged in numerous development opportunities, I still have no real experience. I am left wondering am I doing all of this in vain—what's the point? (Reflective Journal, June 21, 2017)

This same sense of insecurity was reinforced as recently as the writing of this dissertation. I recently facilitated a diversity workshop for early career faculty and just received the feedback from the participants. While the majority of the participants appreciated the opportunity to engage in conversations about diversity, some expressed concerns about me as the presenter. Comments such as “A discussion on diversity lead [sic] by tenured, middle-class, White faculty strikes me as slightly biased” and “I would just say to bring in people who are better trained to lead discussions on diversity.” I am at a loss as how to process this in my mind and move forward. I continue to be left questioning my place in this area of work. Irving (2014) expresses similar sentiments in her text when she reflected on her early work at becoming culturally aware. She wrote:

Looking for answers, I worked on diversity committees, went to diversity forums, and participated in outreach efforts to include and welcome students and families of color. The more I tried to understand and “help” the more confused I became....The persistent worrying about doing or saying something wrong perplexed me. Worst of all, over time I started to wonder if I might be doing more harm than good. (p. 29)

I experienced these same thoughts.

## **Internal Tensions**

Much like the tensions that I described when dealing with family members, I experience similar tensions as a result of my professional work with diversity over the years. Since securing my faculty position in the late 1990s, I have developed a reputation in my institution as the go-to person for diversity issues.

One thing that has occurred over my time at the school is that I have gained the reputation of the “diversity queen.” Because I have brought a number of initiatives forward; got the diversity task force started, I’m the one that comes into the ethics course to speak on diversity; I’m the sole person in the division whenever it’s part of our curriculum or part of our program competencies—I’m the person that goes in to work with the students. So the designated person for better or worse, I’m not sure which one. While I’m proud of the fact that I have this reputation and that others call upon me, I feel like it also shuts some people down. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

While tensions continue to exist and likely always will, my experiences with this self-study suggest that I do see that I might have a place in professional development. I have come to appreciate that while my journey in becoming more culturally aware and in preparing to do work in the area of diversity, having experienced discomfort and tension and always questioning my credibility, I do see that I might have something to offer others.

## **Advocacy**

A subtheme of advocacy surfaced in my self-study that suggests I feel a need to be an advocate for others. In an effort to do this, I expressed in my reflective journal the need to have the whole story:

Whenever we are in trouble I need to use the tool of inquiry to ask questions, asking myself first what do I know and what do I need to know in order to make a fair assessment of the situation. We cannot assume anything—as those assumptions typically are not accurate. We make assumptions on a little bit of information. There is always a bigger story we have not seen or heard. Don’t take stories at face value, we don’t have all of the information. I know that I am guilty of doing this. When a student comes to my office to tell me about an issue they are having with another

faculty or student I am quick to believe them and provide feedback about what they might do next. I need to take a step back—listen to the student—hear their story and then try to elicit the story of others that might be involved before making any judgement calls or providing any feedback. Make sure the student knows that I hear them and that I genuinely want to assist them but that I need some time to hear all sides of the story. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

I saw this desire to speak up and out for others in previous reflections when I commented on the need to speak out against aggressions and speak up to family members when they make offensive comments. When asked in a personal interview following the diversity training program about whether I find myself being more of an advocate as compared to before I participated in the diversity training workshop, I responded:

Absolutely. I was black and white. Everything was black and white to me, especially when I started teaching. Because that's all I knew. That is who I was, in terms of teaching and learning, that's what I was exposed to. I didn't have this awareness about me in terms of listening to people's stories, and considering what motives are. I was very quick to judge. I feel confident the students would tell you that as well. Like I said, I had to learn some lessons the hard way, and unfortunately, the students were on the receiving end of that. So I feel like yes, that has evolved. The thing that I really question, though, is while I feel that, I feel like I really evolved, and have a whole different mindset, I wonder whether others see that in me? (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

While my sense of growth and the desire to speak up for others has evolved, I continue to question how others might perceive my growth. In a nutshell—I am always questioning my ability to “walk the walk.”

Irving (2014) expressed a similar sentiment when she wrote:

The ultimate goal is to interrupt, advocate, and education without doing more harm than good...I've learned that when it comes to race, there is no such thing as neutral: either I'm intentionally and strategically working against it, or I'm aiding and abetting the system...The worst racism operates silently and often unknowingly in people's hearts and minds...Do I remain a bystander and stay silent? Or do I become an ally and ask the hard questions about how this might affect the range of people in our community. (p. 220)

As a result of this self-study I realized that while I believed myself to be an advocate for those without a voice, I often found myself staying silent in an effort to not make waves when I should have had the courage to speak up and speak out.

### **Personal Practical Knowledge Relative to Teaching**

A final theme that emerged in the data was that of personal practical knowledge relative to teaching. When I entered into this self-study I was consciously considering how what I was discovering about myself impacted my teaching practices past, present, and future. One of my aims for this research was to identify ways that I might improve my current teaching practices.

Teacher self-reflection is important to teaching practices because reflection can be one way to measure teachers' level of concern and care for their students. According to Howard (2003), "critical reflection requires one to seek deeper levels of self-knowledge, and to acknowledge how one's own worldview can shape students' conceptions of self" (p. 198). This same type of reflection can also serve to inform one about their teaching practices. "A teacher's willingness to ask tough questions about his or her own attitudes toward diverse students can reflect a true commitment that the individual has toward students' academic success and emotional well-being" (Howard, 2003, p. 199). Central to the idea of reflection is the ability to give attention to one's experiences and behaviors, so that meanings are then completed and interpreted to inform future practices. Dewey (1933) was one of the early theorists who discussed the value of reflection in education. He viewed reflection as a special form of problem solving steeped in the scaffolding of experiences and events that should be viewed as an active and deliberate cognitive process (cited in Howard, 2003, p. 197). Much of Dewey's philosophical framework still guides the thinking on reflection in

education. The term “critical reflection” attempts to look at reflection within the moral, political, and ethical contexts of teaching. Issues pertaining to equity, access, and social justice are typically referred to as critical reflection (Howard, 2003).

McNiff (2012) stated that identity formation is a process of development involving a person’s own values, purposes, and intents. Since a person is always in relationship with others, present and past, one’s identity is influenced by these elements. These relationships give us particular ways of thinking and ways of knowing, which are learned from birth. Through written stories of experiences, one’s identity formation can be observed. These stories show who we perceive ourselves to be in relation to others. McNiff (2012) also suggested that when studying one’s own identity, one should accept responsibility for one’s behaviors and thinking. This includes saying what is honest and true and considering one’s own position and one’s own self-perception. “If what we believe and come to know influences what we do, then what we do also influences who we are; so we can transform ourselves through developing knowledge” (p. 141). By utilizing the self-study process, the understanding of the self can be transformed. Through narrative inquiry and reflection, the following reflection portrays my willingness to self-assess my ideals as a teacher, most notably related to diversity.

Culturally responsive and inclusive teaching—that is where it is at for me. This the area of diversity and inclusion that I am most interested in pursuing. I want to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment for my students. I have engaged in much learning relative to cultural diversity, cultural competence, cultural awareness, multiculturalism, multicultural education, etc.....All of these areas have been critical to my development of becoming a culturally responsive educator. All really culminate in my efforts to become a more responsive teacher. Skills such as being reflective; creating a safe and inclusive learning community; critically assessing course content; utilizing varying teaching methods; dealing with difficult moments or conversations and constantly assessing the classroom climate are critical for me to develop as an educator. Will I acquire these skills all at once and miraculously create

an inclusive classroom—not so much. For me—this is a journey. One in which I will learn from trial and error—constantly reassessing what seemed to work and what didn't, constantly soliciting student feedback and using that feedback to improve the classroom climate. These are ideals for which I strive. (Reflective Journal, June 23, 2017)

Vozzo (2011) suggested that through self-study, the teacher's professional identity can be further shaped. The teacher's story and his/her experiences give the teacher the professional knowledge to establish credibility with students. This then can give the teacher confidence. Teachers' beliefs are formed over their professional careers through chance observations, intense experiences (both positive and negative), or through events that gradually convince them of the "truth" of some rational or relationship (Ennis, 1994). The following excerpt for a journal entry highlights my willingness to participate in self-reflection in an effort to improve my teaching practices.

Every year that I teach a class, I am constantly re-evaluating my curricula—what worked, what didn't, what could I improve upon? I constantly change my courses up to try and better meet the needs of all students. It is a challenge, it takes time and effort—but in my mind, the students deserve that effort. I want students to be engaged, I want them to find meaning in their learning, I want the content to mean something to them. I have to believe that all faculty want that same thing. Am I the exception—I highly doubt that. Do I attend more development opportunities in an effort to facilitate this work?—likely, but I love attending faculty development. I love learning more about how to be a better teacher. That likely explains why I have been taking courses for so many years. I love learning. (Reflective Journal, August 21, 2017)

This reflection brings up a valid question—do we all want the same thing in terms of teaching? Do all faculty want what is best for their students and are they willing to engage in the self-reflection needed to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The following reflection for my reflective learning journal conveys the challenges that face faculty as they work towards improving their teaching.

As I read through this resource I am reminded about how much time and effort needs to go into planning for your teaching. It is really almost overwhelming to have to consider who the students are, where do they come from, what are their cognitive abilities, how do they learn, how do they best communicate, how do I create an inclusive learning environment. There is so much to consider. How does a faculty member have enough time and energy that is needed to consider all of these things? I've been at this a long time and as a full time faculty member, I don't feel like I have time to even update my syllabi some semesters. There is no one size fits all approach and one fail-proof approach to teaching—how do we make the time and expend the effort to create the most appropriate learning environment for our students. I'm overwhelmed with it all. (Reflective Journal, July 31, 2017)

I don't believe that these sentiments are unique to me. I sense that most faculty members can be overwhelmed with the demands of teaching. When asked to consider creating an inclusive environment faculty can become intimidated by the idea of needing to make changes to themselves and their teaching practices as reflected in this excerpt from my reflective learning journal:

Diversity awareness, cultural awareness is just one piece of the many things that are relative to teaching. Most of us come into teaching, we are hired for our content expertise, not our teaching expertise. We learn, as a result of what we've experienced and what works for us, what we think works for us as opposed to what works for the student in the classroom. I feel like we have so many opportunities to help faculty raise their awareness. I think it really starts with this whole journey for cultural awareness and diversity awareness and being inclusive and responsive in your teaching practices, starts with self. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

As campuses continue to become more diverse, faculty members need to be attentive to prejudice, bias, and discriminatory behavior—their own and that of their students. Some historically underrepresented students describe feeling like unwelcome outsiders and encountering subtle forms of bias and unwitting insensitive comments from peers and instructors that have led to a sense of alienation and detachment (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). Initiatives fostering inclusive excellence are particularly critical for reinforcing the academic resiliency of students who have been historically marginalized in education

systems—notably students of color, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered, women, and students with disabilities. Inclusive excellence means a purposeful deployment of inclusive practices toward multiple student identity groups (Milem et al., 2005). Improved academic outcomes are evidenced in higher educational aspirations, motivation, and self-confidence and stronger critical thinking and problem solving skills (Milem et al., 2003). An example of this need to focus on inclusivity surfaced in the multiple sources of data and included the following reflection:

As teachers we need to be mindful and inclusive of all the learners and know that each presents with unique needs that we should be trying our best to address and meet. Variety in every aspect of the curricula is crucial. What works for one student may very likely not work for another. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

Determining who we are as teachers and the perceptions we have of ourselves may not always match up with those of our students. We need to determine who we are as teachers based on our own privileges. In a reflection written during the training program, I conveyed this same sentiment.

We need to determine who we are as professor or teacher, explore the perceptions we have of ourselves and determine who we are as teachers fully knowing that our perceptions might not match up with those of our students. We need to be reflective of who we are as a professor based on our own privilege. (Reflective Journal, June 22, 2017)

Many in education have this innate need to be seen as neutral or non-discriminatory by our students. Students often agree that White professors and White students are often “hung up” because they do not want to be perceived as racist or prejudiced. I can see this in my own work as a teacher. I have strived to be seen as impartial, inclusive, and more evolved in my thinking almost to a fault. This sentiment surfaced in the personal interview portion of my research:

One experience that I can clearly remember was when I was working with a student who was Asian. I made an extra effort when working with this student to be sensitive to that fact that she was a CLD student. This student reported to my director that she felt like I was targeting her. I was treating her differently than others. And I was devastated. Because here I was, this individual that was trying to become more enlightened, more responsive to students of different cultures and ethnicities and whatever those difference might be, and then I had a student that really felt like I was treating her differently. I thought it was because of her ethnicity. I was just blown away and was devastated. It was very painful personally and professionally. I felt like a complete failure. I did have an opportunity to speak with the student and found out that it was her ethnicity had nothing to do with the situation. She perceived the situation as age discrimination. She was older than I was, and she perceived that I talked down to her because of the age difference. It was monumental for me personally and professionally. I felt so guilty that I had a student feel she was less than and it was me that made her feel that way. (Personal Interview, May 8, 2018)

Culturally competent educators recognize that students experience schools and society differently, based on their socio-political identities (Jones & Nichols, 2013).

However, many of our educators, a majority of whom are White, often view schools as culturally neutral spaces. In order for leaders to develop the cultural competencies needed to promote equity within schools, transformative learning must occur. According to Brown and Shaked (2018), “transformative learning changes the way people see themselves and their world” (p. 84). Transformative learning brings about a change in one’s frame of reference.

### **Difficult Conversations**

A recurring subtheme that emerged in this self-study was the conflict that I felt while considering the need to engage in difficult conversations. Considerable evidence exists suggesting that people of color can more readily identify the causes and dynamics of a difficult dialogue on race while their White counterparts are often experiencing confusion and disorientation in these sort of interactions. This certainly can be seen in my self-reflection during the training program.

One thing that I have given considerable thought to was my ability to manage critical conversations that might occur in the classroom. I will admit that I have felt less than prepared to support these kinds of conversations. Now more than ever the opportunity to have these conversations is upon us. The current political climate has prompted many to speak out when before they might have kept their opinions and thoughts to themselves. I have considered how I might manage this situation if it ever arises in my classroom. I do believe that these conversations could serve as teachable moments and as a faculty member it is my responsibility to seize these opportunities and try to learn from others. Even though my teaching discipline may be less likely to spark some of these critical conversations, they very likely could come up in casual conversation inside and outside of my classroom. Approaching these critical conversations from the view that these conversations are opportunities to learn, I think is critical to the success of the conversations. In the past, I believe I have approached these types of conversations by either shutting them down or trying to take control of the conversation and project dominance over others involved in the conversations. I think I did this more because engaging in the conversation made me nervous and I really did not have a good understanding of how to manage the conversations. Using reflective statements in an effort to understand what others are trying to convey, being nonjudgmental, and asking for greater explanation in an effort to understand and sharing my perspective in a nonjudgmental manner are all critical to these types of conversations. Recognizing that students are coming into the classroom with their own histories and issues is imperative to the success of an inclusive classroom and respecting the diversity that each student presents with. (Reflective Journal, June 22, 2017)

As educators we need to acknowledge that we are no more immune from inheriting the biases, fears, and anxieties about race than any other person and that we bring those attributes with us in every conversation or dialogue we have with others. I came to see this, and I consider how other teacher might also find this vantage point useful. I have also come to understand the need to be honest with ourselves about our own personal biases, prejudices, and cultural norms. I acknowledge the power of those dynamics in the following reflection:

I cannot express enough the importance of instructor honesty and openness as attributes that ultimately enhance the creditably of professors and has the secondary effect of freeing students to self-disclose and challenge their own beliefs and values. Professors comfortable with acknowledging that they are products of cultural conditioning and have inherited biases and fears about other racial groups have a positive impact on facilitating difficult dialogues on race. I have hope because I do

feel like I can own my shortcomings and my role in the learning process. I can own where I am at in the process of facilitating difficult dialogues. I don't have this real need to be the 'all knowing.' I have no hesitation in letting others see my vulnerability. Honesty is always the best policy. (Reflective Journal, June 22, 2017)

Increasingly I am able to go into these conversations free of the need to make a particular point or make myself heard. I am humbled by the collective intelligence that emerges when people use conversation to deepen understanding. When having challenging conversations, the trick is to stay in the conversation long enough to get to the other side, where niceness gives way to authenticity, understanding, and trust.

Teachers will be hard-pressed to follow through with inclusive practices if they do not understand the role of culture in their own lives. Gay (2000) suggested that

teachers carry into the classroom their own personal practical knowledge. They perceive students, all of whom are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconception. Students likewise come to school with personal and cultural backgrounds that influenced their perceptions of teachers other students, and the school itself. (p. 9)

### **Final Thoughts**

The four major themes that emerged from this research include 1) defining and redefining diversity in which I highlight my struggle to really understand the concept of diversity and all of its implications. 2) Continuous state of self-awareness where it is evident that I impose self-reflection in an effort to better understand my personal professional practices. 3) Professional development at a personal and professional level provides an understanding of what I have gained from the many opportunities to engage in professional development as well as the need for teachers to do the same. 4) Personal practical knowledge related to teaching which highlights some of my experiences in becoming a culturally responsive teacher.

The themes described above have significant meaning for me in my self-study journey to enlightenment. The theme of understanding the meaning of diversity highlights the fact that understanding diversity is a complex process. Each person has their own perspective and understanding of what diversity stands for. I have come to understand that we best serve others if we are mindful of our own views, biases, prejudices, and cultural norms. The second theme of self-awareness helped me to understand that growth does not come without tensions. It is often through our personal and professional missteps that we come to better understand ourselves and our intentions. Self-reflection is critical to developing self-awareness, and self-awareness is critical to our growth as individuals and teachers. The third theme of professional development at a personal and professional level really highlighted my insecurities with the work that I do or will do in the future related to diversity training. Time and time again I reflect on my ability to walk the walk of a person who is culturally competent. I suspect that this is something that will not change in the future. I believe it is highly likely that I will always question my capabilities. I do not believe this to necessarily be a bad thing. As I continue to grow and develop my knowledge, understanding, and practices, that lack of confidence will always challenge me to do and be better. And finally, the last theme of professional development brings attention to my discomfort with discomfort. I understand that discomfort is something to anticipate and embrace when engaging in diversity professional development—both as a participant and as a facilitator. It was within this theme that I also discovered the important role that self-awareness and self-reflection play in developing my culturally responsive teaching practices.

The road to understanding diversity in all of its varying aspects has been enlightening. This study has helped me to learn that the actions that I engage in matter. They

matter to my own personal development, but also to my professional development as a teacher and as a person wanting to help other teachers embark on that same enlightenment. As a result of this self-study I have come to understand why I do and why I say the things that I often do, and why I treat others as I do. Most importantly this study has provided me with insights for further development.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

A paradigm shift is taking place in American higher education, moving away from an instructional paradigm in which the focus of teaching is often conceptualized as the “sage on the stage” and where the mission of the institution is to deliver instruction. Institutions of higher education are now adopting a “learning paradigm” in which the production of learning by whatever means that works best for the student is the focus (Barr & Tagg, 1995). This shift from teaching to learning and the increasing diversity of our student body have prompted educators to consider the use of culturally responsive teaching as a means to better help students in higher education succeed. Some would suggest that higher education has a responsibility to change the pedagogical paradigm in an effort to help prepare graduating students to meet the complex challenges they will face in their real-world lives after school, college, or university. This paradigm shift is needed to help graduates fulfill their civic responsibilities and live fulfilling lives (Kivunja, 2014).

While there exists much evidence to support the relationship between the use of culturally responsive teaching and student achievement in pre-K through 12th grades (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Banks & Banks, 2004, 2009; Gay, 2018; Nieto, 2002, Sleeter, 2008, 2012), the lack of research about culturally responsive teaching and student outcomes in higher education cannot be overlooked (Heitner & Jennings, 2016). Much of the existing literature defines, describes, and outlines principles of, or advocates for culturally responsive teaching in higher education rather than providing empirical evidence for what does or does not work in college classrooms (Sleeter, 2012). Little evidence exists that highlights the process that faculty undertake in an effort to engage in culturally responsive teaching. That

same lack of empirical research and theoretical works exists in the U.S. on teaching CLD students in college classrooms (Banks & Banks, 2004). The knowledge derived from qualitative studies of White pre-service education students and curricula designed to promote culturally relevant pedagogical practice in diverse K-12 school communities is relevant to higher education. It is limited, however, in the usefulness because the focus is on the student and not the faculty member teaching.

This study attempts to close that gap in knowledge and better understand the impact a professional development program can have on the development of values, beliefs, and attitudes about culturally responsive teaching and personal practical knowledge. Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) developed the personal practical knowledge framework to study and articulate how teachers' past experiences and their narrative recollections of these experiences influence their classroom behaviors. Since that time, numerous studies reflecting on the pedagogical development of educators, mostly in the primary and secondary grades, have been published; however, little research has been done at the collegiate level exploring personal practical knowledge. Even less evidence can be found that explores the personal practical knowledge of higher education educators and the development of culturally responsive pedagogies.

While diversity training can be presented in varying forms and have varying impact on individuals, it has the potential to be a life changer for many (Peterson, Cross, Johnson, & Howell, 2000) The insights gained from this research will serve to inform faculty and administration about the impact of diversity and culturally responsive professional development on faculty in higher education. In this final chapter of my dissertation, I share conclusions and implications for self-study research, diversity training, and culturally

responsive professional development, personal and social implications for this study, limitations of the study, ethical considerations, and suggestions for future research.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Educational Significance**

Much has been written about the potential academic success of students who are on the receiving end of the culturally responsive pedagogy; however, there is a lack of research that explores the motivations of those faculty who seek to engage in culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms, especially those in higher education. Taking the opportunity to think deeply and engage in uncomfortable self-reflection, admit to prejudices and assumptions, and build relationships with people who are different from oneself are all seen as critical to the development of self-awareness needed to engage in culturally responsive pedagogy (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2010; Gay & Howard, 2000). A culturally responsive paradigm requires deep and sophisticated analysis of self-awareness. Faculty who have a keen sense of self and what that self brings to the classroom have the potential of creating a learning environment that benefits all students. Gay (2010) found that when teachers reflect deeply about what they believe about groups of people who are different from themselves, they often discover that their beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives toward others easily affect their teaching paradigms. Lucey and White (2017) examined and described the process of self-reflection while teaching a graduate course on diversity and CRP. Over the course of a semester the researchers engaged in reflective dialogue about teaching the course. The outcomes of this study speak to the importance of incorporating self-reflection about the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy in an effort to effect true attitudinal change.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) explained, “we can think about our experience—muse, review, and so on—but to reflect critically, we must also examine the underlying beliefs and assumptions that affect how we make sense of the experience” (p. 328). Crucial to this study is my engagement in critical reflection as a means for identifying and understanding my beliefs and assumptions and how those impact my practices as a teacher. Both Howard (2003) and Ladson-Billings (1994a) cited the process of critical reflection as a useful tool for creating culturally relevant teaching to assist this process. Dewey (1933) deemed “reflective action” an active component of behavioral intervention or means of effecting change in outcomes. Critical reflection entails an honest self-assessment and critique of thoughts and behaviors. Through critical reflection, adults are compelled to deconstruct what we think we know about a subject and then reconstruct our knowledge after acquiring new information or perspectives that challenge us to rethink our behaviors (Yorks & Marsick, 2000).

Critical reflection was central to this research study. It was through self-reflection that I came to have a better understanding of my beliefs, values, biases and prejudices, and how those things impacted my teaching practices. Self-reflection should serve as a central theme in any faculty development activities that center on diversity awareness or cultural competency.

Bezrukova, Jehn and Spell (2012) conducted a critical examination of literature on diversity training and found that while training programs can change how people think (cognitive) about racial differences, they tend not to be as effective at changing how people act (behavioral), and this cognitive learning often persists, whereas the behavioral learning will likely subside overtime. These authors also found no strong evidence exists to suggest

that diversity training changes people's attitudes over the long term. They did find, however, that training has sometimes changed people's minds. While their biases might remain intact, people can learn new ways of thinking about things like race. That thinking can sometimes lead them to act against their instincts. In a similar study, Booker, Merriweather, and Campbell-Whatley (2016) examined the effects of faculty participation in a Summer Diversity Training Institute. Findings revealed that faculty participation in the diversity training was beneficial in the sense that instructors' personal growth was most frequently evidenced through attitudinal and curricular changes.

As an educator, I felt driven to find a way to share my reality so that other educators might see the importance of telling their stories and learning their students' stories as an essential part of developing their teaching practice in culturally responsive ways. The research questions, conceptual framework, and methods for engaging in this self-study are the result of years of reading, writing, learning, and revising thinking in formal and informal learning spaces. Exemplified in the theme "self-awareness" I demonstrate that I sometimes get my cultural wires crossed, and it causes stress. Sometimes, my Whiteness comes out when I have not asked it to. I might react quickly in some White privileged way. I immediately feel very aware of my surroundings. I feel exposed. Embarrassed. I am immediately reminded of other times and places where my cultural self and the self I present to others are not the same.

This study is thus an example for White educators of how they can be naïve in their understanding of diversity and what it means to work with a CLD student body. Garrett and Segall (2013) attributed White teacher candidates' resistance to critical multicultural education to avoidance of acknowledging the truth of social accounts provided by those who

are oppressed. In other words, excuses of ignorance represent deliberate efforts to avoid responsibility for culturally oppressive conditions. I believe that my early teaching practices support this idea in that I didn't know what I didn't know, and I used my own personal cultural capital as an excuse for addressing disparities in my classroom.

This study expands the boundaries of research because self-study and personal narratives are not common or easily accepted in the realm of academic research. Even as I write this very sentence, I struggle to find tangible support, scholarship, and examples to help amplify my voice, ideas, and experiences. This scholarship is either buried or nonexistent—neither of which is acceptable and makes the process of academic writing that is representative of my cultural voice much more challenging. I am not just looking for epistemological and methodological support for my research. I am also seeking support for me and my way of being and reaching out to other educators to seek such support and educational action. I further display in this study how applying self-study techniques to research and practice in education may be pertinent for expanding research and practice in culturally responsive teaching and development.

While it is often a challenge to engage faculty in development activities, it can be even more challenging to engage faculty in diversity development. The use of self-directed and transformative learning can assist in this engagement. Transformative learning suggests that we make meaning of the world through our experience in which we develop a frame of reference for understanding the world around us (Cranton, 1996). This is the goal of professional faculty development, especially faculty development centered on diversity.

## **Personal Significance of the Study**

During the summer of 2017, I participated in a diversity training workshop. As a participant in this workshop, I examined the development of my own personal and professional knowledge and practices related to my cultural identity. Included in this exploration was the analysis of my previously held knowledge, experience, and practices concerning diversity. Using a self-study approach, I engaged in reflective practices that provided a better understanding of my cultural beliefs and values, teaching practices, and professional development. The diversity awareness workshop emphasized the importance of cultural awareness and the effects which professional development can have on cultural awareness. My participation in varying diversity training experiences has been transformative and instrumental in transforming my way of thinking about others.

Four major themes emerged from the multiple data sources utilized in this study. The first theme of defining and redefining diversity highlights the challenges that I have faced over the course of my academic career to truly understand culture and diversity and how they have impacted my experiences as an educator. I uncovered the insecurities I have related to the process of becoming culturally aware and responsive and the impact those insecurities had on me as a teacher. Understanding the complexity of diversity has helped me to gain a better perspective on my journey. The second theme that emerged from my research supports the idea that teachers need time to reflect on their practices. Personal and professional self-awareness has afforded me the opportunity for growth. I have come to understand that although I have grown through the process of self-reflection, I have also come to understand that I have much to learn. Employing a continuous state of self-reflection provided me the opportunity to reflect on my White privilege, a concept that has

impacted me personally and professionally more than any other. I experience a constant state of tension struggling with my ability to facilitate diversity work with my students and with my colleagues because of position and positionality as a White middle class female.

A third theme of personal and professional development emerged in my research. As a part of this theme emerged the idea that in order to grow, one must experience discomfort. I have struggled with this concept for years and continue to do so. While I have to acknowledge that I have undergone personal discomfort in my pursuits of becoming more culturally aware, most notably when I learned of White privilege, I have resisted that notion that one must be uncomfortable to become more culturally aware. The tensions that I have about facilitating diversity work resurface again in this theme. The final theme of personal practical knowledge relative to teaching frames my journey as an educator, most specifically as an educator with the desire to be culturally responsive. Determining who I am as a teacher based on my own privileges has been a journey and one that will continue well into the future.

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to explore my experiences of participating in a diversity training workshop in relation to my own practices. In particular, I examined the development of my own personal and professional knowledge and my practices as an outgrowth of my personal practical knowledge, with a concentration on issues of diversity and culturally responsive pedagogy. My mission to become better focused on the premises of diversity and culturally responsive teaching has allowed my thinking of culturally responsive teaching to evolve. Scholars describe culturally responsive teachers as continually developing their knowledge base about cultural diversity; including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum; demonstrating caring and building learning

communities; relating with ethnically diverse students; and responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction (Gay, 1994, 2002, 2013, 2018). Culturally responsive teachers understand the interaction of academic achievement, cultural competency, and sociopolitical consciousness in their work (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b, 2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2016). They also understand education as part of the systems of oppression, and therefore, work in a variety of ways to combat its pervasiveness—through knowledge construction, prejudice reductions, and creating an empowering school and classroom culture (Banks & Banks, 2009).

I “knew” about culturally responsive teaching before I knew what it was. I really knew it more as good teaching. My search for a doctoral program and my search to become a better teacher and help others to avoid some of the mistakes that I had made as a novice teacher were grounded in questions I had about how I interact with students. I knew there was a connection to diversity, cross-cultural understanding, and being a good teacher, and I wanted to learn more. That was why I began a journey towards an IPhD in curriculum and instruction. Along the way, I have developed some answers to my questions and have asked new ones as well. I realize how complex it is to implement culturally responsive teaching practices and to be attentive to the diversity within our classrooms.

The findings from this study suggest that self-study can foster a deeper understanding of self and culturally responsive teaching practices on the path toward transformational teaching and that self-study can lead to resiliency for those who choose to acknowledge a deeply reflective process. My pursuit to better understand my role in professional development related to diversity and develop my teaching practice turned out to be a journey of self-discovery and awareness that has undoubtedly inspired me to be a well-

developed culturally responsive educator. This was often reflected in the theme of professional development at a personal and professional level. My goal is to offer transparency in my process to help others develop appreciation and pathways for engaging in self-study.

Not only am I a different educator than I was 25 years ago, I am also a different person based on the experiences described in this study. I entered academia with little understanding of what it means to be an educator. I learned many lessons the hard way, and, I am embarrassed to say, at the expense of my students. However, I have always considered myself a reflective practitioner who constantly relives experiences and reflects on opportunities for improvement as highlighted in the “self-awareness” theme of this research. This self-study has given a voice to those experiences and reflections.

What I have also come to understand as a result of this self-study is that I have a responsibility to my students, peers, colleagues, and myself to make sure that I use my voice and that my voice is heard. Yes, it is true that I question my abilities or positionality in diversity training and the ability to lead others in professional development about diversity, but I have come to understand and appreciate that I do have something to offer to others in their journey to becoming culturally aware. I have the perspective of what it is like to be a White, middle class female who has experienced White privilege her entire life and who has embarked on a journey to understand my White privilege and how that privilege has impacted me personally and professionally. I hope that my story can inspire others to do the hard work, the transformational work needed on themselves.

The majority of the traditional research I have been exposed to discourages the researcher from using their personal voice while constructing the context of the data. Self-

study allowed me as the researcher to provide a first-person account of how context has added value to my profession. My particular learning style has never responded to conventional research lacking the personalized significant of events, artifacts, people, and observed cultural social norms. It is my hope this self-study will provide the reader with an opportunity to broaden their understanding on a collaborative journey through the research. Krizek (1998) depicted this balance between narrative and research: “In short, we often render our research reports devoid of human emotion and self-reflection. As self-study researchers, we experience life, but we write science” (p. 93). The personal account found here provided me with an opportunity as the researcher to explain how the literature and data collected played a direct role in my evolution as a teacher, which is best reflected in the personal practical knowledge relative to teaching theme that emerged as a result of this research.

The majority of my research experience has been approached through a quantitative framework. I found it difficult to write in first person, allow myself to tell a story, and portray what Anderson (2006) described as a “narrative visibility of the researcher’s self” (p. 378). Furthermore, critics of qualitative research have often charged that this approach to research is too subjective, in large part because the researcher is often the instrument used to collect and interpret the data and because qualitative research requires that the researcher get close and personal with the people and situation under study (Patton, 2002). The vulnerability of sharing my story opened the door to fearing judgment. I encourage the reader to reflect on their own professional practice in relation to my story rather than judging my choices. The freedom most would find appealing within the confines of self-study research created academic anxiety for me personally. Knowles (2014) conducted a self-

study exploring how others are affected by her teaching in an effort to understand her pedagogy and how to change it. She also explored her interactions with vulnerability and its transformative value. Using a social justice lens, Knowles found that the relationship between self-study research and vulnerability can be a risky one. Exposing one's thoughts, ideas, and practices to be scrutinized by others can often put the researcher in a defensive position. In her research Knowles acknowledged that she was cautious in what she chose to expose of herself in an effort to protect her vulnerability; in turn, that provided her with power that she did not realize she had.

The self-study research method lacked the clearly defined path and predictable steps my concrete mind had become accustomed to. My previous research experience was heavily weighted in technical writing with little opportunity to share personal experiences. Van Manen (1990) explained lived experience research as “textural reflection on the experiences and practical actions of everyday life with the intent to increase one's thoughtfulness, and practical resourcefulness or tact” (p. 4). I had no way of knowing 50 years of memories would become a collection of research data to reflect on. The opportunity to use narrative as a means for sharing knowledge in the context of lived experience is rewarding.

### **Inquiry Ethical Considerations**

The Social Sciences IRB aims to ensure the ethical treatment of human participants in university research through the review of studies considered medically noninvasive. The acceptance and conduct of this study was no exception to those guidelines. University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) SSIRB approval was secured prior to conducting this study. Data generated from this study were used to inform the body of work and were not reported to university personnel in any manner. Any data in this study pertaining to other participants

of the workshop or other colleagues was reported using pseudonyms to protect the privacy of individuals. The Belmont Report, published in 1979, established ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice for the protection of human subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Self-study researchers often claim stories they write as their own, but they ultimately often implicate others (Tolich, 2010). In this self-study research, I was conscious about not potentially risking myself or identifying others that were a part of the narratives that developed. I also shielded my research in terms of not disclosing the name of the institution in which the diversity training program that I participated in was held. In this study, attention was paid to the concept of beneficence as I considered, from the time of conceptualization of the study to its completion, minimizing harm to myself and others with whom I engaged.

In order to offer sufficient analysis of the social and cultural phenomena explored, other voices, selves, and participants are necessary to give credence to the research process. While the literature served as a guide for my research project, my life experiences certainly influenced the lens through which I saw the data collected. My past experiences in teaching and with culturally responsive pedagogy have shaped my experiences in this research project and the collection and interpretation of the data (Carger, 2005; Phillion, 2002).

Narrative inquirers often engage in intense and transparent reflection and often question their own position, values, and beliefs (Clandinin, 2012; Trahar, 2009). Making oneself apparent via reflexivity can put oneself at risk of making oneself more central to the discourse and pushing “other” voices out to the margins (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). In reporting narratives, the researchers position their own “voice, stance, assumptions and

analytic lens so that the reader is abundantly clear on whose story is whose” (Connolly, 2007, p. 453). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggested that the goal of qualitative research is not to eliminate the influence of the researcher on the study, but to understand it and use it as productively as possible. This is something I need to attend to carefully, as I aim to study my own experiences and position those experiences within my own practices.

I did due diligence in trying to remain objective in the collection process and in reporting the data collected. By keeping a journal of my experiences and thoughts as a researcher-participant, I was able to reflect upon my own understandings and interpretations of the research process and identify what influence these processes have had on me personally as a researcher. Journals are a way for individuals to give accounts of their experiences during the narrative inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Journals are a method of creating field texts. They blend detailed field notes on the actions, thoughts, and experiences of the researcher with reflections on how the researcher feels about those actions, thoughts, and experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Phillip and Lauderdale (2018) stated that field notes encourage the researcher to reflect, aids in the identification of bias, and increases rigor and trustworthiness. They allow researchers to share storied experiences. A reflective journal combined with objective field notes helped me to provide a reflective balance.

### **Future Research Puzzles**

Throughout the course of this research study I found myself asking the same question over and over again—so what? I believe that I have finally identified the answer to that question. Part of that answer is what I have already presented in this chapter. The other part of that answer has to do with my realization that I love qualitative research. I love

exploring why we as teachers do the things that we do. I love the idea of helping others to be better teachers and help others to develop a meaningful career as educators. With that being said, my “so what” is that through this experience with narrative inquiry I have identified a new line of research to pursue. I built my career on quantitative scientific research. That research line helped me to earn tenure. As I have moved through my career, I have come to understand where my passions lie and that it is possible to make a career move that allows one to pursue their passion. The takeaway message is that it is never too late to reinvent yourself either personally or professionally.

Our stories are ever evolving and incomplete. The end of one experience really is just the beginning of another, especially considering external time constraints that do not always align with our personal and professional development and growth. This I know all too well, as I have experienced the passing of both parents, the untimely death of two close family members, the marriage of two children, and the birth of my first grandchild during the course of my graduate studies. For the sake of not adding another year or semester to my graduate studies, this has to be wrapped up, but I now have a great start to a future text as I embrace this “new” world where I am more informed and have the letters behind my name to give my story official credence.

## APPENDIX A

### SEMI-STRUCTURED COLLEAGUE INTERVIEW QUESTION LIST

#### Possible Questions:

- Tell me how you first became interested in diversity training?
- In what ways do you think diversity is important to someone in the role of faculty development?
- How are diversity/inclusion issues and teaching related?
- How would you describe your current thinking about diversity, and how has your thinking changed over time?
- What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment, and how would you see yourself demonstrating it here?
- What influence do you think faculty development can have on developing faculty's cultural awareness?
- How have your teaching knowledge and teaching practices changed as a result of participating in the diversity training program?
- Why do you think it is important to address diversity and inclusion issues in a faculty development role? What are some ways in which you might do that?
- How has your experience prepared you for working with a diverse population?
- Do you find yourself being more or less of an advocate for others compared to when you started your journey towards becoming more culturally aware?
- What is your past experience relative to diversity training in a faculty development position?
- What ideas do you have for educating faculty about diversity?

- In a perfect world, if you could design a faculty development program on diversity, what would that look like?
- In what ways might your current practices underscore your commitment to diversity?
- Do you think being a White, middle-class privileged female impacts your ability to provide faculty development relative to diversity?

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## VITA

Lorie Holt has lived in Bucyrus, Kansas her entire life. She attended grade school in Bucyrus, Kansas and middle school and high school in Louisburg, Kansas. She completed her Associates Degree at Johnson County Community College and went on to earn a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in dental hygiene from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In addition to her academic journey, Ms. Holt has provided oral health care in the same private practice for over thirty years.

Ms. Holt is currently a full time faculty member at UMKC and serves as the Director of Degree Completion Studies in the Division of Dental Hygiene. She has much teaching and service experience within the UMKC School of Dentistry, within the University itself, and to the dental profession.

Ms. Holt entered the UMKC Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program with a passion for better understanding the relationship between culturally responsive pedagogy and faculty development. Seeking a better understanding of how to help faculty become better teachers both inside and outside of the classroom has motivated her to pursue extensive faculty development opportunities. Upon completion of the Doctor of Philosophy degree, Ms. Holt plans to continue her role as a faculty member and pursue opportunities in educational development.