IN PURSUIT OF HEALING-CENTERED EDUCATION:

A CASE STUDY OF A RACIAL LITERACY AND HEALING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP SERIES

by

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ABSTRACT

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Angel Acosta

In an attempt to tackle issues of racism in the U.S. public education system, school districts throughout the country are paying particular attention to how teachers and educational leaders are trained and supported to address issues of racial disparities. As a result of this, there has been a diffusion of various anti-bias and racial literacy-based trainings in some of the largest school systems. This dissertation explored a case study of a unique racial literacy and healing professional development (PD) workshop series within the New York City Department of Education, which was offered to a group composed predominantly of educators of Color. This inquiry was primarily concerned with how the educator of the PD workshop series designed and enacted a *healing-centered* pedagogy and what were the affordances of such an approach. A number of qualitative research methods—including contemplative inquiry—worked together to understand how this professional learning experience enabled participants to engage in a healing praxis. The PD curriculum structured opportunities for participants to deploy a

two-pronged healing praxis, which combined racial literacy and critical consciousness on one side, and healing and self-care on the other. Through the combination of a *transformative activist stance*, a *healing-centered engagement*, and an *indigenist stance*, this study drew on a unique conceptual framework to examine how the PD series enabled participants to: (a) surface feelings of racialized stress and trauma; (b) potentiate their own healing journey; (c) articulate gratitude and cultivate empathy; and (d) explore conflict and cultural fault lines. This work finds a home in the coming wave of scholarship and a canon that considers healing within the context of education as an urgent matter.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The task of preparing educators to understand how racism works in schools has, in large part, been situated within university-based teacher preparation programs and university-based educational leadership development programs (Brown, 2004; Gooden, 2012; Horsford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011; Parsons, 2005; Rusch & Horsford, 2009). In the case of teacher education, researchers have documented how programs struggle to equip teachers effectively with the skills needed to teach a diversifying student population and to dismantle long-standing racist policies and practices (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Picower, 2009). Scholars in the subfield of educational leadership have also examined the challenges that come with training and educating superintendents, principals, deans, and other school staff to address issues concerning racism (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Lightfoot, 2009; Rusch & Horsford, 2008; Solomon, 2002). This study drew on the recent trend in the field of education that focuses on ensuring that teachers and educational leaders have the racial literacy and cultural competency to identify and interrupt personal prejudice and structural racism in schools (Bolgatz, 2005; Gillborn, 2014; Horsford, 2009).

Rusch and Horsford (2008) asserted that aspiring educational leaders who feel unprepared to talk about race and who do not have access to opportunities to explore complex social justice issues constructively experience difficulties when leading in diverse contexts. There is a palpable sense of urgency toward building educators'

competencies through different anti-bias, anti-racist, and racial literacy-based professional development and leadership programs. The core assumption here is that by helping educators to understand “what race is, why it is, and how it is used to reproduce inequality” (Horsford, 2011a, p. 95), they will develop the racial literacy and skills to interrupt policies and practices that reinforce racism in schools (Gilborn, 2014).

Fundamentally, this inquiry is influenced by three specific developments. First, some school districts throughout the country are providing opportunities for their leaders and teachers to learn more about how to better address issues of racial disparities (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Horsford, 2010). Second, some of the challenges that come with this task have given rise to the development of racial affinity groups to help educators discuss issues of race and racism in separate spaces (Bennett, Cole, & Thompson, 2000; Irizarry, 2007; Kohli, 2008, 2012; Kohli & Pizzaro, 2016). Third, there has been an emergent focus on *healing-centered pedagogies* to support communities processing and recovering from racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of institutionalized oppression (Ginwright, 2015, 2018).

Correspondingly, this is a case study on the design, implementation, and impact of a racial literacy-based and healing-centered professional development (PD) workshop series within the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) that was provided for educators of Color in the fall of 2019. My research closely examined a NYC DOE-sponsored educator affinity group—the Male Educators Collective (MEC)—as its members participated in an intentionally curated professional learning experience. To protect participants’ identities, the names Cindy Bailey-Cruz and MEC are used as pseudonyms. As I briefly mentioned, school districts are investing significant money and

energy in deploying different strategies to address issues of equity. The MEC represents one of many opportunities the NYC DOE has provided to support educators with tackling issues of racial disparities.

Background of the Problem

> The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colorline. (Du Bois, 1903)

> The unique combination of American terrorism—Jim Crow and lynching—as well as American barbarism—slave trade and slave labor—bears witness to the distinctive American assault on black humanity. This vicious ideology and practice of white supremacy has left its indelible mark on all spheres of American life—from the prevailing crimes of Amerindian reservations to the discriminatory realities against Spanish-speaking Latinos to racial stereotypes against Asians...In this sense, the problem of the twenty-first century remains the problem of the colorline. (West, 1993)

In 2019, issues concerning race and racism remained intractable throughout U.S. culture and society. Exactly 400 years after the arrival of enslaved Africans to Jamestown, Virginia, the racial fault lines within the United States of America were still wide and exposed. Various scholars have suggested that the system of slavery never ended; rather, it transmuted into more sophisticated mechanisms of control and stratification (Alexander, 2010; Coates, 2014; Du Bois, 1903; Ladson-Billings, 2006; West, 1993). For many of these researchers, the prison-industrial complex, voter suppression, the wealth gap, the opportunity gap in education, and pervasive police brutality represented some of the ways the aftermath of slavery manifests itself in contemporary American society.

The further entrenchment of racial stratification and the resulting inequality impact the life trajectories of not only African Americans, but other minoritized groups as well. In many ways, the United States has had to deal with the ramifications of its encoded and institutionalized form of racialized hierarchy. For example, it has wrestled with the byproducts of what many scholars considered to be the failure of integration after *Brown v. Board of Education* (Horsford, 2011a; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ogletree, 2004). Scholars have documented how the process of desegregation resulted in failed efforts to truly integrate schools in a way that went beyond just dismantling the legal barriers that separated the races, but to thoroughly ensuring a fair and just distribution of resources in the nation's schools (Bell, 1992; Guinier, 2004).

In her book *Learning in a Burning House: Educational Inequality, Ideology, and (Dis)Integration*, Sonya Horsford (2011a) provided an examination of the negative consequences of school desegregation on Black communities in the United States. Her work illuminated how the legal effort to desegregate and integrate the nation's school systems was thwarted, stalled, and derailed by the persistence of racist ideologies and the permanence of structural racism itself (Horsford, 2011a). Furthermore, the U.S. education system as a whole has had to respond to the demographic shifts in its population. The current student population in schools throughout the country is representative of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Anderson, 2003; Johnson, 2019; Noguera, 2003, 2009). Many school districts are overwhelmed with the influx of students with complex cultural, linguistic, economic, and health needs (Howard, 2007; Johnson, 2019). Presently, the population of the U.S. teaching workforce is predominantly composed of White female teachers. Less than 10% of the teaching workforce is constituted of teachers of Color

(Carter-Andrews et al., 2019). This reality also has propelled scholars to study the absence of teachers of Color in classrooms, and the various issues relating to their retention, professional development, and turnover (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Bristol & Shirrell, 2018; Carter-Andrews et al., 2019; Kholi, 2018).

At the same time, a plethora of scholarship and educational initiatives has emerged to understand and support teachers and educational leaders who are tasked with educating a diversifying student population and addressing issues racial disparities. Research on the demographic changes and present educational inequalities confirmed how institutionalized racism within school communities continues to constrain efforts to educate all children, especially children of Color, in more equitable ways (Alexander, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Payne, 2008; Sizemore, 2008). Fundamentally, racism still plays a debilitating role in how schooling is experienced and administered. School communities that are predominantly populated by students of Color experience a disproportionate distribution of school funding (Anyon, 1997; Gooden, 2012); overtly punitive school discipline (McKintosh et al., 2018); disproportional labeling of students with disabilities (Green, Cohen, & Stormont, 2019); and truncated access to postsecondary education (Hung et al., 2020). This disproportionality experienced in communities of Color in relation to education is a byproduct of centuries of systemic and structural inequality.

Evidently, legislation to desegregate and integrate schools over the last half-century represents legal efforts to create a more equitable schooling experience for all Americans. Yet, these legal strategies did not do enough to level the playing field (Wells, Duran, & White, 2008). In addition to legislation, a variety of curriculum-based

interventions have emerged to address racial disparities in schools. In particular, over the last decade, educational leaders have recognized the importance of advancing policies that increase educational access and equity, especially for communities of Color (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). These efforts somewhat reflect a recognition that the current socioeconomic conditions that limit social mobility and further cement the opportunity gap in education need to be urgently addressed. Scholars in the field of education have created curricula and academic departments that aimed to address the needs of an evolving multicultural society riddled with racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination. For example, the evolution of multicultural education (Banks, 2004; Nieto, 1999; Shannon-Baker, 2018; Sleeter, 2018), social justice education (Parker & Villalpando, 2007), culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995b), critical pedagogy (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Freire, 2007), and racial literacy-based education (Bolgatz, 2005; Horsford, 2009) have emerged to equip teachers and school leaders with the strategies and knowledge base to combat institutionalized racism and other forms of oppression in schools and communities. These approaches to education have made their impact on the public school system in myriad ways. In particular, school systems like the NYC DOE have provided its educational leaders and teachers with professional development (PD) opportunities that deepen their understanding of race and racism through anti-bias, anti-racist, and racial literacy-based trainings.

With the help of university-based partnerships and educational consultants, school systems throughout the country have offered a variety of PD opportunities to its staff. This case study examined a professional learning experience curated and sponsored by

the Male Educators Collective (MEC), a program within the NYC DOE. MEC partnered with a professor from a private university and educational consultant, Dr. Cindy Bailey-Cruz, to facilitate and host a racial literacy and healing PD workshops series. Dr. Bailey-Cruz was a university-based scholar who had spent the last decade teaching about the effects of racial divisiveness and institutionalized racism in the context of education. I came to learn about her work and the PD workshop series through my relationship with her as a former student of hers. I viewed the PD workshop series and MEC as a unique development that aligned with my research interest. I explore this synergy in more length in Chapter III.

The partnership between the MEC and Dr. Bailey-Cruz is connected to the recent history and developments within Mayor Bill de Blasio's *Equity and Excellence* mandate and former mayor Mike Bloomberg's education agenda. In terms of the de Blasio administration, the component within the mandate that is of interest here is the fact that it provided more access to PD to help with implementing and integrating equity-based leadership and instructional practices. More specifically, the Chancellor of the NYC DOE—Richard Carranza—committed an additional $23 million dollars to pay for anti-bias trainings for the next 4 years (Veiga, 2018). These trainings would be mandatory for every employee who works with students in the system. Carranza and the de Blasio administration were attempting to ensure that students were being well-served, and that teachers and school leaders were equipped with the skills to educate a more diverse population. By the end of 2019, the NYC DOE expected to train 10,000 employees and reach the rest of the department by 2022 (Disare, 2018; Veiga, 2018). The central goal of this effort was to help the system as a whole to dig more deeply into data and practices to

uncover and address racial inequities. This increase in funding for anti-bias training also brought about more support for initiatives like the Male Educators Collective. This initiative aimed, primarily, to increase the small number of males of Color who served as teachers in NYC public schools. It also provided a mentoring program and curated PD workshops on culturally responsive teaching practices and racial literacy-based education to its male members, but it also invited other educators to participate in these opportunities and in the MEC community. In a sense, the program cultivated an ecosystem that supported teachers of Color in particular, but also invited all educators interested in issues of racial equity to come together to build cultural competency and resiliency. Again, although its mission was focused on supporting men of Color in the teaching profession, many of its professional learning experiences and community events were open to all educators who were interested in learning more about racial disparities.

In early February of 2019, MEC and Dr. Bailey-Ruiz launched the *Racial Literacy and Healing Professional Development Workshop Series*. The curriculum was designed to explicitly center the lives and experiences of educators of Color. This inaugural series was comprised of five day-long workshops. It was hosted at a private university in the NYC region, where Dr. Bailey-Cruz taught. The series invited participants to reflect on their experiences as leaders and teachers of Color and provided them with an opportunity to discuss issues of race, racism, racial literacy, and healing. After a successful inaugural series, MEC and Dr. Bailey-Cruz decided to host a second round of workshops addressing similar themes. This case study looked at what transpired during the second installment of the racial literacy and healing PD workshop series.

Statement of the Problem

The NYC DOE's efforts to educate its teachers and leaders about how to disrupt racism is a crucial step toward addressing pervasive racial inequalities in the system. Access to anti-bias, anti-racist, and racial literacy-based trainings and workshops have, on some levels, advanced the conversation on racial equity. One of the major contributions of this work is the discussion of how Whiteness and White Supremacy reinforce racism in schools (DiAngelo, 2011; Howard, 2006; Leonardo, 2002; Margolin, 2015; Picower, 2009). Many of the anti-bias and racial literacy-based trainings made available to educators have exposed participants to conversations about unearned privilege, White fragility, and Whiteness as a form of property and cultural capital (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013). This is a step in the right direction for a school system that is taking concerted efforts to transform itself. However, most of these PD opportunities are designed, often unintentionally, to support White educators with having courageous conversations about racism (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

In both teacher preparation programs (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2000; Picower, 2009) and within educational leadership programs (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Rusch & Horsford, 2008; Solomon, 2002), there is evidence of the benefits and challenges to teaching White educators how they are implicated in how racism works inside and outside of schools (Leonardo, 2002). Within these programs, educators of Color often end up lifting the emotional weight during conversations about racism and feel unsupported afterwards (Leonardo, 2004; Sleeter, 2008). Critical conversations about racism—that are often revelatory and transformative for some White

educators—leave educators of Color drained (Bennett et al., 2000; Irizarry, 2007; Kohli, Nevárez, & Arteaga, 2018). For many educators of Color, these kinds of programs, trainings, and PD experiences trigger trauma from past overt and subtle racist acts, and, at times, incite racial battle fatigue (Smith et al., 2006). This reality has given rise to new scholarship on racial affinity groups in education, primarily to support teachers of Color with navigating racist public school systems (Kohli, 2012; Matias, 2013; Pour-Khorshid, 2016; Sleeter, Neal, & Kumashiro, 2014). Research on teachers of Color has pointed to a growing hostile racial climate within school systems (Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009). This case study on the MEC's professional development workshop series is situated within a growing interest in exploring professional learning spaces that specifically aim to support teachers of Color. The PD series deliberately carved out an open space to center the lived experiences of educators of Color, while supporting them with exploring issues of racial literacy and racism through what seemed to be a *healing-centered* curriculum. My core research questions were organized around this notion of a *"healing-centered"* approach.

Rationale

Again, within education systems like the NYC DOE, there is a growing commitment to addressing issues of racial disparities. The rapidly diversifying student population, the persistent gaps in educational opportunity, and a predominantly White teacher workforce propel educational leaders throughout the country to find ways to address these problems with various reforms. One of the elements of these reforms is the use of professional and leadership development as a mechanism to produce change.

However, a growing body of work reveals how education and training on issues of race need to be differentiated for educators, especially educators of Color who frequently experience the intensity of racism directly on a daily basis (Kohli, 2018). Professional development, teacher preparation, and educational leadership programs that attempt to help educators deepen their understanding of how racism works are often insufficient in providing educators of Color with the support, knowledge, skills, and insights they need to navigate school systems riddled with racial disparities. As education systems continue to invest heavily in PD to reduce racial disparities and provide resources for the development of culturally responsive leadership and instruction (Veiga, 2018), it is crucial to understand how different professional learning offerings can be differentiated, especially for educators of Color. There are limited studies on existing PD offerings that create space for educators of Color to explore issues of racism and racial literacy through a *healing-centered* pedagogy.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

Part of the purpose of this study was to document and analyze how the educator—Dr. Bailey-Cruz—designed and implemented the professional development workshop series. Additionally, this qualitative inquiry explored how participants were impacted by their PD series experience. A core intention was to understand the possible affordances and hindrances of using a *healing-centered* approach to the workshop's facilitation and design in the context of exploring issues of racism, racial literacy, and healing. The following were the central research questions:

- How did the educator design the curriculum for the *healing-centered* professional development workshop series?
- How was the curriculum implemented?
- How did participants process the impact of the experience?

Significance

The findings from this study contribute to the growing paradigm concerning research and practice involving restorative and healing-centered pedagogies. This singular case study shed some light on what happens when the lives of educators of Color are centered in the process of having difficult conversations about racism, racial literacy, healing, and self-care. The work explored here informs practitioners and school leaders on the promise of using *healing-centered pedagogies* for exploring issues of racial disparities. It also engages in a larger conversation on the necessity of such approaches and their history. Additionally, with the need to recruit, retain, and support teachers of Color in urban schools, this inquiry hopes to inform theory, practice, and policy through the documentation and analysis of the experimental design and implementation evidenced by the PD workshop series.

Conceptual Framework

This study was shaped and supported by three specific constructs that formed a guiding conceptual framework. Together, these constructs informed methodological decisions concerning research design, data collection, and data analysis. The following is a brief exploration of how I combined a *healing-centered engagement*, a *transformative*

activist stance, and an *indigenist stance* to provide a useful and transformative framework for carrying out this study. In essence, over the last several decades, scholars and practitioners have deliberately integrated the notion of *healing* into specific approaches to education (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Ginwright, 2010, 2015; hooks, 2003; Pour-Khorshid, 2016). This work has been heavily influenced by efforts to reform the U.S. criminal justice system and find alternative ways to discipline students in schools (Barnett, 1977; Barton, 2000; McCluskey, 2005). In a way, the rise and proliferation of restorative justice programs in schools is one example of *healing-centered engagement* (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001; Bitel, 2005; Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001; Chmelynski, 2005). More broadly, the use of restorative practices in schools (Drewery, 2007; Drewery & Winslade, 2005) and the integration of indigenous ways of knowing into research and curricula (Lincoln & González y González, 2008; Rosa, 2014; Smith, 2001) serve as other examples of different ways *healing* has been integrated into the field of education.

Furthermore, scholarship on the impact of trauma on student behavior and academic performance has facilitated the emergence of trauma-sensitive teaching (Crosby, 2015). This too is part of the movement toward incorporating *healing* into educational discourse by finding more holistic approaches for supporting students and communities, especially for those at the margins of society. While writing on the flaws of trauma-sensitive teaching, Ginwright (2018) suggested that the movement within the field of education to address issues of oppression and trauma through *healing-centered pedagogies* and methodologies reflect a collective shift within the field toward *healing-centered engagement*. For Ginwright, the following represent some of the features and functions of *healing-centered engagement*: (a) It is explicitly political rather than clinical;

(b) It is culturally grounded and views healing as the restoration of identity; (c) It is asset-driven and focuses on the well-being we want rather than the symptoms we want to suppress; and (d) It supports adult providers and educators with their own healing.

For Ginwright (2018), the work of *healing-centered engagement* provides practitioners, community members, and students with a framework for engaging in lasting social change. More precisely, Ginwright (2015) asserted that this kind of approach to education facilitates *radical healing*. The dire circumstances and conditions in which many communities find themselves necessitate bold, robust, and transformational efforts that cultivate hope and nurture community. In terms of *healing-centered engagement* and *radical healing*, Ginwright pointed to the following three fundamental ideas that set the foundation for approaching education in this way: (a) Structural oppression harms hope; (b) Healing is a critical component in building hope; and (c) Building hope is an essential political activity. *Healing-centered engagement* supports this case study with relevant language and concepts that lend themselves to a better examination of the enactment of a *healing-centered pedagogy* within the Male Educators Collective PD workshop series. Using this construct helped to consider how *healing* was possibly operationalized within the PD curriculum and exhibited in the participants' behavior.

Moreover, the concept of *transformative activist stance* (TAS) comes out of what Anna Stetsenko (2014) called *post-objectivist critical* (POC) scholarship, which challenges the traditional objectivist scientific paradigm. A *transformative activist stance* questions the notion that "the pursuit of knowledge is value-neutral and independent from practices, histories and the contexts of its production" (p. 181). Implicit in TAS is the

goal of advancing emancipatory knowledge (Stetsenko, 2008, 2014, 2016). TAS is inherently political and focused on radically re-imagining the future. Scholars who take up a *transformative activist stance* deliberately engage in an active struggle and commitment to enhancing and promoting people's collective agency and political imaginations.

An underlying assumption of TAS is that human beings do not just adapt to the word that 'is'; rather, we are constantly transforming to recreate it (Stetsenko, 2014). Drawing from sociocultural, Vygotskyian, and Deweyian approaches, TAS suggests that people come to know themselves and their world as well as ultimately come to be human in and through (not in addition to) the processes of collaboratively transforming the world (Stetsenko, 2008). Historically, TAS can also be situated within what Mertens (2009) called the transformative research paradigm. This paradigm is characterized by research that places central importance on the experiences of marginalized communities, analyzes asymmetrical power relations, and links the results of social inquiry to action (Mertens, 2009). This stance is also part of the "post qualitative turn," which refers to the growing movement in educational research to actively "think within and against" traditional positivist social science, which tends to separate epistemology from ontology and values objectivism as that standard for arriving at knowledge claims (Lather & Pierre, 2013).

The TAS framework places emphasis on the role of value, power, and politics in the process of conducting research, and highlights doing research *with*, not *on* participants in ways that help to create more equitable futures (Stetsenko, 2014). Fundamentally, TAS shifts away from the "objectivist experimentation model that suggests researchers should act as disinterested, impartial, and neutral observers of

reality" (p. 194). Taking up a *transformative activist stance* to carry this out helped in several ways. In light of the explicit integration of *healing* as a foundation for exploring issues of racism and racial literacy, I viewed the PD series and its curriculum as a possible site for producing and disseminating emancipatory knowledge.

More importantly, integrating TAS into this study was useful for thinking through and articulating my positionality as a researcher and making sense of how entangled I was with the community. As someone who knew the instructor and some of the members of the MEC, I needed support with thinking about how some of my observations and analysis may have been infused with bias. Taking this stance allowed me to be sensitive to how participants were co-producing the experience together with each other and the instructor. It also allowed me to pay close attention to the sociopolitical forces that shaped the world inside and outside of the PD series.

Lastly, throughout my doctoral education, I was deeply inspired by indigenous research methodologies. Throughout this journey, I inquired further to learn about the concerns, limitations, and potential for non-indigenous scholars to work with these methods and approaches. As a member of the Cree nation, Shawn Wilson (2008) wrote about how non-indigenous scholars can take up an *indigenist stance*, which represents an alignment with the principles, values, and methods that constitute the variety of epistemological and ontological practices found within indigenous research methodologies. Here, I tried to be careful with and hyper-aware of the history of cultural misappropriation and the fetishization of indigenous practices. Within my conceptual framework, I wove into it an *indigenist stance*. My commitment to this stance was further reinforced when I received positive affirmations from Dr. Shawn Wilson himself. I asked

him for permission to take up this stance in my research. It was important for me to talk to him or another indigenous elder in the field before moving forward.

By integrating an *indigenist stance*, I meant to be intentional about attending to and building relationships throughout the research process. I gravitated towards this stance because I am skeptical of the Western research enterprise and its association with positivistic science and Western imperial hegemony. I am sensitive to the harm that communities have experienced in the name of social science research. I refused to do research "on" people, and I knew that the relationship between researcher and participants was profoundly entangled. On many levels, indigenous researchers have always understood that the enterprise of research has, historically, caused immense physical and emotional harm to their communities. However, they also recognize that research can be an opportunity to build and repair relationships with and within communities. Scholars like Wilson have identified three principles that tend to be shared across many indigenous groups that related to the enterprise of academic research. These principles include *relationality*, *relational accountability and research as ceremony*. I explore these principles in more detail in Chapter III. Directly speaking to these principles, Rix, Wilson, Sheehan, and Tujague (2019) wrote the following:

> A common feature among many Indigenous peoples' ontology is that we are relational. That is to say, we do not engage in relationships, but we are relationships. Our very being, and the nature of reality itself, is relational. We are relationships with people and communities, with the Land, with ideas, with everything. (p. 259)

In light of how I was entangled with the participants and the research themes, I found this awareness of relationships, interconnectedness, and interdependence to be profound. This

helped me to see how inextricably connected I was to the work, but also supported with being intentional about providing some distance for me to make substantial observations. Since I had known Dr. Bailey-Cruz for several years prior to this study, I was familiar with her approach to pedagogy and found it powerful. My relationship to her and to her work required me to be honest with how these relationships could influence my perceptions of what was happening in the study. I explore this further later as well.

Furthermore, Wilson (2008) suggested that conducting research within the indigenous research paradigm is a form of *ceremony,* whereby every step in the process contributes to building stronger relationships with the ideas, the research participants, and all of the relationships that are involved in the process. I attempted to carry out the research as if it were a *ceremony* and carefully tended to the sacredness of the process by nurturing close relationships with all of the elements of this inquiry. Taking an indigenist stance supported me with paying close attention to how participants were building relationships to each other and sharing stories.

All in all, by combining the aforementioned constructs, I was able to conduct a qualitative study that took into account and was sensitive to how the data that emerged from the field were co-produced by the dynamic interactions between the participants and myself. I was not a neutral and objective observer. Therefore, I needed to be acutely aware of how my positionality and the lived experiences of everyone involved were culturally and politically situated. This awareness pushed me to engage in the necessary reflexivity to account for my proximity to the participants.

Overview

Fundamentally, this study aimed to provide a rich account and snapshot of the world and learning that unfolded within and throughout the Male Educators Collective *Racial Literacy and Healing Professional Development Workshop Series*. In the subsequent chapters, I explore what transpired over the course of several months to arrive at a deeper understanding of the affordances and limitations that come with the design and implementation of a *healing-centered professional* learning journey. In the subsequent chapter, I present a literature review that situates this inquiry within specific academic research and scholarship. This review of the literature also provides an overview of the emerging paradigm of restorative and healing-centered education.

Furthermore, in Chapter III, I provide a detailed description of the methodology used to conduct this inquiry. Although I mainly used traditional qualitative research methods—carried out participant observation, conducted interviews and focus groups, and reviewed documents—I also deployed some innovative approaches to data analysis. I describe these in detail and connect them to a budding line of thinking related to contemplative qualitative research. In Chapters VI and V, I present and analyze salient data that emerged throughout the study. I draw on relevant theoretical frameworks and constructs to make sense of PD curriculum documents, the instructor's pedagogical decisions, and the participants' behavior. Moreover, I use Chapter VI to discuss the implications of my findings. Here, I also reflect on my unique conceptual framework and interpret the results of the research further. I conclude this chapter with an exploration of

the theoretical, practical, and policy-related implications of this research and the limitations of this inquiry in its entirety.

On many levels, this study is situated within the legacy of educational research that has attempted to understand and transform inequity, especially as these relate to racial disparities within the context of teacher development and education. It is also connected to the evolution of educational approaches that have emerged over the last half-century—multicultural education, social justice education, culturally relevant pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and humanizing pedagogy—to challenge the *hidden* (Apple, 1990) and hegemonic curricula that center the history, epistemology, and ontology of a culture grounded upon White Supremacy (Bartolomé, 1994; Freire, 1998; Kohli, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Nieto, 1999; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). I present this work to provide a window on a unique learning experience and community, where the lives of teachers of Color are sources of knowledge and inspiration. The following pages depict the byproduct of my doctoral journey—a sacred escapade and ceremony.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The fundamental thrust behind this inquiry was to understand the enactment of a *healing-centered* curriculum in a university-based racial literacy professional development workshop series. The following literature review explores the research, theories, and pedagogies that form disparate threads, all of which help to situate the emergence of a restorative and healing-centered paradigm of educational academic discourse. Additionally, this review situates particular scholarship on racial literacy to surface its connections to *healing-centered pedagogies.* The central goal here is to gain a historical understanding of the use of *healing-centered pedagogies*, while exploring how the connections to conversations about race, racism, and racial literacy are becoming more relevant and urgent in the professional education of teachers and educational leaders in U.S. schools.

Before delving into the literature, it is crucial that I point out a few challenges that came up during this review. To be clear, there is no cohesive body of work on *healing-centered pedagogies*. In fact, the term *healing-centered pedagogies* comes out of my own attempts to categorize the various ways in which *healing* has been used within different curricula and approaches to education. However, even though there is no central body of work that concretely defines and explores what could be referred to as *healing-centered pedagogies*, the academic literature points to various scholars creating and conducting research on educational approaches that use *healing* as a central theoretical and

pedagogical principle. The literature does not provide a fixed or cohesive articulation, but rather an assemblage of pedagogies and conceptual frameworks that explicitly rely on *healing* as a guiding concept within instruction, community building, and activism. In fact, the exploration and use of *healing* in the context of education has, historically, been considered as nonexistent or, at best, marginal. It is important to note that the use and integration of *healing* have historically been reserved for and in the dominion of the fields of medicine and health sciences. The use and integration of this term now into educational scholarship challenges scholars to do the work of building a cohesive and comprehensive canon that normalizes and legitimizes *healing-centered* approaches to education and social science.

After reviewing numerous publications, I sorted and organized this review in a particular way. I first explored *healing-centered pedagogies* through four distinct categories or what I viewed as the following threads: (a) healing-centered pedagogies within indigenous scholarship and education; (b) healing-centered pedagogies within higher education; (c) healing-centered pedagogies within K-12 school curricula; and (d) healing-centered pedagogies within community organizing. I then reflected on the connections among these four threads. I conclude this chapter with an exploration of scholarship on racial literacy within education to surface its connection to *healing-centered pedagogies*.

Healing-Centered Pedagogies within Indigenous Scholarship and Education

The long-standing resistance to White Supremacy, racism, sexism, and patriarchy in indigenous communities, especially those located in North America, constitutes the

genesis of *healing-centered* approaches to education. The struggle for indigenous self-determination after European and American conquest forged communal efforts to survive, restore, and heal from cultural, psychological, and political subjugation. Many scholars have affirmed that the legacy of cultural indoctrination and economic domination by European settlers significantly marginalized indigenous groups and First Nations (Denzin, 2008; Grande, 2004; Jester, 2008). For example, in Canada, with the Indian Act of 1876, the subjugation of indigenous groups by armed conflict was followed by the establishment of residential boarding schools, which many Native children were forced to attend (Weenie, 2000). The historical attempts at erasure of aboriginal cultural and pedagogical practices in the United States and Canada served as a backdrop for the emergence of indigenous scholarship that worked to restore previously practiced ways of knowing, learning, and being that served as crucial forms of cultural and psychic preservation in the face of colonization (Denzin, 2008; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Iseke-Barnes, 2008; Reginer, 1994).

Indigenous scholars from the Western Hemisphere and some from New Zealand have curated research methodologies to help restore, reclaim, and protect indigenous histories and cultural practices (Chilasa, 2012; Rix et al., 2019; Smith, 2001). While outlining the emergence of indigenous epistemologies and methodologies within the Western academy, Denzin et al. (2008) asserted that indigenous self-determination and cultural preservation embody a pedagogy of healing, hope, and freedom. Therefore, the concept of *healing-centered pedagogies* is grounded on the efforts to decolonize traditional research methodologies in the social sciences and resist against hegemonic pedagogies in Western school systems. Both traditional research and Western

imperialistic practices were part of the systems that contributed the genocide of indigenous peoples, and the concerted effort to erase and undermine indigenous ways of knowing (Wilson, 2008). A key point to consider here is that it was not enough to recover from the physical, psychic, and epistemic violence (Dotson, 2011) that occurred in these communities. Restoration and healing were as crucial as survival to ensure that indigenous communities could thrive in hostile sociopolitical environments. In light of the roles that traditional scientific research and state-administered education have played to discredit indigenous knowledge, there is a sense of urgency behind the curation and diffusion of indigenous research methodologies and pedagogical practices. I link the long-standing practices of indigenous communities to preserve their cultures with the notion of *healing-centered pedagogies*.

Looking more closely at the integration of *healing-centered pedagogies*, the work of Robert Reginer (1994) is recognized as one of the first scholars to conduct a qualitative study that explicitly focused on healing pedagogical practices in a tribal school in Canada. Reginer studied Duquette High School in Saskatchewan, which implemented a curriculum centered on indigenous cultural and healing practices. Drawing from Cree cosmology, Duquette High School used the *Sacred Circle* as the foundation for its curriculum. The *Sacred Circl*e is interpreted differently across indigenous groups, but in this case, it helped the school to approach education through the alignment of students' spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional lives (Reginer, 1994). With the increase in chemical dependency and dropout rates among aboriginal youth in the area, the school reconfigured its approach to educating students with histories of alienation, self-mutilation, and other forms of abuse. The main purpose was

to create an educational environment that supported the development of academic skills and self-esteem. Blending the school's academic program with aboriginal spirituality addressed students' emotional and spiritual needs. The school directly responded to the needs of aboriginal youth through a combination of storytelling circles to allow students to dramatize their learning and the integration of traditional rituals—sweat lodges, drumming circles, and sweetgrass ceremonies (Reginer, 1994).

According to Battiste and Barman (1995), Reginer's work is situated within the gradual yet truncated evolution of aboriginal education in Canada during the last half of the 20th century. Canadian education reforms in the 1970s resulted in the funding of Indian education cultural centers and the development of educational policies that gave more power to First Nations over their own schools (Battiste & Barman, 1995). This is significant because it sets the scene for the emergence of scholars, in addition to Reginer (1994), such as Iseke-Barnes (2008), Jester (2008), Shahjahan (2005), Raine (2010), and many others who studied the formal integration of aboriginal cultural and healing practices into school curricula.

Essentially, the integration of indigenous healing and cultural practices into school curricula is an attempt to radically transform indigenous communities who have experienced the traumas of colonization and Western expansion. In the broader North American context, many indigenous and non-indigenous scholars have been critical of state-led education systems and Western scientific research methods, viewing them as parts of the colonial project to subjugate aboriginal and minoritized communities (Denzin et al., 2008). The central point here is that scholars working on curating and restoring indigenous ways of knowing have set a foundation on which to begin to understand the

history and relevance of *healing-centered pedagogies* as community responses to legacies of domination. Within indigenous scholarship and research, we see explicit language that explores healing, reconciliation, and restoration as important mechanisms for community survival and resilience.

Healing-Centered Pedagogies within Higher Education

Non-indigenous scholars in higher education have also attempted to curate and conduct research to explore the role and implications of healing inside the classroom and other learning communities. These scholars have used qualitative and ethnographic research methods to document different aspects of healing-centered pedagogies and curricula (Hodson, 2004; Hurlbert, 2012; Kiang, 2003; Spear, 2013; Villanueva 2013). For example, Peter Kiang (2003) taught an Asian American studies course composed of Southeast Asian immigrant students and veterans at a public university. Many, if not all, of these students had some experience with trauma from war. Kiang used his course as an opportunity to conduct research and facilitate what he called "healing circles." According to Kiang, these circles supported students with deconstructing the legacies of war and colonization in a supportive and restorative way. Through conducting interviews and taking field notes, Kiang concluded that the course had a profound impact on students in terms of helping them examine the interconnections between racism, trauma, and healing.

In a similar case, Rachel Spear (2013) conducted research on a trauma narratives college course. Students were asked to read fictional narratives and supplemental readings on the psychological impacts of traumatic events. They reflected on the lives of characters within specific texts and also on their own lived experiences in order to re-

conceptualize suffering. Spear called her approach to instruction a "wounded-healer pedagogy," which created the space for students to bear witness to the suffering of the characters within assigned texts, while at the same time reflect on their own traumas. Her systematic documentation of classroom discussions and the coding of student papers and semi-structured interviews revealed that the course helped students to engage in a deeper understanding of their own trauma and need for healing.

Another important work that stands out is Nina Asher's (2003) conceptualization of a *pedagogy of interbeing*. Asher's work is useful for thinking through the construction of a curriculum that aims to heal and liberate students. Asher was interested in the development of what she called a "self-reflexive pedagogy of interbeing," which integrated healing as a central component within students' classroom experiences. Her perspective combines different aspects of post-colonial theory, feminism, mindfulness, and multicultural education to capture the nuances and complexities of students' identities. Asher aimed to craft a curriculum that challenged students to deconstruct the "forces of colonization and Eurocentrism in order to forge a discourse of difference that is more attuned to the multiplicities within present day classroom contexts" (p. 239). Asher's attempts to support students in the process of finding healing and liberation resembled the aforementioned efforts by indigenous communities to resist hegemonic forces through the restoration of their cultural identities.

Asher drew on Paulo Freire (1982) and critical pedagogy to situate and ground her curriculum. She also integrated the work of bell hooks on *engaged pedagogy*. For hooks (1994), an engaged pedagogy requires teachers to be present, bringing in both their intellect and their spirit to their practice. Asher also added Thich Nhat Hanh's work on

mindfulness to her theoretical framework and curricular approach. She suggested integrating mindfulness into teaching to underline the importance of centering students' well-being through deep contemplation. Asher's approach to creating a *healing-centered pedagogy* was integrative and demanded a critical, contemplative, and sociohistorical orientation toward teaching. Fundamentally, her work was concerned with designing a kind of pedagogy that might help teachers and their students to engage in a process of healing within the context of the classroom.

Moreover, a few case studies on teaching English literature and composition have also integrated *healing* as a central theme. For example, scholars who have used narrative approaches in teaching composition have documented the generative qualities of using a healing-centered approach to instruction (Goodson & Gill, 2014; Hurlbert, 2012; Kiang, 2000, 2003; Spear, 2013). These scholars proposed that providing students with the opportunity to re-tell their stories in a supportive environment allowed them to reconstruct a sense of self, which often served as a starting point for healing and transforming in classroom contexts (Goodson & Gill, 2014).

As a scholar in the field of English composition, Claude Hurlbert (2012) posited that teaching composition to his undergraduate students serves as a way to help them heal from the legacy of racism. He documented how supporting his students to engage with racism in their personal lives led to some healing and sense of release. In the same field, Goodson and Gill (2014) conducted a study that documented the impact of a critical narrative pedagogy. Goodson and Gill combined restorative justice practices, journaling, storytelling circles, and personal narrative writing to teach English to prisoners in the United Kingdom. Their findings highlighted how participating inmates showed an

interest and a commitment to engaging actively in a process of healing and lifelong learning.

Healing-Centered Pedagogies within K-12 School Curricula

Another thread in the literature on *healing-centered pedagogies* focuses on its use within K-12 education. Take as an example Marc Lamont Hill (2009), who taught a high school class focused on English literature and Hip Hop culture in an urban setting. He designed this class by drawing from a *wounded-healer pedagogy* (Spear, 2013). By conducting interviews with students, video-recording classroom discussions, and carrying out a discourse analysis, Hill documented how the class became a community where students could reflect on suffering and healing through conversations about the assigned readings and their own personal experiences. For Hill, this pedagogy created a *healing-centered* community. The class created a space for students to analyze Hip Hop and deconstruct issues concerning racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression within their personal lives and within the assigned texts. The format of the class allowed students to share stories in ways that provided a form of release, relief, and healing.

Similar to Hill, Bronwen Low (2009) designed a curriculum that used a combination of critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and Hip Hop culture to teach a high school class. Low documented and analyzed how her class supported students of Color to think about their own healing through the teaching of literacy and Hip Hop culture. In yet another study, Stasko (2009) used popular cultural forms such as Hip Hop to help students heal and develop a critical consciousness in the classroom. Stasko developed a curriculum that focused on healing through the development of media

literacy. He called his approach a pedagogy of holistic media literacy that drew from young people's consumption of popular media to help them reflect on questions of well-being and critical thought.

The overarching pattern across the examined texts is that scholars designed their healing-centered pedagogies with what was, for each of them, the most salient and generative theoretical frameworks. Take as another example Patrick Camangian (2013), who outlined the development of what he called a "humanizing pedagogy." For him, this kind of pedagogy aimed to empower historically dispossessed students to become politically active and intellectually curious and to undergo personal transformation. Camangian drew on critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy to create a curriculum that supported students with cultivating hope in a critical way and empowering them socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Through the documentation and analysis of the impact of his pedagogy, Camangian concluded that his classes helped students to begin a process of healing, whereby students developed the analytical skills to become more resilient through a greater connection to the political struggles of their respective communities. For Camangian, this kind of pedagogy revealed that young people are less likely to become disaffected if and when they are engaged in the sociopolitical transformation of their communities, which often contributes to individual and collective healing.

Furthermore, three more sub-threads within this section are important to briefly explore. The use of restorative justice in U.S. schools over the last decade represents a concerted effort to integrate a kind of *healing-centered pedagogy* into public schools. With the rise of punitive disciplinary policies that disproportionately target students of

Color, schools have embraced restorative justice as an alternative approach to responding to peer-to-peer conflict in schools and an alternative to suspension and expulsion (Hopkins, 2003; Payne & Welch, 2015). Restorative justice draws on indigenous epistemologies and social justice-oriented methodologies to provide schools with a way of mediating and facilitating conversations between victims and perpetrators of harm through restorative circles (Karp & Breslin, 2001). These restorative circles have helped school communities to move away from zero-tolerance disciplinary policies. In many schools, the use of these circles has reduced the number of suspensions (Casella, 2003).

Another healing-centered movement to consider is the growth of mindfulness-based education throughout K-12 schools. Mindfulness-based education supports students with developing a sense of focus and well-being through the harnessing of attention skills, including self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness (Bostic et al., 2015). Over the last decade, there has been an upsurge of scholarship and programs that incorporate mindfulness into school curricula (Weare, 2013). Briefly, it is important to explore some of the historical developments connected to the rise of mindfulness in the United States. Over the last two decades, mindfulness has become a sort of panacea that has penetrated the legal, business, education, and medical fields (Ross, 2015). In the field of education, the increased focus on standardized testing and the rise of teacher burnout have fueled the diffusion of mindfulness-based curricula to support with the reduction of anxiety and the development of student and teacher well-being (Brazier, 2013; Parks, 2017). More specifically, the popularity of meditation in the United States is partly credited to the work of scholars such as Jon Kabat-Zinn, Richard Davidson, and several others who have conducted and promulgated research on the

positive impact of meditation on the brain. These scholars also secularized meditation for the American public. In 1979, Kabat-Zinn, Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, drew from Buddhist teachings on mindfulness to create Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction—an influential program in the popularization of mindfulness in the medical field and beyond. For Kabat-Zinn (1994), "mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing one's attention to the internal and external experiences occurring in the present moment" (p. 5).

The popularity of mindfulness in the United States can be traced back to the travels of scholars like Kabat-Zinn and others who spent time in India and other countries in East Asia during the late 1960s and 1970s. These scholars returned with a fervent commitment to introducing the Buddhist practice of meditation to American society (Ross, 2015). The term and practice of mindfulness meditation come from the Theravada Buddhist tradition, which encourages its followers to engage in deep meditation in order to reduce or escape suffering (Heffernan, 2015). A key point to consider here is the fact that the cultural origins of mindfulness are often ignored or glossed over in popular K-12 mindfulness-based curricula. It is important to go beyond thinking about the wave of White scholars who came back from trips to East Asia as the main purveyors of mindfulness because it discounts the historical legacy of the Asian American Buddhist community that brought the religion and practice to the United States in the mid-19th century (Hsu, 2017).

In a sense, mindfulness-based education and restorative justice are part of a broader shift in the field of education that centers the well-being of school communities. An additional movement within this shift is the emergence of trauma-sensitive teaching.

Scholarship from the fields of psychology and neuroscience has explored the impact of adverse childhood experiences (Crosby, 2015). Trauma-sensitive teaching integrates this scholarship into instructional practices through the understanding of the different types of trauma that often disrupt and impede students' ability to learn. It is a form of inclusive teaching that pays close attention to the stress students undergo in order to create learning environments that are welcoming, nurturing, and supportive (Plumb, Bush, & Kersevich, 2016). The following excerpt is from the work of Crosby (2015):

> Childhood trauma affects many youths across the United States and has a devastating impact on their functioning, well-being, and overall academic and vocational outcomes. Experiences of psychological trauma can impede cognitive, social, and emotional development in childhood, which can impair youth academic achievement, behavior, interpersonal skills, and general success in school. Trauma-informed educational practices in schools can provide much needed support to these students, improving their projected academic success and future life outcomes. (p. 224)

This kind of approach to teaching positions teachers to be more responsive to the needs of their students. However, scholars like Ginwright (2018) cautioned educators with how they view students and their respective communities as just traumatized. Students are not just their trauma. They come to school with community cultural wealth in the forms of social, linguistic, navigational, familial, aspirational, and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). It is here that scholars like Ginwright (2018), who wrestled with the problematic features of trauma-sensitive teaching, make the conceptual shift away from being *trauma-sensitive* towards *healing-centered engagement*. This is incredibly important for the work in which this study is trying to engage and document. In his article titled "The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma-Informed Care to Healing-Centered Engagement," Ginwright (2018) explained:

> A shift from trauma informed care to healing centered engagement (HCE) is more than a semantic play with words, but rather a tectonic shift in how we view trauma, its causes and its intervention. HCE is strength based, advances a collective view of healing, and re-centers culture as a central feature in well-being…. A healing centered approach to addressing trauma requires a different question that moves beyond "what happened to you" to "what's right with you" and views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events. (p. 2)

Ginwright's work is monumental in the scholarship on *healing* within the context of education. His call to make the shift toward *healing-centered engagement* is part of the historical trajectory and emergence of *healing-centered pedagogies* and the research paradigm explored here. Ginwright's work contributes to the construction of a more cohesive body of scholarship on the integration of *healing* in education. It is crucial to put an emphasis on his assertion that culture is "a central feature in well-being." This connects to the ways in which the aforementioned indigenous scholars and other researchers in higher education have thought about *healing-centered pedagogies* as having a restorative function when it comes to supporting historically marginalized communities to reconnect to their respective cultures.

Healing-Centered Pedagogies within Community Organizing

With regard to activism, several researchers have documented the use of *healing-centered pedagogies* in the work of community organizers. Julio Cammarota's (2011) approach to *healing-centered pedagogies* is evidenced in his research on a social justice youth development (SJYD) program. He developed and researched this program in Tucson, Arizona, while working with youth leaders from local high schools and colleges. Cammarota used the SJYD model to train students to become activists and further

develop a critical consciousness. His research argued that healing and empowerment were generated by helping urban youth to understand the structural forces causing marginalization, and by equipping them with the tools to transform themselves and the community.

Comparably, Shawn Ginwright (2010) conducted research on Black youth who were organizing against police brutality. His work illustrated how the efforts of these young people were a manifestation of what he called "radical healing." Ginwright (2015) used the term "radical healing" to describe "a process that builds the capacity of people to act upon their environment in ways that contribute to well-being for the common good" (p. 8). Ginwright went on to suggest that the process of radical healing "contributes to individual well-being, community health, and broader social justice where people can act on behalf of others with hope, joy, and a sense of possibility" (p. 8). Akin to Cammarota and Ginwright, Mara Chavez-Diaz (2015) examined how local activists took a healing-centered approach to community organizing in the San Francisco Bay Area. Chavez-Diaz closely studied several activists whom she called "social justice healing practitioners." According to her, these practitioners used *healing-centered* pedagogical practices to bring about change. By taking a narrative inquiry approach, Chavez-Diaz documented the critical and reflexive "testimoninos" (testimonies) of these activists. Through this work, she captured thick descriptions of various *healing-centered* approaches to community building and empowerment.

One last movement to explore briefly is the healing justice movement. The movement is an organic assemblage of faith-based and activist organizations that work in local communities throughout the United States to address contemporary issues of

inequality with *healing* as a central goal and organizing principle. This movement incorporates restorative justice, mindfulness, and indigenous healing practices to foster and create communities of care and resistance (Piepzna-Samarasinha, n.d.; Sawatsky, 2009). This movement and the work of researchers who are documenting how this work shows up in community activism reveal the transformative power of healing, while in pursuit of creating social and political change. This strand of the literature suggests the importance of harnessing *healing-centered pedagogies* for the purpose of collective healing and transformation.

Integrating the Threads of Healing-Centered Approaches

Throughout all the previously explored threads, *healing-centered* approaches to education have been deployed within various sectors of our education systems. This integration has a few consistent patterns and themes. For example, the emergence and interest in this kind of approach to education are closely related to the recovery from and survival in systems of oppression. In the responses by indigenous communities to domination lie key insights for understanding the historical roots of *healing-centered* approaches to cultural preservation and community education. In this way, the development of *healing-centered pedagogies* is connected to the response to the dysfunctional legacy of Western imperial, colonial, and capitalist projects of domination. The key point here is that these kinds of pedagogies are closely tied to indigenous efforts for self-determination.

On a theoretical level, the literature on *healing-centered pedagogies* points to how this work is mostly concentrated within discourses of post-colonial, feminist,

multicultural, social justice, and critical theories. In each of these frameworks, scholars have diligently labored to push back against the epistemic violence (Dotson, 2011) that has resulted in the marginalization and erasure of minoritized and non-Western epistemologies and ontologies. Therefore, the role of scholars in these theoretical traditions, with the support of *healing-centered pedagogies,* is to perform a kind of *epistemic healing* (Khan & Naguib, 2019), whereby ways of knowing and being that have been historically silenced or on the brink of extinction can be legitimized, honored, and integrated into contemporary research methodologies and educational practices. There is enormous theoretical potential in expanding on the notion of *epistemic healing* and its possible connections to *healing-centered pedagogies*.

Furthermore, this integration of both *healing-centered pedagogies* and nontraditional ways of knowing into mainstream educational systems can be poised to have an impact on teaching and learning. The United States is currently struggling to adapt its school systems and academic institutions to accommodate the current demographic shift with more students from marginalized communities entering educational institutions. Scholars and teachers will need to become more sophisticated in how they teach, study, and create spaces for nontraditional students, whose ways of being have been historically overlooked. This literature review reveals just how various scholars are not just creating spaces for students to feel empowered and included, but also designing and documenting curricula that deliberately support students in the process of healing from legacies of exclusion and exploitation.

Overall, the key challenge found throughout this review is the need to further expand cogent and comprehensive scholarship that continues to expand the literary canon

on *healing* in the context of education. Such scholarship could advance our understanding of how to create and research *healing-centered* curricula. More importantly, this scholarship could help with the conceptualization of clearer definitions for *healing* and *healing-centered pedagogies* within educational discourse. There are no substantive working definitions of what these concepts mean in the context of education. This review demonstrates that there is only a constellation of scattered scholars in separate academic traditions who are integrating *healing* and *healing-centered pedagogies* into their teaching and research agendas. More needs to be done to document the power of these approaches. In summation, this review makes a significant conceptual contribution to the field. I propose, drawing upon Ginwright's framing of *healing-centered engagement*, to move towards the conceptualization and canonization of *healing-centered education* as a legitimate field in the broader enterprise of academic scholarship. In essence, this literature provides an overview and a historical foundation to buttress the legitimacy and growth of *healing-centered education*. All in all, this shift may provide more momentum for carrying out needed scholarship to better understand of how *healing* and *healing-centered pedagogies* are operationalized and integrated within the field of education.

Weaving Healing-Centered Pedagogies with Racial Literacy

This study explored issues of healing and racial literacy in the context of the professional development of teachers and educational leaders. This section briefly outlines some of the salient themes concerning racial literacy within the sub-fields of teacher education and educational leadership. These two academic sub-fields serve as homes for the majority of the scholarship on racial literacy in education. The central goal

here is to situate the concept concisely in relation to particular ways in which it has been used to educate teachers and leaders about racism and ground this review in support of the larger goal of interrogating what occurred in the Male Educators Collective (MEC) professional development (PD) workshop series.

In the United States, the issue of racism has its origins in European and American imperial and colonial projects. In the North American context, the enslavement of Africans and the subsequent extermination of Native Americans set the table for the entrenchment of a multitude of wicked institutions that have, over time, systematically limited the freedoms of minoritized communities such as people of Color, women, and poor laborers (Zinn, 1999). A rich scholarly tradition has contributed useful frameworks for thinking about race and racism. From a smorgasbord of concepts and approaches, the literature on racial literacy provides useful insights into learning how to disrupt racist practices and systems within education.

In the field of education, teachers and educational leaders have struggled with mitigating how racism creates racial disparities. Researchers have documented how teachers often graduate from teacher preparation programs without the skills or knowledge base to address issues of race and racism in their future job placements (Gilbron, 2014; Rogers & Mosley, 2006). Several studies have demonstrated the power of teacher education programs taking concerted efforts to prepare their candidates to talk about and address issues of racism, especially through racial literacy development (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Kohli, 2012; Mosley & Rogers, 2011). These studies illustrated the discomfort, anxiety and, at times, positive transformation that happen when preservice and in-service teachers are supported in their development of racial literacy.

It is not a surprise that the same challenge is found in the field of educational leadership, where case studies point to the significant number of educational leaders who eventually take on positions as school principals, superintendent, deans, and department chairs and do not feel comfortable with addressing and exploring issues of race and racism (Brown, 2004; Horsford, 2009). Research on racial literacy points to how helpful it can be to provide a clear and supportive approach to tackling issues of racial disparities (Guinier, 2004; Horsford, 2009). According to Horsford, racial literacy in education is "the ability to understand what race is, why it is, and how it is used to reproduce inequality and oppression" (Horsford, 2011a, p. 95). Scholars like Horsford have documented how educators can learn how to talk constructively about the history of racism, how they are implicated in its production, and how they can actively interrupt its reproduction (Horsford, 2009; Sealey-Ruiz, 2011, Skerrett, 2011).

To understand why this case study has the potential to contribute to the literature on racial literacy, it is useful to draw on the work of Sealey-Ruiz (2011) and her definition of racial literacy. She defined racial literacy as:

> A skill and practice in which students probe the existence of racism and examine the effects of race and other social constructs and institutionalized systems which affect their lived experiences in U.S. society. Educators with racial literacy are able to discuss the implications of race and racism in edifying and constructive ways. A desired outcome of racial literacy development is for members of the dominant racial category to adopt an anti-racist stance, and for persons of Color to resist a victim stance. (p. 25)

The reference to the differing desired outcomes of racial literacy development is telling. On one hand, educators of Color support processing the ways in which racism may have contributed to victimization. On the other hand, White educators need support in reckoning on how to dismantle racism and commit to that. This reveals a growing

concern in the field. It points to the largely overlooked reality that conversations about race and racism require providing different resources needed to support educators of Color and their White colleagues. Extensive work has been done to document the challenges and benefits of developing the racial literacy and anti-racist stances of White teachers and leaders as they meet separately from educators of Color in affinity groups (Epstein, 2019; Howard, 2006; Michael & Conger, 2009; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2008). Also, an increasing number of studies have documented how teachers and leaders of Color, through similar racial affinity groups, engage in conversations about racism and other issues pertaining to education (Bennett et al., 2000; Irizarry, 2007; Kohli, 2008, 2012; Kohli & Pizzaro, 2016).

At the same time that education systems and school districts are supporting educators to explore and address issues of racism, there is a growing crisis with the recruitment and retention of educators of Color (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Simply put, researchers are paying closer attention to how teachers and educational leaders of Color are leaving the profession in large numbers. Many scholars have concluded that this phenomenon is a byproduct of the challenges that professionals of Color in the field often face—lack of mentorship, unclear pathways for career advancement, biased performance metrics, and prejudiced supervisors and colleagues (Carter-Andrews et al., 2019). This crisis has resulted in a wave of support for racial affinity groups, whereby educators of Color meet separately from their White peers to find support and explore how they experience racism and other forms of oppression in the education system. Scholars are using qualitative research methods to study some of these affinity groups as they explore issues of racial literacy and social justice (Kohli, 2018). Through interviews with

participant and focus groups, scholars have documented the critical role that racial affinity groups can play in retaining and supporting educators of Color. For example, in her case study on a racial affinity group for educators of Color, Pour-Khorshid (2018) interviewed several participants and used vignettes of those interviews to build an argument for the sacred space that the affinity group generated. Below is an excerpt from one of these interviews:

> I feel like we've been building a foundation to engage in our practice more holistically by being able to show up as whole humans, not just as teachers, but as people of Color who carry trauma, as queer people, as non-binary folks, as whoever we are in the world because we've intentionally made space for all of those identities. What's really beautiful about that is that because we're explicitly a [people of Color] group, the ways in which we are all very different shows up when we're together and we reflect much deeper about our identities and about how the varying experiences in our space shape what it means to teach our student population. (p. 323)

Excerpts like this reveal the insight that can come from studying the supportive spaces that affinity groups provide for educators of Color. For Pour-Khorshid (2018), her findings demonstrated the need for more learning spaces where educators of Color can come together to tend to the unhealed wounds caused by White Supremacy, patriarchy, and other forms of oppression. Similar studies on affinity groups demonstrated that these unique and supportive spaces help people of Color resist victimization and reinvigorate their commitments to their role as teachers and school leaders (Kohli, 2018). These kinds of affinity group studies exhibit elements of *healing-centered pedagogies*. Scholarship in this area of education research revealed how *healing* and recovering from working in an education system that reproduces racism and other forms of oppression are crucial steps for educators of Color, especially if they hope to stay in the profession long-term.

In summary, this study of the MEC is situated within both the research on racial affinity groups for teacher of Color and the larger paradigm of healing-centered education. The racial literacy and healing PD series explicitly centered on the lived experiences of educators of Color—making it a kind of racial affinity group. The unique combination of themes within the PD curriculum position this study to be able to contribute to the existing research on healing in the context of education in light of the explicit exploration of both healing and racial literacy. By documenting the experiences of educators of Color—undergoing a *healing-centered* PD series with the aim of enhancing their racial literacy—this inquiry aimed to provide a snapshot of what transpired and surface insights into power of this kind of innovative and experimental professional learning experience.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This inquiry is an intrinsic case study that examined the design and implementation of a unique professional development (PD) workshop series. The main goals of the research were to understand how the educator, Dr. Bailey-Cruz, designed and taught a *healing-centered* professional learning experience, and to explore how participants were making sense of their learning experiences throughout the PD series. In this chapter, I discuss in more detail the context of the study, the research design, and the research questions. I also describe the methods for data collection and data analysis, along with a discussion on my positionality as a researcher. Lastly, I evaluate the trustworthiness of the study along with its limitations.

Context of the Study

As discussed in Chapter I, this study is embedded in the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE), and further nested within the Male Educators Collective. With more than 1.1 million students in its 1,700 schools, the NYC DOE is the largest school system in the world. It is a powerful geographical, social, and political location from which to examine the challenges facing the field of urban education, especially in regard to issues of racial disparities. This school system created the MEC as one of many initiatives that aimed to address issues of racial inequity and disproportionality through teacher professional development.

To varying degrees, explicitly tackling racial disparities through targeted professional development and programming was largely initiated by the last two local governments—the Bloomberg and de Blasio administrations. During the Bloomberg era, a $127 million public-private partnership was launched to support the improvement of education for Black and Latino males, with an additional focus on training, supporting, and recruiting of more teachers of Color (Meyers, 2011; Wall, 2015). The majority of these funds went to reforming the juvenile correction system, while the rest were allocated to improving teacher effectiveness and creating programs like the Expanded Success Initiative (Villavicencio, Klevan, & Kemple, 2018). The Expanded Success Initiative has played an instrumental role in expanding access to professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders to examine their personal beliefs and biases intentionally, with the hopes of better preparing them to implement culturally responsive educational experiences that support all students, in particular those who are Black and Latino (Villavicencio et al., 2018). The Expanded Success Initiative still exists under the current administration. NYC mayor Bill de Blasio has expanded on this similar program by providing more access to culturally responsive professional development for its staff—the bulk of which focused on reducing bias and increasing racial literacy.

On top of providing PD opportunities for teachers and educational leaders to learn how to address racial disparities, the NYC DOE decided to make a concerted effort to diversify the teaching pipeline by recruiting and supporting men of Color (Pennamon, 2018). Currently, less than 8% of the teachers in the NYC DOE are men of Color (Pennamon, 2018). As a result of a collaboration among the Expanded Success Initiative,

the NYC Mayor's Office, and the City University of New York, the Male Educator Collective was created. In addition to recruitment efforts and the intention of expanding opportunities for educators to engage in conversations about culturally responsive education, the MEC began to host seasonal PD workshop series that were open to all educators who were interested in exploring issues of equity and racial disparities. The overarching goal of the MEC was to help educators to develop individual leadership capacity, teaching effectiveness, and personal growth. It primarily provided mentoring and resources to new male teachers of Color and offered them a community of educators with whom to network. The seasonal PD workshop series aimed to bring this network together by hosting relevant and consistent learning experiences. The central idea was that by supporting male teachers of Color with direct training and a nurturing community, these educators would thrive in the profession. Although a small number of White educators attended MEC events, the community that formed was mainly constituted of people of Color—including women and gender-nonconforming individuals. MEC events became a safe space for exploring complex issues related to inequities in the system.

Moreover, the partnership between the MEC and Dr. Bailey-Cruz—a tenured professor from a private university in the New York City region—emerged out of collaborations between two NYC programs and divisions—the Expanded Success Initiative and the NYC DOE Office for Teacher Effectiveness. For a few years, Dr. Bailey-Cruz provided PD workshops to these institutions within the NYC DOE. At the university at which she was based, Dr. Bailey-Cruz hosted forums, roundtables, workshops, and performances that helped local teachers explore issues of racism and racial literacy. After collaborating for a few years on culturally responsive education

strategies, Dr. Bailey-Cruz and MEC decided to create a PD series that was responsive to the needs of its members. It seemed as though educators of Color—who were part of MEC—were hungering for conversations about race and anti-bias, with their lived experiences and healing as central themes. Out of this collaboration came the *Racial Literacy and Healing Professional Development Series.*

In the spring of 2018, Dr. Bailey-Cruz facilitated the inaugural PD series. Again, this series was different from other MEC-sponsored events since it went beyond the usual focus of culturally responsive teaching. The positive reception of this inaugural series led to its repetition in the fall of 2019. Below is an excerpt from the original proposal for both the inaugural (spring 2019) and second PD series:

> Deep and sustaining conversations about race in education happen infrequently and with great trepidation. Very few departments of education are able to effectively engage their teachers in reflective and enduring conversations about race that can ultimately bring about the change needed to serve their students. Research reveals that these conversations, done effectively, provide education professionals with the confidence needed to alter their pedagogy in more culturally responsive ways, and become skillful in engaging their students in essential conversations that relate to their learning and social development.
>
> In addition to racial literacy, teachers are also in need of support when it comes to dealing with burnout and the secondary trauma accompanied with teaching in high-need communities. Now more than ever, balancing work and life, showing up to their classrooms daily with the energy to teach, and navigating school communities with structural challenges tend to deplete teachers physically, emotionally and spiritually. In light of this, self-care and healing have become important themes in the field of education and in teacher preparation specifically. Nevertheless, teacher education programs have not adequately integrated these concepts into their curricula—leaving teachers to fend for themselves for restoration.
>
> Educators of Color—a minority group in school systems across the country—are often overlooked as needing deep and sustaining professional development on culturally responsive curriculum and racial literacy professional development. When, in fact, educators of Color need this type of professional development to help them understand the trauma they may be experiencing while teaching in a

> school system dealing with pervasive racial disparities. Teachers of Color are often bystanders witnessing many injustices experienced by Black and Brown children in the schools where they teach.
>
> This professional development series centers teachers of Color who are part the New York City Department of Education's *Male Educators Collective*. The five workshops in this series invites participants to reflect on their experiences as teachers of Color and how to develop their pedagogy to make it more racially and culturally reflective of their students. This series will also provide participants with an opportunity to develop self-care plans while they rethink how race, curriculum, pedagogy, and their own identities impact their classroom instruction.

This initial description illuminates some of the intentions behind the purpose of the PD series. It is important to note that the proposal and implementation of the series was explicitly centered on the lives of educators of Color. Before the racial literacy and healing-themed PD series, Dr. Bailey-Cruz and the director of the MEC, Bayard Thanes, spent a couple of years offering workshops on culturally responsive teaching practices to MEC members. After hearing more from participants about their needs, they decided to create a new PD series that also addressed teacher self-care.

Research Design Overview and Research Questions

I considered this research as a case study in light of the opportunity to understand the uniqueness, complexity, and embeddedness (Stake, 1995) of the healing-centered professional learning experience. I viewed Dr. Bailey-Cruz's racial literacy and healing PD workshop series as a "specific, a complex, and functioning thing" (Stake, 1995, p. 2). In a sense, this PD workshop series was an integrated system itself (Stake, 1995) that was situated within a larger system—the NYC DOE. The purpose of using case study research was not to make generalizations, but rather to particularize and highlight what constituted the various aspects of the PD series (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Stake, 1995). I

aimed, mainly, to learn as much as possible from the PD series' healing-centered curriculum and the participants' experiences.

This specific PD offering was representative of other professional development opportunities within the context of the NYC DOE. There were a multitude of similar PD offerings on racial literacy, anti-racism, and anti-bias trainings throughout this school system. However, this PD series was unique in how it grounded conversations about racial literacy with a healing-centered approach. During the time period of this research, the NYC DOE had no other anti-bias or racial literacy-based PD offering that explicitly integrated *healing* as a central theme or pedagogical principle.

Additionally, the PD series was purposely designed to center the lived experiences of educators of Color. Most of the PD learning experiences offered through or in partnership with the NYC DOE were not tailored to support any particular demographic. This adds another level of uniqueness to this case study. In essence, I viewed the PD series as a reasonably bound system and an appropriate site for using case study research methods. I drew from traditional approaches to qualitative research to carry out this case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I collected data and created an audit trail and inquiry journal, in which I archived raw and coded field notes and memos. These notes and memos helped with capturing and analyzing data from participant observations during five 5-hour-long workshops, five 90-minute focus groups, a review of all curriculum documents, and 17 semi-structured interviews and member check-ins with participants.

During direct participant observations of workshops, I took detailed expository notes which helped with re-constructing descriptions of what was occurring. Raw

observational field notes were coded and further analyzed through writing memos on all notes. With these memos, I crafted thick descriptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) that helped with writing the vignettes. Raw and coded data from semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and PD series curriculum documents also helped to arrive at data saturation (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017)—where enough rich data were available to make sense of what was unfolding in this specific case. Altogether, these methods of data collection helped to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the educator design a healing-centered PD workshop series?
2. How did the educator implement the healing-centered PD workshop series?
3. How did participants process and make sense of their experiences throughout the PD series?

Before exploring the research design further, the next sections provide more details on site selection and participant selection.

Site Selection

This case study examined what transpired during a PD series in the fall of 2019, where between 25 to 30 participants attended five workshops across 4 months. As I explored in my positionality statement, I selected this site for two main reasons. First, it was a rare opportunity to document a learning experience that explored healing in the context of education and in teacher development more specifically. Second, access to the site and to MEC was facilitated by my relationship to the educator of the PD series. Being that I knew Dr. Bailey-Cruz, I gained access to the community and gained trust through this introduction. The director of MEC and participants were open and interested

in me documenting the impact of the series (I discuss this in more detail later). Table 1 below shows a snapshot of Dr. Bailey-Cruz's PD series syllabus (Appendix H). The syllabus was distributed in the form of a packet to all participants during the first workshop. The syllabus outlined required readings, assignments, and descriptions for each workshop. I attended each entire workshop.

Table 1. *Workshop Series Outline*

Date	Workshop	Description
10/26/2019 10AM-3PM	Mapping the three Tenets of Racial Literacy in our Classrooms and our Everyday Lives	In this session, participants will learn about the three tenets and five components of racial literacy development and their connection to their classrooms and their everyday lives.
11/9/2019 10AM-3PM	Archeology of the Self: Exploring Social Location	In this session, participants will develop ways to deeply reflect on their identity and positionality, and how this impacts their role as an educator of Color.
11/23/2019 10AM-3PM	The Role of Trauma (Historical, Personal, Educational) in Teaching	In this session, participants will consider all that hinders and helps them take care of themselves as an educator. Participants will explore the concept of trauma-informed education and how our individual traumas may manifest in our teaching and relationships with students and colleagues.
12/14/2019 10AM-3PM	Understanding the Four I's of Oppression | Layering the Tenets	In this session, participants will learn about and explore in depth the four aspects of Oppression as an Interrelated System.
1/18/2020 10AM-3PM	Leaning into What We've Learned	In this session, participants will reflect over the past four sessions, and in particular select highlights from their self-care plan, and feedback from students on their growth.

Participant Selection

The PD series held a captive audience. I viewed the PD series and its participants as a convenience sample—a population that was at hand and my network. I had a relationship with Dr. Bailey-Cruz already as a former student of hers and I had met Bayard Thanes. I proposed the idea of conducting research on the impact of the PD series. Thanes enthusiastically welcomed the idea and made all participants of the second series know that research would be conducted on the workshops. Although not all participants attended all workshops, each session had between 20 to 25 people present. Table 2 below shows all of the participants who attended the second PD series. For protection, all the names here are pseudonyms. The names in bold were participants who participated in semi-structured interviews.

Table 2. *Participant Grid*

#	Name	Position	Race/Ethnicity	Gender
1	**Josh**	**ELA Teacher**	**White**	**Male**
2	Yvette	History Teacher	African American	Female
3	Marcus	Math Teacher/Dean	African American	Male
4	**Clifton**	**Retired Teacher/Administrator**	**African American**	**Male**
5	**Bill**	**Special Education Teacher**	**White**	**Male**
6	**Daniel**	**Health ED Teacher**	**White**	**Male**
7	**Kevin**	**Science Teacher**	**African American**	**Male**
8	Cresta	Teacher	Nigerian American	Female
9	**Angie**	**ELA Teacher**	**Latina**	**Female**
10	**Gina**	**Special Education Teacher**	**African American**	**Female**
11	Viviane	Teacher	African American	Female
12	**Freda**	**Teacher**	**African American**	**Female**
13	Simone	Administrator/Union Leader	Afro Latina	Female
14	**Camille**	**Special Education Teacher**	**African American**	**Female**

15	Alex	Special Education Teacher	Latino(a)	Gender Fluid
16	**Michelle**	**Special Education Teacher**	**African American**	**Female**
17	**Derrick**	**Dance Teacher**	**African American**	**Male**
18	**Courtney**	**Social Worker**	**African American**	**Female**
19	**Adam**	**ELA Teacher**	**African American**	**Male**
20	Rebecca	Chemistry Teacher/Dean	African American	Female
21	Maria	Science Teachers	Latina	Female
22	Jeremy	Social Studies Teacher	African American	Male
23	Anthony	Special Education	African American	Male
24	Shannon	Foreign Language Teacher	Chinese American	Female
25	Tina	Early Childhood Teacher	African American	Female
26	Tara	Retired Teacher	African American	Female
27	James	Special Education Teacher	African American	Male
28	Lana	Early Childhood Educator	Caribbean American	Female
29	Patricia	Teacher	African American	Female
30	Cyndy	Computer Science Teacher/Administrator	Chinese American	Female

Data Collection

In the qualitative research tradition, data analysis is “an ongoing part of the research” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 55). Throughout this study, I engaged in data collection and analysis iteratively and consistently throughout the process. I primarily gathered data through participant observations during the five PD workshops. I attended each session and read all the assigned readings. I also partook in whole-group discussions throughout the series. I tried to limit the amount of time participants heard from me during each workshop. On a handful of occasions, I did participate in icebreaker activities, where I spoke to one other participant with a get-to-know you question. I also collected data by conducting 17 semi-structured interviews and five focus groups as well

as a document review of all PD curriculum documents. I explore each data source in more detail in the subsequent pages. Table 3 below serves as a visual representation of the different sources of data that together helped to achieve data saturation.

Table 3. *Sources of Data Grid*

Type of Data	#Pages
Raw Workshop Observational Field Notes	50
Memos (Inquiry Journal)	150
Raw Focus Group Notes	15
PD Series Curriculum Documents	180
Transcribed One-on-One Semi-Structured Interviews	180
Total	**524**

Contemplative Qualitative Inquiry

Before delving more specifically into methods of data collection and analysis, it is important to frame how particular elements of contemplative qualitative inquiry influenced this study. Contemplative inquiry mainly refers to qualitative research techniques and strategies that place emphasis on thinking and feeling rigorously throughout the research process by exercising mindfulness and engaging in meditative practices (Janesick, 2016). For scholars like Janesick, contemplative inquiry is grounded in principles of Zen meditation. Janesick wrote about how qualitative research and Zen both share a commitment to disciplined approaches to thinking and writing. Also, my main goal was to engage in research in a way that would maximize the experience of joy throughout this process. As a person who has meditated for close to a decade, I found excitement in the possibility of integrating this practice into this research. Often, writing and thinking about academic work can be arduous and bereft of joy. I aimed to use

contemplative inquiry as a way to deepen my enjoyment of the process and use meditation and contemplative writing as a way of analyzing the data. Janesick stated that this kind of approach disrupts academic writing, "which distances the reader and writer from each other and from individuals involved in a research project" (p. 37).

Furthermore, I drew on two specific concepts within Janesick's (2016) work on the elements of Zen-based contemplative qualitative research—*observations as being impermanent* and *interview as non-self*. By thinking about *observations as being impermanent*, this kind of approach to research invited me to take mindful notes that were supported by capturing details and nuances regarding the setting, people, and actions unfolding in this study. By carrying out interviews with the concept of *no-self* in mind, I considered how "interviewing, and more specifically, hearing the data from a participant, was a contemplative act" (p. 53).

In a sense, contemplative inquiry served as a way of shifting my relationship to the data and slowing down to the process of thinking through all that was emerging. Relatedly, I was deeply moved by the Slow Scholarship movement in higher education (Berg & Seeber, 2016). In response to the "publish or perish" ethos in the academy, a small number of scholars were calling for a different approach—one that was more thoughtful and reflective and embraced a sense of leisure in rumination. This phenomenon was in direct opposition to the culture of speed in the many higher education institutions with their competitive citations politics. This slowing-down aligned with my intention to weave meditation and contemplative practices in certain parts within my data analysis process. In his book *When Knowing Becomes Love: Meditation and*

Contemplative Inquiry, Arthur Zajonc (2009) explored the various elements, themes, and benefits to using contemplative practice to engage in rigorous reflection. He wrote:

> Contemplative practice means among other things, becoming practiced in solitude. This does not mean brooding or self-indulgent musing, but instead practicing a special form of recollection of the past, mindful of the present, and envisioning of the future in a manner that is enlivening, clear, and insightful. We learn to be properly solitary and carry the depth of our solitude into the world with grace and selflessness. (p. 20)

I deployed meditation and contemplative practices to analyze data and make sense of the different themes and patterns that emerged. In the subsequent section, I delve more deeply into each data collection method and discuss how I used these practices wherever appropriate.

Inquiry Journal

Throughout this case study, I kept an inquiry journal as a way of systematically recording and archiving reflections, observations, musings, speculations, and analyses. This inquiry journal helped to capture and organize all of my descriptive notes, reflective notes, methodological notes, and analytical notes. I took descriptive notes by hand during participant observations to capture thick descriptions of participants' behaviors and the physical aspects each workshop. During the evening of or day after each workshop, I typed up the field notes. These notes recorded aspects of the workshop space, participants' body language, the facilitator's teaching style, and other behavioral and affective dynamics unfolding throughout the field. Also, I used a separate notebook to capture reflective notes to document any personal musings on what I was observing. These notes contained feelings, speculations, concerns, and prejudices, and provided a

way to take into account the influence of my own subjective experience throughout the inquiry process by clarifying how I was thinking and feeling.

In addition to the aforementioned notes, I wrote memos to summarize and analyze all raw field notes, interview transcripts, and PD documents. For example, after writing up each one of my field notes and coding them, I reflected on the codes and content to write a memo. Each memo contained methodological and analytical observations, additional questions, and commentary on emerging themes. These memos played a crucial role in synthesizing the various sources of data. All together—raw field notes, reflective notes, and memos—helped to keep track of the growing analysis and precise methodological decisions that I made. This inquiry journal played a major role in helping me with clarify and refine my interpretations. Overall, the inquiry journal was a comprehensive and ongoing process that documented the trajectory of this study and established a discernable research audit trail.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In terms of interviews, I was able to speak with 17 participants for around 60 minutes each. Here, again, I used a kind of convenience sample to recruit interviewees. During one of the workshops, I invited participants to participate in interviews to reflect on what they were learning. I explained the purpose of the research and recommended they partake in the interview process only if they wanted to. I did not ask anyone in particular; I left the option open to all. Those who felt compelled to reach out to me did so directly.

During the interviews, I recorded each call and stored the recorded file in a password-protected digital archive. I interviewed the educator of the workshop series during the beginning of the series to discuss the design process, learn which scholars influenced her work, and explore her hopes for the impact of the series (see Appendix C for Educator Interview Protocol). At different junctures throughout the following months, I interviewed 16 participants—10 of whom had participated in the previous PD series. In the original proposal for this study, I wanted to conduct two sets of interviews. The first would happen halfway through the series to get a sense of how participants were settling into the experience. The second set of interviews would be with the same interviewees but a couple of weeks after the end of the series. While in the field, I noticed this would be difficult to coordinate. Each workshop was held on a Saturday morning for 5 hours. Participants came in from all five boroughs and attendance fluctuated. I resorted to conducting one set of interviews with anyone who volunteered after the third workshop. The majority of these interviews took place between the third workshop and the fifth (last) session. Each interview helped me to understand how participants were experiencing the series, but it also how gave me more insight into their lives and trajectories to becoming educators (see Appendix B for Participant Interview Protocol).

These interviews helped me obtain a better understanding of how participants were making sense of the workshop themes and provide those who volunteered a space to express their views freely and on their own terms. These semi-structured interviews were relaxed. I tried to remind participants that this was a casual conversation about whatever was coming up for them throughout their learning experience. I was not trying to test them or prove anything to them. This helped with reducing some of the participants'

anxieties around providing particular insights or information. A central goal here was to capture rich textual data on participants' perspectives through the audio-recordings. Before each interview, I ensured that participants were clear on the interview process and had signed the study's informed consent form (see Appendix A). After each interview, I coded it and wrote a memo.

Focus Groups

As another way to understand participants' perspectives, I conducted a 90-minute focus group at the end of each workshop (see Appendix D for Focus Group Protocol). These five focus groups provided an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas on what they had learned on the day of as well as surface and lingering questions they had. I deliberately asked Dr. Bailey-Cruz to let me spend that 90-minute period with the participants without her. I want to create some space so that participants could feel more comfortable talking about the PD experience without feeling the pressure of speaking in her presence. She left the room and did not come back once I started each focus group. I facilitated each one in a circle to resemble the circle practices within restorative justice, where individuals can speak freely and openly about their perspectives.

Before each focus group began, participants helped to reassemble the room so that we could be in an equidistant circle. Before encouraging participants to talk about their perspectives, I facilitated a meditation and contemplative practice. This involved participants closing their eyes and gently breathing for 5 to 10 minutes at the beginning of each focus group. I did this because I knew that participants had been engaging in deep

conversations over the last few hours. I also wanted to find a way to include a contemplative practice within the focus group protocol in order to further align the study's methodology with contemplative qualitative inquiry. The mindfulness practice was an opportunity for them to reset and catch their breath. A few participants had never meditated before but got the hang of it after a few sessions. Many participants appreciated this moment of pause. After the meditation, I invited participants to, in pairs, share what resonated most with them from the day's workshop. This was an opportunity for them to reflect on all they had learned or thought about on that day. I would let them talk for about 10 minutes. I often used the Focus Group Protocol questions to guide these peer-to-peer conversations.

Once the initial peer-to-peer sharing was over, I opened up the conversation to the entire circle. Most often, participants would share what they thought about the day's workshop and discussed concepts from the conversations that unfolded during previous sessions. The rest of the focus group consisted of participants responding to each other. The initial peer-to-peer reflections would generate enough material for the rest of the time to be spent on them responding to each other. In essence, the topics and ideas explored here emerged organically. I mostly stayed quiet and came in to call on participants who were waiting to talk. I took some notes, but mostly focused on noticing being present to capture the feelings and ideas that were emerging. Essentially, the focus groups ran themselves. I formally opened and closed them. Each one felt like an open restorative circle. This open approach was a deliberate decision to align the research with the ethos of healing in the PD curriculum.

Document Review

To deepen the examination of this case study, I conducted a thorough document review and analysis. PD curriculum documents including the following: (a) workshop syllabus; (b) workshop Power Point presentations; (c) participant final presentations; (d) assigned readings; (e) blank participant assignment worksheets and handouts; and (f) YouTube video clips from workshop lessons (see Appendices H to K for PD worksheets). For each document, I coded it and wrote a corresponding memo to capture and analyze the content's purpose and meaning. These memos were typed and stored in my inquiry journal. This process helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the overall design of the PD series. Reading the assigned texts and re-watching videos explored during each session supported me in getting a sense of what participants were exploring outside of the series.

Essentially, this document review served as a key source of data for understanding how the *healing-centered* curriculum was assembled and sequenced. Each document served as a piece of evidence that might reveal important information on different aspects of the PD curriculum. This process provided more data for interpreting the actions and intentions of the educator, along with more accurately thinking about participants' experiences. This provided a closer look at the specific decisions the educator made in the inclusion of specific content throughout the PD series.

Researcher Positionality

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), all researchers bring their specific backgrounds to a study. This often includes training in a particular field, knowledge of

substantive topics, a particular standpoint, and theoretical approaches. For the last decade, I have worked as a consultant in public schools located in predominantly underserved communities. I have served as a program director for an education nonprofit, a social justice workshop facilitator, and a conference organizer. These experiences were transformative and shaped my understanding of the precarious and urgent situation that many rural and urban school communities endure. I have worked with incredibly talented students, teachers, and school leaders. My commitment to continue to build a career in the field of education was largely influenced by these formative years after graduate school. With an interest in issues of social justice and mindfulness, I decided to transition from the college access and leadership development fields to pursue a doctorate in curriculum and teaching more broadly. I hungered for a more expansive understanding of education. However, my approach to this research has been infused by my career as a youth advocate and staff developer. This direct experience helped me to understand and empathize with the emotional labor that the participants in this study carried in their role as teachers.

Moreover, I was aware of how my identity as a cisgender, Afro Latino male who is also able-bodied shaped how I might be perceived in the research site. In essence, I very well looked like the participants I was studying. Partly, this helped me build trust with them. Although I grew up in public housing and know too well the ravages of living below the poverty line in NYC, I have had many privileged experiences through higher education that have afforded me with opportunities for some social mobility and a cosmopolitan worldview. I brought an awareness of my whole self to this inquiry as I built relationships with participants.

As a male of Color studying in a predominantly White educational institution, the coursework I have undergone also shapes how I viewed knowledge and knowledge production throughout this study. I was sensitive to the problematic history of higher education institutions and their role in conducting epistemic violence (Dotson, 2011) through education research, especially to communities filled with people who look like me. I also had a sense of the long legacy of imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism, which continued to play a role in how the university engaged in neoliberal self-management and reproduction. Therefore, I gravitated toward more critical and justice-oriented theories in education like critical pedagogy, culturally relevant teaching, critical race theory, third spatial theories, indigenous epistemologies, and decolonial approaches to education. I strongly resonated with the PD workshop series' themes and content. My experiences as an educator and practitioner along with my theoretical inclinations shaped why I took an interest in healing-centered pedagogies and in conducting this research.

On a personal level, being raised in NYC in a working-class family and having struggled in school for the larger part of my primary education, I know first-hand how it feels to be a young person of Color in a large school system. I have experienced some wounding from this. I also understand how teachers often feel overwhelmed by teaching in communities experiencing extensive trauma. This understanding shaped my perspective on the power that comes with being a researcher from an Ivy league institution and the social privilege that comes with being a scholar and professional at this stage in my development. This is why studying healing was compelling to me. Having been wounded in the context of education and noticing the need to explore the topic propelled me to center it as a core topic for formal study. In a way, this study was directly

connected to my psycho-spiritual development, whereby the pursuit of healing has been paramount. As I grew throughout my doctoral education, I became curious about conversations on the notion of *healing* in the context of education. I have spoken directly to many of the scholars who have researched racial literacy and healing separately, and I have cited most of them throughout this text. I have aimed to live this research and the conversations that it raises.

Even though I played the role of researcher, which bestowed me with particular privileges, I was skeptical of the research enterprise because of its affiliation with positivistic science and Western imperial hegemony. I was sensitive to the harm that communities have experienced through social science research. I saw my role as a participant with interest in documenting the life-world of the PD series. I also understood that I, as the researcher, was going to change as much as the participants did in this study. I was open to change. This helped me to relax into my role, which allowed me to dedicate most of my emotional energy to what was happening and what I was thinking. In many instances, in light of the high-pressure environment that the academy produces, I have been struck with imposter syndrome—worrying about whether or not I belonged. Being able to set some of these feelings aside was a relief.

Regarding my relationship to the instructor and with participants, it is important explore this in more detail. This, too, shaped my positionality. I was closely connected to the instructor of the PD series that I was studying. I had previously taken a course with Dr. Bailey-Cruz. By the time this research began, I knew her for about 4 years. I was very familiar with her scholarship and teaching style. I maintained contact with her as I moved on with my doctoral work. In December of 2018, after sharing with her how my work

was evolving in terms of an increasing focus on *healing* in education, she invited me to facilitate a few hour-long conversations with a group of local teachers with whom she was working, all of whom were members of the Male Educators Collective. I facilitated five conversations on the notion of healing in education. This was where I met Bayard Thanes, the director of MEC, and several teachers who would later return to participate in the second racial literacy and healing series. It was after facilitating these conversations and learning about what was happening during the first initial PD series that I was struck with the idea of conducting my doctoral research on this particular site and community. Thanes welcomed the idea and looked forward to seeing what I would document.

At the core, I am incredibly entangled in this study. My relationship with the instructor, with participants, and with the topics explored increased my proximity to the data, which created some bias. I simply loved the work that was being done and loved the community that was coming together. This love may have tainted the ways in which I perceived the work when I carried out fieldwork. However, I will constantly reflect on this entanglement. I nurtured a relationship with the educator that had reasonable boundaries. I never discussed any findings with her or any information related to the data that were emerging. Well after data collection, I shared some of my findings with Dr. Bailey-Cruz as a way to engage in transparency and member checking. As mentioned before, we also arranged for her to leave the room each time I facilitated the 90-minute focus groups. Throughout the study, I was deliberate about thinking through the ways in which my relationship with the facilitator and my familiarity with the research site impacted my interpretations of the raw data. This constant reflexivity allowed me to be sensitive and bring more integrity and rigor to the data analysis process.

On several levels, my conceptual framework—a combination of *healing-centered education*, *transformative activist stance*, and *indigenist stance*—helped with the critical reflexivity that was required to engage in this study. Again, the central goal was to provide a thick and clear description of what was unfolding throughout the PD series. The conceptual framework that I constructed served as a compass for thinking about my positionality, the data that were emerging, and the validity of the claims I wanted to make. Below, Figure 1 frames the integration of all of the above-mentioned constructs, which created an orientation towards this study that understood the limited objectivity that I brought to this work and the fact that the reality emerging within the study was culturally situated and politically shaped. This conceptual compass reinforced the notion that the life-world inside the PD series—the community that formed, and the knowledge and experience that were shared—was all co-produced by everyone, including myself.

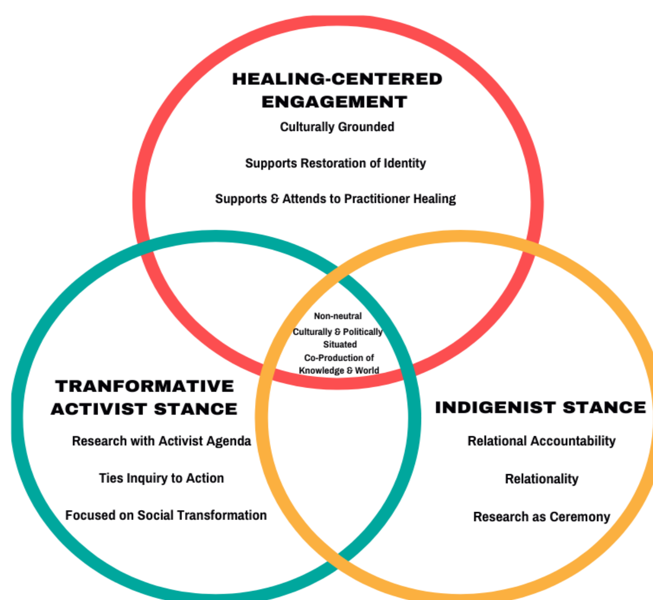

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Briefly, it is helpful to outline how the constructs in my conceptual framework helped with my positionality and with making decisions throughout the study. For example, taking a *transformative activist stance* (TAS) impacted the execution of this study on a fundamental level. The deliberate focus of this study on a *healing-centered pedagogy* relates to the critical and emancipatory theoretical underpinnings of TAS. A core intention within TAS is the creation of equitable futures, especially for historically marginalized people, with a politically non-neutral and transformative educational research agenda (Stetsenko, 2014). This reinforces the fact that this study was important to me for sociopolitical reasons because it enabled me to advance theories and practices that will aid in better understanding the possibility of healing in the context of education. TAS also enriched this study with a theoretical foundation for understanding the limits of traditional objectivist and positivist social science research. Through a TAS perspective, I pushed the boundaries of traditional qualitative research. Regardless of how entangled I was with my previous connection to the instructor and participants, I remained committed to produce knowledge from this site.

Furthermore, I viewed this study as part of the growing field of qualitative research, which explores the possibilities of “post-qualitative” research. Lather and Pierre (2013) discussed this concept at length and thought about new ways that qualitative research can be carried out without being controlled and overwhelmed by mainstream neo-positivist methods and values that prioritize objectivism and epistemology. Post-qualitative research invites scholars to think about how research is not a “value-neutral” activity, and how they are entangled in the research process in ways that positivist approaches to humanistic qualitative research do not acknowledge (Lather & Pierre,

2013). A core tenet within the post-qualitative research paradigm is that "knowledge is—neither absolute nor relative—rather constructed socially and historically located within complex cultural contexts" (Mertens, 2009, p. 49). Stetsenko (2014) expanded on this tenet and suggested that, within the TAS framework, the world is understood as "dynamic, fluid, and constantly changing through people's own activities and activist contributions to their communities and the world at large" (p. 191).

Moreover, this wave of scholarship posits the notion of *onto-epistemology*, where "knowing" is not privileged over "being," but rather are both imbricated (Harding, 1992; Lather & Pierre, 2013). This claim pushes back against the legacy of positivist research, which has been deeply influenced by Cartesian logic and a dualistic separation of mind and body, mind over body (Harding, 1992). Thinking about this research through this lens challenged me to think more explicitly about my own values, reflexivity, and what I considered as data and truth claims. All of this made my reflexivity around my positionality more robust. In essence, I was very interested in *healing-centered pedagogies* and in learning how to deepen conversations about racism and racial literacy for my own development. I was not a detached and disinterested researcher (Lather & Pierre, 2013) who aimed to be objective. Instead, I was completely imbricated and engrossed in the research process, but conscious of this, and I strove to achieve strong objectivity (Harding, 1992). To maintain strong objectivity, I kept in the foreground of my mind the biases, ideas, and experiences that shaped how I approached this study and how I came to particular interpretations.

Additionally, I also took an *indigenist stance* (Wilson, 2008) by incorporating the principles of *relationality*, *relational accountability, and research as ceremony*—all of

which come from indigenous research methodologies. These concepts refer to the centrality of building relationships with participants and with all elements of the research process by upholding the principles of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. These concepts also refer to the importance of maintaining those relationships with clear commitments to integrity, harmony, and not causing harm. By drawing on these concepts from indigenous approaches to research, I was intentional about building relationships, but also viewing myself as a web of relationships. I treated this process as though there was a sacredness to research. As Wilson (2008) suggested, "conducting research is a form of *ceremony* whereby every step in the process contributes to building stronger relationships in a way that allows both participants and the researcher to experience a raised level of consciousness and insight into the world" (p. 11). With this in mind, I attempted to conduct this study with a sensitivity toward fostering relationships and paying particular attention to how I might collect and analyze data in a mindful and relational way. Within Indigenous research paradigms, the role of stories and storytelling is paramount (Wilson, 2008). Here, stories and storytelling are both sources of data that come out of the context of a given study, and a method for analyzing and making sense of the world that emerges throughout a research project. With this in mind, I considered writing and analyzing throughout this case study as an attempt to tell a story—one with multiple stories embedded within it. This orientation toward narratives made me acutely sensitive to the ways in which participants shared stories on their perspectives or past experiences. I paid particular attention to the stories and experiences participants shared in common, many of which were related to ongoing racialized stress. I explore this in detail later. Using an *indigenist stance* was a gift. It opened me up to listening in a

different way. In her text on finding harmony between Western science and traditional Indigenous values, Tafoya (1995) wrote:

> Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen. (p. 12)

There were points throughout this research journey when I felt lost and adrift. At a certain point, I was overwhelmed by the sea of data I had gathered. Indigenous approaches to research provided gentle nudges to keep writing, listening, and feeling into the relationships that were emerging—relationships between ideas, between participants, and between data sets.

In terms of *healing-centered engagement* (HCE), I integrated this construct into my conceptual framework for a few key reasons. First, this construct seemed to provide the field with some explanatory power when it came to thinking about what *healing* might look like in an educational setting. From the literature review explored previously, HCE stood out as one of the more cogent framings of *healing*. As Ginwright (2018) articulated, *healing-centered engagement* involved a process in which education was affirming of people's identity, culturally grounded, and attending to the healing journeys of educational practitioners who spend significant amounts of time caring for others, especially the children they teach. I began this research thinking about the PD series as a possible site where *healing-centered engagement* was embodied by its curriculum and the community that it brought together.

Drawing on all the aforementioned constructs, I stepped in and walked throughout the trajectory off this research with rich theories and methodologies with which to think

about the data. Of course, this case study is replete with bias in light of my previous relationship to the instructor and my connection to the participants after attending a portion of the inaugural PD series as a guest speaker. Nonetheless, I moved forward with data collection and analysis, knowing that my aim was to present a snapshot and thick description of what was unfolding before me and within me. In Chapter IV and Chapter V, I explore an analysis of what I viewed was before me—the data. In Chapter VI, I explore some interpretations of the findings that display the thinking I engaged in and that unfolded within me as I made more sense of what the data represented for me.

Methods of Analysis

This section explores the different methods I used to analyze and make sense of the more than 500 pages of raw data and memos from my inquiry journal. I also explore some of the innovative ways I used contemplative inquiry to meditate on the data and move the coding and analysis process forward. In essence, I collected data through the abovementioned methods and, simultaneously, began to take analytic notes the moment the research began. While writing memos from raw field notes and document reviews, I wrote down extensive analytical notes that surfaced. These analytical notes contained any emerging themes that I perceived were emerging—many of which became codes. Within my inquiry journal, the extensive notes I archived provided ample analytical notes that laid a foundation to begin making sense of the data. Once the PD workshops were completed and I had conducted all interviews and focus groups, I coded all of the memos, interview transcripts and the rest of the raw data.

Open Coding of Data

For this particular study, the coding process played an instrumental role in the data analysis process. Coding comprehensively helped to add rigor to my analysis. Generally, coding provided a structure for organizing, deciphering, and analyzing large amounts of raw qualitative data (Thomas, 2003). I considered codes as a word, a phrase, or a paragraph that, for me, represented something significant within the context of the study. Here, I used inductive coding (Thomas, 2003) to analyze and interpret raw data throughout. On inductive coding or open coding, Thomas wrote the following:

> The purpose of inductive coding is to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief format, to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data, and to develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the raw data. (p. 1)

This method of coding fit with this study because I wanted to maintain a flexible approach to the data that emerged throughout the case study. I did not intend to narrow my analysis by engaging in deductive coding (Thomas, 2003) with predetermined codes. I generated codes based on recurring patterns and themes that surfaced from the data. I anticipated undergoing several rounds of coding before arriving at a set of codes that might be applied across and between data sets.

In order to ease the labor that came with this coding of a large amount of data, I used NVivo—a qualitative analysis computer software package. This software enabled me to upload all raw field notes, interview transcripts, all documents from the document review process, and any multimedia, worksheets, and workshop Power Point presentations. This was a major source of support since NVivo allowed me to apply

my codes across all data sets. It also offered the navigational feature of being able to search for specific codes and see how they were evidenced throughout the data. The software's features and functionality allowed me to see the frequency of codes within each data set. This helped me to recognize patterns within each workshop, each of the 17 interview transcripts, and each data set I wished to explore.

With the support of this kind of technology, there were both great benefits and major challenges. I was able to go into any data set, highlight particular text, categorize a code, and add a description of the code. I was able to create a code book with all of the codes and their definitions. While NVivo gave me a bird's-eye view of the application of codes across all data sets, which enabled me to see how particular patterns were playing out, I found myself overwhelmed by the number of codes I was generating.

Once all of the data sets were coded, I found myself with almost 100 codes. In Appendix L, I include my code book with all the codes I had generated once I coded all of the data. As I was making sense of what was happening across data sets, especially within the participant observation field notes, I noticed that I kept generating too many codes. To give a brief example, Figure 2 below shows about 14 sample codes from the larger code book.

Sample List of Codes

- Discussion of Healing
- Workshop Rituals
- Discussion of Racial Literacy
- Venting & Emotional Reflexivity (Participants)
- Watershed Teaching Moment
- Participants Being Vulnerable
- Participants Affirming Each Other
- My Direct Involvement in the Space
- Educator Affirming Participants Identities
- Tension Between Participants
- Issues of Gender Fluidity
- My Assumptions
- A Sense of Belonging
- Surfacing Assigned Readings
- Expressions of Gratitude

Figure 2. Example of codes

As I closely read raw data or memos, I tried to code for a variety of things. For example, regarding whenever I noticed in my field notes that a participant was reflecting on some kind of challenge in front of the entire group or doing what I perceived as venting, I coded these moments as *Venting & Emotional Reflexivity*. Whenever I read field notes describing a participant making a comment that generated a lot of dialogue within a group discussion or whenever the educator made a pedagogical move that shifted the conversation significantly, I coded these moments as *Watershed Teaching Moments*. Whenever I identified the expression of gratitude during group discussion, I coded these moments as *Expression of Gratitude*. The central goal of this first round of inductive coding was to try to make sense of patterns in the raw data with a particular focus on understanding the nature of the discussions that were held and the pedagogical

moves the educator made throughout each PD series workshop. To provide a snapshot of the usefulness of NVivo within this coding and analysis process, consider Figure 3 below. The main point to consider here is the 12 incidents or moments throughout the first workshop—held on October 26, 2019—where *Venting and Emotional Reflexivity* occurred. NVivo allowed me to code the raw field notes view the recurrence of codes on charts. This aided me with getting a better perspective of the rhythm of each workshop, alongside seeing the frequencies of particular codes.

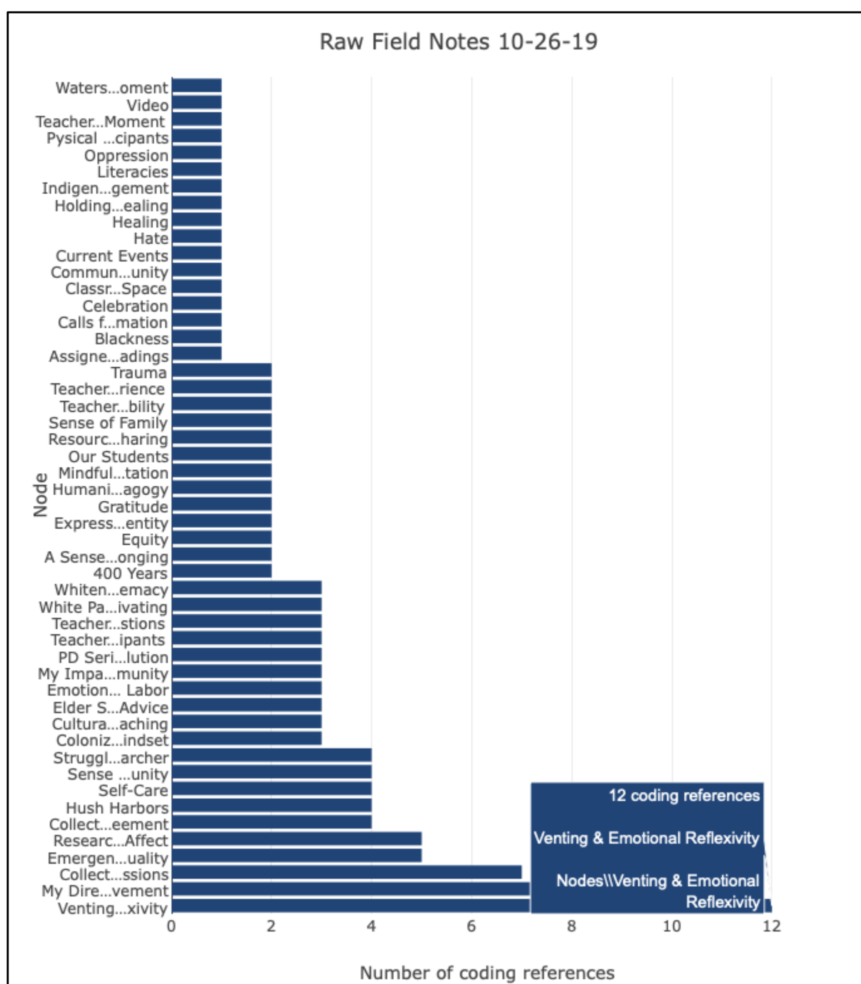

Figure 3. Coding chart from first workshop

Although inductive coding can take up a lot of time, the use of software did help to carry out the initial coding round. Also, using NVivo supported this analysis with not only getting a bird's-eye view of how codes were applied across data set, but also seeing charts of the coding dynamics within each workshop. I used this charting feature of the software to see the coding features of data sets like documents or raw interview transcripts. As I continued to make sense of the data, I noticed that coding in and of itself was a form of analysis. The concentrated effort to label and define moments, observations, and descriptions throughout the data had an analytic quality to it.

Contemplative Inquiry and Refining Data Analysis

Again, I viewed coding as a method of data of analysis in and of itself. Nevertheless, even though I was getting a better understanding of what was happening, I still had too many codes. I had to decide how to continue to organize the codes that I already had and break them up into smaller clusters. I looked at different coding frames (Given, 2008), which represented the organizational structure of different codes that already existed across the data sets. I used a hierarchical coding frame (Lewins & Silver, 2007) to identify which codes were most important and to engage in a more granular analysis of the fundamental dynamics within the research. Here, I decided to use meditation as a contemplative practice to hold and think through all 100 codes in a more expansive way. I wrote all 100 codes on index cards and small pieces of rectangular paper. I set my meditation bench and mat in front of all the codes. I then set a timer for 10 minutes to sit in silence.

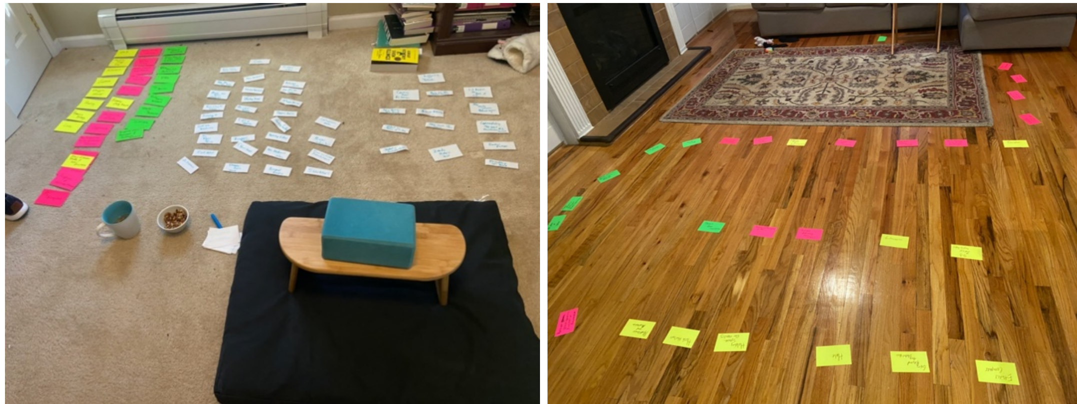

Image 1. Contemplative practices for data analysis

Image 1 depicts two separate contemplative practices I engaged in to analyze and sort through the data. The image on the left shows the set-up for the meditation I engaged in to sort and cluster the original 100 codes. I engaged in several rounds of this practice across a few days to refine the codes. I took notes after each contemplative session and included these notes into my inquiry journal to add to the audit trail. The image on the right shows a makeshift labyrinth I created from new index cards with the refined codes from my previous meditations. I would later use this labyrinth to carry out walking meditations through the newly sorted and organized codes. I essentially innovated and used contemplative practices to think, feel, and analyze. I created a unique methodology that I called *Contemplative Sits & Walks Through the Data* (see Appendix N). Janesick (2016) explored ways to integrate meditation into the research process. I found affirmation in her work and decided to create my own method to sit with the codes and data.

In several ways, this creative contemplative methodology helped me sort through the data and codes that NVivo helped to organize initially. It was utterly overwhelming to sit with the powerful software and all the codes. I decided to struggle through more direct and human engagement with the data. The move to integrate mediation and contemplative practice was crucial since it allowed me to process a lot of data without burning out. Here, it is important to give some examples of my contemplative sorting and analyzing. For example, when looking at the following codes—*Teacher Recognizing Bodies & Feelings of Participants*, *Teachers Recognizing Participant's Identity*, *Teacher Displaying Vulnerability*, and *Teacher Acknowledging Watershed Teaching Moments*—I clustered these into a more clear and salient code, which I labeled *Teacher Pedagogical Moves*. Within a hierarchical coding frame, *Teacher Pedagogical Moves* captured the various micro-moves the educator made during workshops. This granular look at the moves the educator was making allowed me to reflect on later and analyze further how some of these "moves" were connected or not to humanizing pedagogies like critical pedagogy.

Moreover, I still found difficulty combing through the data even after narrowing down the number of codes from 100 to around 25. On one hand, I wanted to try to pare down the codes further, while at the same time looking closer at what participants were sharing within the interview transcripts and workshop discussions. I wanted to surface the voices of participants somehow and relate this to either the existing cluster of codes or re-code the notable quotes from participant interviews.

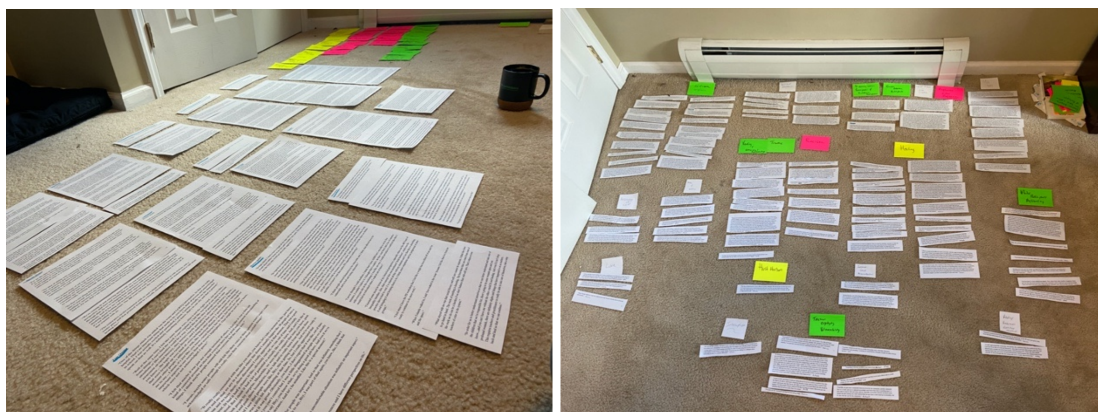

Image 2. Sorting salient quotes from interview transcripts

With the new cluster of quotes in mind, I listened again to all 17 recorded interviews with transcripts in hand. After marking salient quotes across different themes and codes from each interview, I printed a sheet for each interviewed participant with the quotes I selected. I laid all of these documents on the floor. With scissors, I then cut each quote into a separate piece of paper. I wrote each participant's pseudonym on each separate quote to keep track of who said what. After cutting all quotes, I pulled my meditation mat and bench close to all the strips of quotes laid on the floor. Throughout several days, at different points, I sat to meditate, then read and categorize the individual pieces of quotes into distinct clusters, some of which did not necessarily fit the previously sorted cluster of codes. Above in Image 2, one can see how on the left side are whole sheets of paper with quotes from specific participants. On the right side, one can see the individual quotes sorted into 15 clusters (these codes and clusters are included in Appendix M). It was with these coded and organized quotes that I was able to make more sense of participants' experiences throughout the PD series. The cluster of codes that stood out the most related to participants' expression of love and empathy for each other,

the processing of racial stress and trauma, and the making sense of discussions of healing and self-care. From these clusters, I looked again and pulled quotes that represented similar sentiments across participants. In Chapter V, I explore some of these quotes and analyze them.

Participant Interview Profiles and Workshop Vignettes

As another source and method of data analysis, I crafted vignettes that depicted portions of what was taking place during a few of the PD workshops. I also wrote up profiles of each participant who was interviewed. By drawing on coded participant observation field notes, I reconstructed some of the interactions and discussions that occurred during the first three workshops. These vignettes can be found in Appendices E-G. I specifically focused on reconstructing moments where the instructor was facilitating charged conversations. I depicted moments where participants shared revealing discussions that were in response to prompts provided by the instructor or responses to each other's comments. These vignettes helped me to make sense of the flow of group conversations, each workshop's emotional climate, and the social fabric of the community. They also helped to provide snapshots of the life-world inside a few of the workshops.

Purposely, I did not include in the Appendix the profiles I created for each interviewed participant. Many of them shared very intimate details about their personal and professional development. Nonetheless, I wrote 17 profiles and archived them in my inquiry journal. I wrote each profile with some biographical information that included how long the educator had been teaching, what subject the educator taught, and any

unique details about the educator's life trajectory. Each profile also included a *Salient Quotes from Interview* section, where I pasted the notable quotes from each interview. The last section of the profile contained notes on observations and reflections I made on that particular participant. Together, these profiles helped me to better understand the lives and voices of everyone who volunteered to be interviewed. They also supported me with feeling confident with the themes I chose to analyze in Chapter V.

Trustworthiness

The main goals of this case study were to get a better understanding of the content of the PD curriculum and participants' experiences throughout the series. The data analysis that comes with this kind of qualitative research provided me as the researcher with the opportunity to make some further analysis and develop my own personal interpretations. However, oftentimes a researcher's interpretations can be filled with biased speculations. To establish trustworthiness regarding this study, I used member checking to assure that my interpretations aligned with what participants may have said or felt. I sent each participant who participated in interviews a copy of their written interview profile. Everyone suggested the profiles were accurate. I also shared selected pieces of writing to get some feedback on how I was presenting the data. To add more credibility to this process, I kept a meticulous and well-organized inquiry journal with a plethora of descriptive, analytical, and methodology-focused memos that captured the full trajectory of this inquiry. Throughout my participation in each workshop, I built genuine relationships with participants and developed a real sense of care for them and, I think,

they did so towards me as well. I firmly believe that these genuine connections made it easier for participants to bring their full selves to each workshop and each interview.

In terms of methodology, I deliberately chose to share my code book and some of the protocols of innovative methods of analysis in which I engaged. These moves were made to increase transparency. As I discussed in my positionality statement, I was completely entangled in research with my previous relationships to participants and to the educator. I aimed to be frank about these connections. In light of some of the bias that may have played a role in my perceptions, I drew on multiple sources of data to get a more accurate picture of what was happening in the field. With member checks, my own critical reflexivity, and multiple ways of representing the data—building participant profiles and workshop vignettes—I aimed to ground the study's internal validity. Additionally, I protected the confidentiality and anonymity of participants and maintained high ethical standards. I walked participants through the details of the study and explored any potential risks.

Limitations

The limitations of this study can be seen through several different factors. The sample size of the sample might not be representative of the larger population of teachers of Color within the NYC DOE. Although they compose a very small percentage of the teaching workforce, the perspective of the 30 participants who attended the PD series is not enough to make transferable and generalizable claims. In addition, the participants who attended were all volunteers and were able to attend workshops on Saturday mornings. This might be difficult for many other teachers who cannot make this kind of

commitment. Therefore, the kind of educator who attended these sessions was already interested in the themes being explored. A group with more variability in this regard may have produced different results.

Moreover, the PD series itself was an experiment. Its experimental design was evidenced by the unique combination of racial literacy and healing as central themes. Not much research has been done on the exploration of this particular combination in teacher professional development, making this study a somewhat solitary example. Also, some of the methods of analysis were experimental with regard to contemplative and meditation-based inquiry tools developed during this research. This methodological experimentation also limits the claims this study can make.

Lastly, my previous engagement with the community and my shared history with the educator of the PD series introduced significant bias to the power of my interpretations and analysis. I take all of this into consideration as I suggest that—although this study had clear limitations—it does present the life-world that unfolded throughout the PD series in /a descriptive way that enables readers to ascertain the power of the experience. It certainly does not have the power to make generalizations about the role, function, and potential of a *healing-centered* pedagogy for the field of education as a whole. But, within the context of the MEC, this study contains reasonable catalytic validity (Lather, 1986), whereby the data presented here suggested that participants were exposed to a reality-altering and transformative experience. Unfortunately, the engagement of this research was short-lived. Yet, I assume the emancipatory and participatory nature of the experience will have a lasting impact on participants' lives

for a while, possibly shaping how they choose to be agents of change in their respective communities.

Chapter IV

DEPLOYMENT OF A HEALING PRAXIS

In the following two chapters, I present the results of my study of the design and implementation of the Male Educators Collective's (MEC) *Racial Literacy & Healing Professional (PD) Development Workshop Series*. The MEC opened its PD offerings to all educators in the local New York City (NYC) public education system, which in the end enrolled over two dozen educators of Color and three White male teachers. The group was composed of women, men, and gender-nonconforming people. In the ensuing pages, I provide a systematic treatment of coded and analyzed textual, visual, and audio data from interviews, field notes, and documents from the PD series.

In this particular chapter, I explore the pedagogical content and theoretical context on which the PD curriculum was designed and based. I divided this chapter into two sections. In the first section, I highlight the ways in which the instructor drew on concepts from critical pedagogy and tenets of racial literacy to create a process and praxis for participants to partake and exercise throughout the PD series. In the second section, I look at how the PD curriculum resembled what bell hooks called an *engaged pedagogy*. This first chapter mainly focuses on the curriculum's structure and content, which set up the conditions that shaped participants' PD learning experience. Chapter V then explores particular data patterns that reveal how participants experienced the workshops.

Critical Consciousness and Racial Literacy as Praxis

Before exploring how participants made sense of the PD workshop experience, it is useful to surface the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that undergirded its curriculum. The instructor, Dr. Bailey-Cruz, anchored the curriculum by using principles from critical pedagogy and particular models of racial literacy development. As a scholar in the tradition of racial literacy, Dr. Bailey-Cruz drew on her own research and her understanding of how the social construction of race had real ramifications in terms of how racism has thwarted and derailed the life trajectories of minoritized communities. In her curriculum design process, she was intentional about using the PD not only to encourage teachers to develop racial literacy, but also to disrupt racist practices in their schools. “I want to encourage people to interrupt systems that reinforce racism,” she said during a conversation a month before the launch of the PD series.

When the term *racial literacy* was first conceptualized by Lani Guinier (2004), she framed it as the “capacity to decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies and frames the narrative of our republic” (p. 100). Guinier was referring to the ability to deconstruct and unpack the many ways in which racism is still pervasive. For Bailey-Cruz, the PD series was an opportunity to support participants with developing and exercising this skillset and form of literacy. “Individuals who develop racial literacy are able to engage in the necessary personal reflection about their racial beliefs and practices, and teach their students and staff to do the same,” said Dr. Bailey-Cruz during a short lecture to participants. She went on to suggest that “racial literacy

includes the ability to read, discuss, and write about how racial inequity and racial bias manifest in schools.

As discussed in Chapter I, educational systems and teacher preparation programs still struggle to prepare teachers and educational leaders to respond appropriately to issues concerning racial disparities. Racial literacy has emerged as a conceptual tool with which to educate educational practitioners on how to make racism more legible. In an article on the role of critical professional development for teachers of Color, Kholi (2018) defined the term "as the capacity to see, name and unpack the enduring racism in our society" (p. 40). In this same article, Kholi—much like Dr. Bailey-Cruz—made the assumptions that developing strong racial literacy within a community of teachers of Color with similar interests can help participants "to better navigate, persist, and transform the racialized context of schooling" (p. 40). It was with this idea of supporting teachers with this unpacking, seeing, and naming of how racism works that Bailey-Cruz was preoccupied.

In the syllabus for the PD workshop series (to view the PD Syllabus, see Appendix H), Dr. Bailey-Cruz referred to mapping the three Tenets of Racial Literacy. These tenets include *questioning assumptions*, *engaging in critical conversations*, and *practicing personal reflexivity*. Dr. Bailey-Cruz expressed that she wanted these tenets to guide her instruction throughout the PD series. She declared that participants would think critically about racial literacy and their lived experiences in the teaching profession, while also questioning the assumptions they were making with regard to the ideological underpinnings that shaped their racialized experiences as teachers of Color. She wanted

the curriculum to enhance participants' ability to read, discuss, and write about racial inequality in schools.

More precisely, Dr. Bailey-Cruz anchored part of the PD curriculum on her own racial literacy model. After decades of research, she proposed using the *Racial Literacy Development Model* (see Appendix O) as a guiding framework for discussions throughout the workshop series. This framework outlines six particular elements that, for her, constitute fundamental features of the developmental process of deepening one's racial literacy. Dr. Bailey-Cruz explained that, although it was depicted in a triangle, this was not a hierarchical model. Instead, she wanted participants to think about the elements as overlapping processes. She structured the workshop's readings, assignments, and discussions in a way that would generate robust conversations on each element. For her, the PD series would be a place for participants to practice all of the levels and elements in her model.

Both the *Three Tenets of Racial Literacy* and the *Racial Literacy Development Model* emphasized a critical awareness of self, community, history, and taking action. The model's combination of a robust criticality and reflexivity dovetailed with the instructor's deliberate move to integrate critical pedagogy into the PD curriculum. During an interview, Dr. Bailey-Cruz admitted that her work was deeply influenced by Paulo Freire, one of the originators of critical pedagogy. She found synergy between particular concepts within critical pedagogy and the various elements of her racial literacy model. During a conversation on the PD curriculum's design, she shared:

> I want to raise some critical consciousness. I want people to not just be aware of the suffering that is happening in schools, but to feel that they need to play a role in interrupting the systems that are producing this suffering.

Here, Dr. Bailey-Cruz alluded to one of the central concepts in Freire's work—*critical consciousness*. Freire wrote extensively about this construct as a process of critical thinking and examining concrete reality in order to devise solutions or resistance to oppressive power structures. Similarly, for Dr. Bailey-Cruz, her racial literacy model was a kind of process through which teachers could practice and exercise various forms of critical thinking that would lead to action—what she referred to as *interruption*.

For Freire and other scholars in the tradition of critical pedagogy, education was a practice of freedom, not of domination (hooks, 1994). Critical consciousness—or as Freire (1970) called it, *concientization*—was a form of praxis that required intentional action and ongoing reflection upon the world in order to change it. The Three Tenets of Racial Literacy—*questioning assumptions*, *engaging in critical conversations*, and *practicing personal reflexivity*—aligned well the ethos of Freire's conception. Dr. Bailey-Cruz alluded to her desire to curate a learning experience whereby participants could, on their own, develop a sense of empowerment and agency. During a conversation about her aspirations for the impact of the PD series, Dr. Bailey-Cruz articulated the following:

> I recognize how real it is with the constraints they're under, but I want them to be free thinkers and to imagine their curricula in a different way, and to know that they actually have the power to do something different.

Dr. Bailey-Cruz wanted to design the PD series in a way that participants could reimagine education. Her weaving of her own model of racial literacy development, the tenets, and the elements of critical pedagogy were theoretical and pedagogical attempts at curating an emancipatory journey for her participants. From a theoretical standpoint, leaning on critical pedagogy served her well as she put together the readings, assignments, and overall structure of the PD series.

In essence, critical pedagogy pushes back against the banking model of education, whereby teachers deposit information in the minds of students in order to teach them how to adapt to the status quo or to long-standing oppressive conditions. The central goal of this approach is to actively transform structural oppression through a dynamic and emancipatory educational process, in which people learn how they are interrelated and co-dependent and have agency (Rautins & Ibrahim, 2011). In this approach, the educator is not a depositor of knowledge and information, but rather a facilitator—one who creates conditions for students to co-inquire and co-produce knowledge. Everyone—students and educators—in a given educational space is an active participant, not a passive consumer (hooks, 1994). Critical scholars like hooks (1994) have suggested that "Freire's work affirmed that education can only be liberatory when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labor" (p. 14). Part of this approach to education is finding ways to humanize education and facilitate a learning process that helps learners feel comfortable with taking academic risks through the sharing of knowledge, opinions, and lived experiences.

In the context of the PD series, Dr. Bailey-Cruz focused on creating the conditions for the process to be liberatory, participative, and communal, and to offer a generative space for individual and collective knowledge production. The following pages explore the different ways she structured readings, assignments, and activities to enable community building and generative participation. During each workshop, Dr. Bailey-Cruz ensured that rituals and practices were in place to prompt participants to reflect upon their lived experiences. In the spirit of critical pedagogy, Dr. Bailey-Cruz wanted participants to use their lived experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge

production (Kinchloe, 2008). In order to create space for participants' lived experiences, Dr. Bailey-Cruz instituted a writing ritual during each workshop called *Writing for Full Presence*. This 5-minute journaling practice allowed participants to write about whatever was on their mind. They had the option of sharing some of what they wrote by the end of the practice. During the first workshop, Dr. Bailey-Cruz said, "I want you to write away anything that might impede your focus and presence here today." This ritual was followed by participants sharing what came up for them, which surfaced vulnerable and evocative stories regarding personal and professional challenges.

To add to the repertoire of practices that nurtured connection and community, Dr. Bailey-Cruz used the boardgame *Life Stories* to facilitate conversations between participants on their most cherished values and memories. This creation of a space for open sharing was part of her calculus—the strategy that if she nurtured a culture of belonging, she could create a learning community where participants could be their full selves. On this, she shared:

> I want participants to feel that they're being seen by me. And so my first thing is always thinking about how we are going to build a community—a place where they could feel safe and feel brave.

Dr. Bailey-Cruz nurtured this brave and safe space by incorporating poetry as well. During the second workshop, participants were asked to listen to Willie Perdomo's poem "Where I'm From" and then produce their own poems (see Appendix J for poem and "Where I'm From" Poem Activity). Participants then shared their poems with each other. By deploying these rituals and activities that cultivated a sense of community, Dr. Bailey-Cruz humanized the curriculum and created the conditions for the PD workshop experience to be relational and dialogical. The building of relationship with her

participants and between participants played a central role. These relationships were forged and fostered through consistent conversations and affirmation. “I hope that they feel that they’ve been in a space where they have been heard,” she said. As we see here, Dr. Bailey-Cruz placed great importance on constructing and facilitating a PD experience that honored participants’ humanity. This is explored in more detail later.

On another level, some of the pedagogical moves Dr. Bailey-Cruz made revealed the profound influence of critical pedagogy as guiding ethos within the design and implementation of the PD curriculum. For example, in-between workshops, participants were asked to take notes whenever they witnessed or experienced directly issues of racial oppression in their respective schools. They were tasked with identifying at what level—ideological, institutional, interpersonal, or individual—was the racial oppression they were observing manifesting. This was called the *4 I’s of Oppression* assignment (Appendix K for corresponding worksheet). This assignment prompted participants to exercise critical consciousness to identify and understand how problematic issues of race and racism were unfolding in their schools. It also supported participants with sharpening their racial literacy skills by encouraging them to deconstruct and unpack the many ways in which racism was present in their professional lives. Participants brought their observations back and discussed them in small groups, where critical conversations occurred. This assignment humanized the racialized suffering many participants were experiencing directly or witnessing. On one hand, participants were able to discuss and theorize about how racism was present on ideological and institutional levels in their school communities. On the other hand, they were given the opportunity to reflect on and process the racism that was manifesting on individual and interpersonal levels. Here,

critical pedagogy played another important function—the facilitation of a humanizing process where students could critically interrogate the lived conditions in their professional lives that generated racialized suffering. Dr. Bailey-Cruz's intentional design of this particular workshop assignment enabled participants to practice. Critical consciousness seemed to have provided a process—praxis—for thinking about the assignment, while racial literacy provided the tools and skills to identify and unpack how racism was manifesting on different levels.

Another example of an assignment that nurtured participants' critical consciousness was the reflection worksheet on the components of racial literacy development (see Appendix L). Participants were asked to reflect on Dr. Bailey-Cruz's *Racial Literacy Development Model* by taking notes on how they were thinking about each element—*critical love*, *critical humility*, *critical reflection*, *historical literacy*, *archeology of self*, and *interruption*—on professional and personal levels. Participants shared with each other some of the growth or shifts in their thinking along the lines of these elements. The encouragement to practice self-reflexivity on multiple levels was another way Dr. Bailey-Cruz structured opportunities for participants to practice critical consciousness.

Furthermore, the curriculum was balanced with space to practice critical consciousness and moments to engage with inner work and reflection on one's self-care. As another mechanism for cultivating connection and facilitating dialogue, Dr. Bailey-Cruz allowed participants to organically math themselves with an *accountability partner*. Through these peer-to-peer accountability partnerships, participants were responsible for checking in with each other about their emotional, physical, and mental self-care

throughout the entire PD series. Each participant was required to fill in a self-care worksheet and share it with their partner (to view the self-care worksheets, see Appendix I). The self-care assignments and accountability partnerships functioned to ground the conversations on concept of *healing*.

During group discussions on the *4 I's of Oppression*, participants surfaced that they were experiencing high levels of racialized stress in the teaching profession. By including accountability partners and self-care check-ins into the curriculum, Dr. Bailey-Cruz created a space for participants to process the wounding that came from stressful experiences in schools. These assignments and peer activities also required that participants take their self-care seriously in light of the requirement to share updates with accountability partners. This way of structuring the PD curriculum provided ample opportunities for reflection and practice critical consciousness and racial literacy on multiple levels. Again, the exploration of self-care and healing through accountability partners alongside the practice of critical consciousness and racial literacy instituted a praxis where participants were able to consistently "see, name, and unpack" how racism endured in their own lived experiences and within society.

An Engaged Pedagogy

As explored in the previous section, concepts and models from critical pedagogy and racial literacy served as guiding frameworks for designing the PD curriculum. Dr. Bailey-Cruz was also intentional about structuring workshop activities and assignments in a way that would foster a community of belonging, comradery, and critical reflection—creating a space for participants to make sense of their racialized stress. Dr.

Bailey-Cruz wanted participants to reflect on the importance of self-care and the role of healing in their role as educators. By establishing rituals and practices that would enable participants to deploy critical consciousness and racial literacy to "decipher the grammar of racialized hierarchies" (Guinier, 2004, p. 100) and identify racism in schools across the various levels, Dr. Bailey-Cruz hoped participants would come to understand the crucial benefits of healing from the accumulation of this racialized stress.

With her emphasis on practice and building relationships and community, Dr. Bailey-Cruz's PD workshops series resembled the enactment of what hooks (1994) called an *engaged pedagogy*. On this approach, hooks wrote, "To teach in a matter that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (p. 14). For Dr. Bailey-Cruz, creating opportunities for participants to exchange rich stories and experiences from their lived experiences that explored the stress and trauma that come from racial wounds would enable candid discussions and intimate learning. Similarly, for hooks (1994), an *engaged pedagogy* emphasized well-being and "necessarily values student expression" (p. 26). The mandating of self-care check-ins with accountability partners and centering *healing* as a critical theme prioritized participants' well-being.

Conversely, an *engaged pedagogy* is connected to the tradition of critical pedagogy, where the purpose of education is to engage in an active struggle against systems of oppression. In the case of this PD series, Dr. Bailey-Cruz aimed to create a space for participants to resist and heal from racism. She viewed a strategy for resisting against racism as engaging in what hooks (1997) referred to as divorcing ourselves from "white supremacist thinking that suggests we are inferior, inadequate, and marked by

victimization" (p. 17). In light of this view, Dr. Bailey-Cruz integrated the voices of scholars who have taken White Supremacy to task on different fronts. For example, she showed a video of Toni Morrison in conversation with Charlie Rose (Kirkland, 2019), where they explored the maniacal mechanics of racism. In this video, Morrison calls out Rose for asking a question that was racist in and of itself. Bailey-Cruz also shared a short video with Dr. Joy DeGruy (2017) discussing the concept of *post-traumatic slave syndrome*, which refers to the impact of systematic dehumanization over centuries through legal codes and social mores on the psyche of African Americans. In an attempt to help participants grasp the weight of history, Dr. Bailey-Cruz had them read and engage with the 400 Years of Inequality Project timeline (LaVeist, Fullilove, & Fullilove, 2019). This timeline provides a visual and textual representation of a number of historical moments—beginning with the arrival of enslaved Africans in 1619—that entrenched inequality over the last four centuries. Participants walked beside a 4 foot X 20 foot banner that displayed this time period.

Returning to Toni Morrison, for her, White Supremacy represented a sickness, a psychic distortion that leads White people to assume a false sense of superiority over others. Dr. Bailey-Cruz included this clip in the curriculum because she firmly believed it would help participants to think more deeply about the depth of the dysfunction and racial wounding that can come from a system that thrives on the dehumanization of nonwhite and minoritized communities. It was important to her that participants realize there was something utterly wrong with a system that caused educators of Color to feel inferior, inadequate, and victimized. This connected to the exploration in Chapter II of healing-centered pedagogies in the context of indigenous communities. The efforts for

self-determination in indigenous communities—through communal rituals and practices that enabled psychic and cultural restoration—in response to colonial rule provided vital sustenance and resiliency. They too had to deploy strategies to heal from hegemonic cultures that aimed to exploit and, in many cases, eradicate their communities (Denzin, 2008; Denzin et al., 2008; Iseke-Barnes, 2008; Reginer, 1994). This determination to develop practices for psychic and emotional restoration can be seen Dr. Bailey-Cruz's intention to build a PD series curriculum that provided participants with a space to reclaim a sense of power, dignity, and resistance. For Dr. Bailey-Cruz, the PD series was to play a restorative role in the lives of those who would participate. The workshop series was to be a space to reflect critically on the impact of racism and a forum to explore healing and resistance while also being in community. As a "safe and brave" space, the workshops series resembled what Asher (2003) viewed as a space to help educators and students heal from the wounds of oppression. As explored in the literature review, Asher's work was focused on the construction of a curriculum that aimed to heal and liberate students.

In a way, the PD series readings served as supplemental materials to support participants through the process of healing and resisting. Love played a central role here. Participants were asked to read the first couple of chapters of hooks' (2018) book *All About Love*. These initial chapters exposed participants to the intricate connections among love for self, love for others, and love for justice. More importantly, these texts introduced participants to hooks' journey as she embarked on her own healing from what she called *white supremacist capitalist patriarchy*. By this term, hooks denoted the interlocking ways in which the histories and practices of a broken political economy,

twisted racialized hierarchy, and entrenched gender disparities coalesce to maim and derail the life trajectories of the communities experiencing precarity. Dr. Bailey-Cruz's pedagogical decision to intentionally include hooks' work on love seemed to open up a space in the curriculum to ask the question concerning the role of *love* in the process of developing racial literacy, especially as this related to healing.

In addition, participants were also asked to read a piece on secondary traumatic stress in the context of education (for a list of readings, see PD syllabus in Appendix J). In this article, Lander (2018) explored the trauma that students, especially students from marginalized communities, come into the classroom with and how this can create what psychologists call a *counter transference* of trauma. This means that some of the pain and anxiety students might feel from going through adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can get transferred to their educators—causing secondary traumatic stress (Lander, 2018). In the article, Lander wrote the following:

> There is a growing movement around creating trauma-informed schools—schools that recognize and are prepared to support community members affected by trauma and traumatic stress. Such schools deeply integrate social-emotional learning into their teaching, culture and approach, understanding that the holistic health and wellbeing of their charges is essential for achieving academic success. To do this, trauma-informed schools focus on fostering a supportive caring culture, training their entire staff to recognize and support students suffering trauma. While centered on supporting the emotional care and wellbeing of students, trauma-informed schools, by their nature, foster communities where educators have the understanding and tools to recognize and address secondary traumatic stress in themselves and each other. (p. 2)

As Lander pointed out in the quote above, teachers and school staff need to be able to understand the impact trauma has on students and on themselves. This article provided participants with an opportunity to think about and access trauma-informed teaching practices and resources. Participants were certainly encouraged to reflect on the ways

racialized trauma impacted them directly, but Dr. Bailey-Cruz included this piece to provide a broader perspective of the presence and role of trauma within the context of schooling.

In terms of additional readings, participants were also asked to read two other articles on research documenting the plight and promise of teachers of Color in public education. Both of these readings explored the high attrition rates and lack for support for these educators in the U.S. education system. However, the articles highlighted how some teachers of Color develop a communal and racial justice-based orientation towards their craft and relationship with students. In particular, Jackson and Kholi (2016) discussed the extensive empirically-based research in terms of how such teachers engage in the following: (a) they serve as role models to all students; (b) since they tend to work in high-minority urban schools, they reduce the acute shortage of educators; and (c) they are often well-suited for teaching students of Color because they bring to their work a deep understanding of the cultural experiences of these learners. These findings were a kind of affirmation for the presence and power of teachers of Color. Adding these pieces to the PD curriculum seemed to provide participants with a chance to see themselves in the broader landscape of academic research on their demographic and profession.

In its totality—including readings, assignments, lectures, and discussion—the PD curriculum was a way of teaching to transgress. With her explicit commitment to interrupting racism and spurring teacher activism, Dr. Bailey-Cruz attempted to do what hooks (1994) referred to as making the "teaching practice as a site of resistance" (p. 21). In her book *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks went further to say, "When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess"

(p. 21). Here, too, Dr. Bailey-Cruz enacted an *engaged pedagogy.* While speaking to all the participants during the first workshop, she said, "I too am healing and am working on understanding how to live life in a more full way." As the instructor, she took the first risk of being vulnerable. In the next chapter, I explore how participants responded to Dr. Bailey-Cruz's engaged and vulnerable instruction and the PD curriculum as well. In essence, she viewed herself as part of the long legacy of Black feminism (Hill, 2000) and Black women who have played a crucial role in supporting the community's educational, spiritual, and material sustenance in the face of incessant dehumanization. In summation, the PD workshops were designed to enable community building and facilitate the co-creation of a participative learning journey of knowledge production and reciprocal sharing of stories—all with and within the tradition of critical pedagogy.

In closing, it is important to note that the work of holding space for others, in this case by Bailey-Cruz, was an exhausting endeavor. As I witnessed her facilitated each workshop, I also noticed how this work was draining. I took note of the emotional toll this kind of pedagogy can bring upon a practitioner. I know that Bailey-Cruz engaged in her own self-care practices and was getting ready to publish a book that, for her, generated healing. While in conversation with her about the emotional labor of this work, she mentioned that she had a therapist and that she tried her best to have a support system around her to ensure that she was properly supported and fortified. This work is not done alone, rather with the support of community.

Chapter V

BY-PRODUCTS OF THE ENACTMENT OF A HEALING-CENTERED PEDAGOGY

This chapter is an opportunity to delve into the experiences of participants who came together for the five professional development workshops across a 4-month period. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the PD curriculum was designed to enable participants to practice critical consciousness, racial literacy, self-care, and various levels of critical reflexivity. Furthermore, the structure of this learning experience foregrounded and prioritized the building of community, the fostering of a generative space for vulnerable sharing, and the candid engagement with workshop themes. Drawing upon critical pedagogy as an instructional compass, the PD series was to be a co-creation, whereby participants and the instructor moved the dialogue and journey along with responses to the workshop materials and each other's lived experiences.

As this chapter demonstrates, the PD workshop series became fertile ground for candid conversations, robust community building, and critical self-reflection. I divided this chapter into four sections to sort and organize the stream of data that surfaced. To analyze and make sense of participants' experiences, I selected salient quotes and moments throughout the PD series where participants displayed their practice of critical consciousness, racial literacy, and critical reflexivity. The following four sections represent recurring phenomena and clusters of data patterns. For example, I found a pattern of unabated school-based racialized stress which participants shared at every session. Participants deeply appreciated the opportunity to name and share these

stressors. In light of this, the second section explores participants' articulation of gratitude and cultivation of empathy. Additionally, participants actively shared the benefit they were deriving from explorations of self-care and conversations on healing. The third section explores how the PD series potentiated participants' healing journeys. Finally, the fourth section explores a specific conflict that arose during a workshop discussion—one that generated intense emotions which reverberated until the end of the series. In my analysis, I use this conflict to investigate how participants practiced or failed to exercise critical consciousness and critical reflexivity as they navigated conflict along cultural fault lines.

At the end of each section, when appropriate, I reflect on how *healing* might be playing a role in terms of the behavioral dynamics the data illuminated. Also, at different moments, I refer to vignettes in Appendices E through G. As explained in Chapter III, I constructed these vignettes to aid in constructing narratives of what I was observing in the field. These vignettes helped me to get a sense of the flow of conversations during live group discussions and briefly depict the engaged community that was emerging throughout the first three workshops.

Surfacing Feelings of Racialized Stress and Trauma

Fundamentally, the professional development workshop series provided participants with a space to process racialized stress from their experiences in the teaching profession. Throughout the workshops and during one-on-one interviews, participants shared and reflected on the stress and trauma they carried from navigating a public school system with a history of racialized and entrenched inequalities. The

workshop discussions, coupled with the readings, self-care assignments, and structured journaling time, primed participants to personally and publicly reflect critically on how they made sense of the ways that racism manifests at individual, interpersonal, institutional, and ideological levels.

Moreover, all 17 individuals who participated in semi-structured interviews took liberty in expressing the stress they experienced while at work, which linked the sharing that happened during workshop discussions. As an initial example, consider the excerpt below from an interview with Derrick—a Black male dance teacher—who expressed how the PD series allowed him to become more aware of the emotional damage and fatigue he was carrying as a result of being a teacher of Color. Aside from venting and self-reflecting, Derrick's quote revealed how he practices critical consciousness as he thinks about the role he plays in reinforcing systems of oppression.

> Mostly for us as people of Color being in predominantly White educational spaces, again, it's always been about navigation. And, unfortunately, you don't know what that does to you until you're kind of brought in front of a mirror and you have to look at that and you have to review it.... I've gotten so good at navigating these spaces that I didn't realize how much it was wearing me down. And also, I've been so good at navigating these spaces that I didn't know the level of toxicity that I was giving to other people of color when they weren't navigating the space as well as I was. But when you're in this survival mode, and you've been able to survive so well, and you're praised, you don't really see the damage. And I think that's where the PD sessions started to shed light on the situations that we have been taught to hide or sweep under the rug.

Derrick referred to "being brought in front of a mirror" to review some of stress that comes with navigating a predominantly White teaching profession. By "mirror," he was referring to the work participants were tasked with—assigned readings, group discussion, reflection assignments, and structured journaling time—throughout PD workshop series, which required everyone to self-reflect on their racial literacy and

consider self-care more seriously. His reflection was critical in terms of how he called into question the damage done to him by navigating the education system. He also extended the critique toward himself for being toxic to other people of Color. As I mentioned before, Derrick's quote serves as an example of *critical consciousness*. As he surfaced his racialized stress, he questioned the price he paid in the process of being successful in predominantly White space—leveling other folks of Color with his toxicity. This wrestling with the personal damage he has experienced and the hurt he may have inflicted on others revealed the depth of critical consciousness and critical reflexivity in which this PD experience invited Derrick to engage. It took a level of vulnerability and humility to share this and reflect on how he may have caused others damage. When Derrick alluded to being given the opportunity to discuss the "situations we have been taught to sweep under the rug," he was referring to the unpacking of racism that is pervasive in schools.

In the academic literature, the "wearing down" Derrick referred to is what Critical Race Studies scholar William Smith (2008) coined *racial battle fatigue* (RBF). Smith wrote the following about this term:

> RBF is the cumulative result of a natural race-related stress response to distressing mental and emotional conditions. These conditions emerged from constantly facing racially dismissive, demeaning, insensitive and/or hostile racial environments and individuals. (p. 1)

Participants like Derrick used the workshop assignments and the opportunities for dialogue throughout the workshops to articulate how they were experiencing the racially dismissive, demeaning, and insensitive environments in schools. Derrick shared his comments with other participants along with more details. This public critical reflection

by Derrick and others inspired many participants to do the same. The consistent surfacing, processing, and reflecting on racialized stress generated a collective resonance that was palpable throughout the community. Consider the comments below from Courtney. She was a teacher for 5 years in a self-contained classroom in Brooklyn before transitioning into a full-time social worker position.

> It's really helpful to have educators of Color who can come together to debrief about some of the experiences that we have that are specific to us, specifically working with kids of Color, and in a system that I often feel is not designed for the success of our children. It can be emotionally taxing.

For participants like Derrick and Courtney, having the opportunity to engage in dialogue and in relationship with other colleagues of Color who were having similar experiences was cathartic. More specifically, Courtney pointed to an important specificity—the airing of racialized stress gave her the opportunity to articulate publicly her mistrust of the educational system in which she was working. As she articulated feeling as though the system was not designed to educate children of Color successfully, she was striking a collective nerve. This mistrust of the public school system, alongside the tensions and contradictions that come with teaching in this system as a person of Color, was a cognitive dissonance that many participants felt.

Fundamentally, the consistent sharing of how racialized stress unfolded in their professional lives helped to co-create a community of mutual vulnerability. This public display of vulnerability and openness revealed how participants were making sense of and reflecting on their resistance to and complicity in the power structures that reinforce racism in schools. It seemed the PD workshops were providing a space to process racial battle fatigue in community—something many participants could not do within their

respective schools. For example, various participants shared how they were inspired to talk about their own difficulty with processing racialized stress by how others were being so candid about their experiences during group discussions. Consider the reflection from Angie, a female teacher of Latinx descent who taught in public schools for 8 years. The co-created community seemed to have opened her up to sharing her difficult experiences. In her case, this sharing was stimulated and inspired by her witnessing how others in the community were being open about some of the stress they were experiencing in schools. She shared the following:

> I think people allowed themselves to be vulnerable and…I think that allowed me to be vulnerable and to feel safe being vulnerable. When I leave the workshop, I feel like a weight has been lifted off of me and I'm ready to continue to do more work.

Angie's comments reflected the cathartic release many participants alluded to as they attempted to articulate what the community and PD series experience did for them. The quality of the community and the depth of the conversations made participants feel as though they had individually and, at times, collectively released some stress and tension at the end of each workshop. It seemed as though the discussions allowed people to vent and let go of things they had limited opportunities to explore while at work. This space and opportunity to vent what seemed to be repressed racialized stress produced for many what Angie's comment revealed as a cathartic release. Here, one of the questions that surfaced for me was whether this release could be considered as a data point and evidence of healing. I turn back to this later.

The recognition of the cathartic release that came from participating in the series was shared across a few participants. Also, there was a collective acknowledgment of the

reality that participants did not have space to explore similar conversations at while at work with their colleagues. While reflecting on this in particular, Michelle—a Black female special education teacher—talked about what this opportunity meant for her. On this, she shared:

> For me, the space has been about building empathy, building patience, and building love for myself and love for others. And so for me, healing has been about being a part of this space as a woman of Color with other wducators of Color, and learning about what we have all been through, forming solidarity and cultivating our humanity in that space, especially when we have been dehumanized.

Michelle briefly alluded to the empathy that was built throughout the experience. She also reflected on the humanizing process that the space afforded her. This professional learning opportunity enabled her to build solidarity with others. It is instructive to explore further Michelle's comment on having been dehumanized before. This last part of her comment cuts, its sharpness filed by the all-too-real plight of many women of Color, especially in the field of education. During a large group workshop discussion, Michelle had shared how colleagues at her middle school tried to prevent her from doing equity work and advocacy students. This made her furious. For more details on this incident, see Appendix E. However, in her comments above, one can sense a hunger for and appreciation of the empathy, patience, and love that the community cultivated. I stay with this point to introduce the claim that the PD workshop experience enabled participants like Michelle to develop and restore epistemic trust (Fonagy & Allison, 2014) through the sharing of authentic stories and relationships with other participants and with the instructor. Social psychologists Fonagy and Allison (2014) wrote the following about this term:

> This is the development of *epistemic trust*, that is, trust in the authenticity and personal relevance of interpersonally transmitted knowledge. Epistemic trust enables social learning in an ever-changing social and cultural context and allows individuals to benefit from their (social) environment. (p. 373)

It might be possible that the affirming experiences Michelle had during the PD workshops served as a kind of antidote to the racially demeaning social environment she was exposed to in her school community. These racially insensitive moments are a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Schubert, 2008), whereby individuals who have minoritized communities feel a form of nonphysical violence that generates feelings of dehumanization. Here, Michelle was a victim of *symbolic violence*. To make a clearer connection to epistemic trust, consider what Fogany and Allison (2014) suggested the term affords:

> *Epistemic trust* allows the recipient of the information being conveyed to relax their natural, *epistemic vigilance*—a vigilance that is self-protective and naturally occurring. The relaxation of epistemic vigilance allows us to accept that what *we are being told matters to us.* (p. 375)

Here, I suggest that the *racial battle fatigue* Michelle experienced at work—as evidenced in Appendix E—and in part of her comment above on past experiences of feeling dehumanized resulted in triggering a sense of *epistemic vigilance* towards her colleagues. According to Smith et al. (2007), the psychosocial experiences and symptomatic responses to racial battle fatigue include but are not limited to frustration, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, emotional and social withdrawal, avoidance, and fear. Michelle may have become accustomed to the fatigue that comes with working in racially hostile environments and felt the anger, resentment, and withdrawal that came with working with colleagues who were dismissive.

Returning to Michelle's quote, I posit that the relational trust and authentic connections that were forged throughout the PD workshops enabled her to build solidarity, empathy, and patience, and even restore her humanity. In its entirety, I consider this the restoration of *epistemic trust*, for Michelle's openness to the knowledge that was transmitted through her relationships with the participants and the instructor maximized her learning within the context of the PD.

Again, it seemed as though participants like Michelle and several others found the PD series to be an affirming community and learning experience. Here, it is helpful to think further about the restorative role this experience may have played. For Michelle, the ongoing experiences of racialized stress and racial battle fatigue were exacerbated by the symbolic violence that was represented by ignorant and dismissive interactions with her colleagues. The experience of being affirmed by the community and the content of the PD series curriculum may have generated what Khan and Naguib (2019) framed *epistemic healing*, a process whereby ways of knowing and being that have been historically silenced can be legitimized, honored, and integrated. On some levels, the PD series can be viewed as a process that supports individuals who have been historically dehumanized or marginalized to reclaim, reengage, and reassert their ability to produce legitimate knowledge and ways of being. In the quote above, Michelle directly said that, for her, healing was about being part of the PD series to "learn about all we have been through, forming solidarity and cultivating our humanity." This reaffirmed the notion that the PD series may have provided a space for participants like Michelle to restore *epistemic trust* through a kind of *epistemic healing*.

As discussed in Chapter IV, workshop assignments enriched workshop discussions. During a large group conversation on how racism was manifesting across the *4 I's of Oppression*, Dr. Bailey-Cruz and participants listened to an intersectional and more complicated testimony. Alex raised their hand to share. As a gender-nonconforming Latinx middle school teacher, they expressed recently experienced intersectional and interpersonal oppression at their school. Alex—whose preferred pronouns are *they and them*—described a painful and awkward moment. During a discussion with colleagues in school, another teacher was talking negatively about a sixth-grade student who identified as transsexual. In front of Alex, this teacher was insensitively refusing to acknowledge the student's gender identification. This was triggering for Alex: "It was like I was talking to the wall." Alex began to tear up while retelling the story but kept talking about how frustrating it felt to hear this, and how this generated a lack of trust toward that colleague and toward the school staff. Alex did not feel comfortable sharing that they were gender-fluid and gender-nonconforming with her school colleagues. They already felt uneasy being a Latinx teacher on a predominantly White teaching staff. "I don't feel safe sharing who I am there," said Alex. Dr. Bailey-Cruz immediately acknowledged Alex's feelings and thanked them for sharing the raw emotions and vulnerable story. For more context on this moment, see Appendix F. Moments like this unfolded often, giving participants the emotional space to articulate difficult and frustrating experiences.

For Alex, the dialogue during workshop discussions was an opportunity to surface racialized stress, but also process the challenges that came in their lived experiences as a person of Color who does not adhere to normative gender roles. Participants held space for Alex and were curious to learn more about the challenges that other teachers and

students from the LGBTQIA community faced. As evidenced in the vignette within Appendix F, Dr. Bailey-Cruz noticed this interest and decided to change the entire agenda for the following workshop to focus on an exploration of these challenges. Alex felt affirmed by the fact that her fellow participants attentively listened and expressed curiosity.

Contrariwise, there was some evidence that pointed to some annoyance with the level of emotional intimacy and public processing of vulnerable stories. One participant was candid about his lack of interest in what he viewed as the "public healing" part of the workshops. Andre, a middle school science Black male teacher, felt comfortable discussing this with me during a one-on-one interview:

> I think that for our group—the fact that we've been a community for so long—it's hard to not to have a five-hour love session during each workshop. We have all these connections and all this foundation with each other. This can make it hard to explore a topic during a PD or meetings because we tend to get lost in building community or engaging in each other's healing.

Andre's perspective is important for this inquiry—his experience represents a divergent perspective. While the majority of participants enjoyed the group processing of intimate vulnerable moments, he found it as necessary labor. When I probed further during our conversation, he shared that he wanted to get to the "meat" of racial literacy and spend more time discussing it. Andre might represent what some teachers experience in a similar professional development workshop that requires emotional conversations. Not everyone is interested in doing the personal healing work nor witness others doing so in a professional educational setting. Andre did express that he valued in exploring "the notion of healing and self-care within the context of racial literacy development." He just found it uncomfortable to think through experiences of trauma and stress consistently in

group discussions. This brings up the question of the difficulty of ensuring that everyone feels comfortable with the tender space the group has co-created. Although Dr. Bailey-Cruz aimed to create a "safe and brave" space for everyone to feel comfortable, Andre did not necessarily want to go there. This is an obvious point, but it begs another question: How many participants in this PD workshop and in others like it are dissuaded by the public display of vulnerability? Clearly, there has to be an appetite and a community built around the habit of coming together to heal and to process difficult experiences. But it might be necessary to engage in an early assessment of participants' comfort levels as well. This did not occur during this series.

The Articulation of Gratitude and Cultivation of Empathy

During workshop group conversations and throughout one-on-one interviews, participants exercised their critical reflection to express their appreciation for the space that the community had co-created. A recurring feeling that was shared across participants was the sentiment of being comfortable in the community. This "comfort" meant something different to each participant. For some, it meant being comfortable with sharing intimate details of some of their struggles at work. For others, it meant being around others in a way that made them feel welcomed and seen. Consider the reflection from Angie, a female teacher of Latinx descent who taught in public schools for 8 years. She shared the following:

> One of the things that stays with me is how there were so many participants in the PD who were dedicated to doing good work for the kids and to learning more. There were a couple of sessions when I had to go to a family commitment, but I feel like I needed to attend the workshop. It was like a form of therapy for me. We were able to really unpack the issues and the things that we're dealing with in a

> safe place. And I do really feel like there's love in the room...and, you know, there's a respect...I don't even know how to put it into words. It's just this feeling of calm you get when you walk in because everybody's there. And that makes the PD experience comforting.

For Angie, the sense of community that was co-created was like a family. The level of safety, respect, and comfort she sensed was present in the community made her associate the space with a "form of therapy," where difficult issues could be unpacked. When she said there was "love in the room," she was referring to the affirming nature of the community. She expressed gratitude for the community and for the content the PD series invited her to explore. Throughout participant interviews, similar expressions of gratitude surfaced consistently. It is important to note that many of the participants had a shared history through years of membership in the Male Educators Collective (MEC). This sense of community had been partly built over time. Around half of the participants had attended the previous installment of the same PD series during the previous spring. As I mentioned in Chapter III, I attended the inaugural PD series as a guest speaker. I met many of the participants who decided to return.

Moreover, one of the places where this empathic response can be seen is within the interviews with the small number of White participants. As mentioned earlier, three White male teachers decided to join the group. Consider Daniel, who attended all five sessions and traveled from Long Island to Harlem to participate. While reflecting on how he experienced the PD series, he shared:

> All of this made me think about how this is exactly how it might feel...let's say for the only Black teachers in a school with a mostly White staff. I personally have never felt uncomfortable in a similar school, but I could now get how Black teachers might feel. The fact that we were having such deep conversations and being open to those conversations really made me think of it in a different way. And that's one of the things that stuck with me. I was able to share with members

> of my family that I was having deep conversations and it gave me a lot of historical context of the country…about where we are, and why people are the way they are. And kind of gave me some insight into what the kids are probably going through too. I kind of think that I'm getting a better version of what America is...a more informed version. And that's giving me a better sense of my place in this world and what I want to do.

Here, we see a White male health and physical education teacher in his early 30s reflecting on how the candid discussions he had with teachers of Color created an empathic response from him. For Daniel, it seemed the PD workshop series exposed him to a plethora of perspectives that made him empathetic toward the lived experiences of his colleagues of Color. He admitted to not being uncomfortable himself in predominantly White-led schools. His comment may reveal how he came to better understand how his colleagues experienced pervasive racially demeaning and insensitive exchanges in schools.

For Daniel and the two remaining White participants—Josh and Bill—it seemed as though they developed a sensitivity toward the racialized lived experiences of teachers of Color. On one hand, the witnessing of stories that revealed the manifestation of teacher stress generated an empathic response. On the other hand, this empathy also contributed to deeper critical self-reflection and the experience of empathy toward oneself. Consider another excerpt from Daniel's reflection on how he made sense of his PD experience:

> I got a chance to hear the personal stories everybody in the room had in relation to their race and culture…. I was able to make connections to the history of where these traumas might come from. I also got in touch with my own intergenerational trauma in my family.

Daniel's acute awareness toward the stress and trauma that his colleagues shared allowed him to develop his racial literacy. His comments pointed to his ability to make the connections among the stories he was listening to throughout the series, his own racial

literacy, and the racially oppressive power structures present in schools. More profoundly, this experience brought him closer to his own intergenerational trauma. Daniel's revelation of coming closer to and getting in touch with his own trauma in light of engaging with colleagues throughout the PD series connects to the next data pattern. The candid sharing of stories and experiences of racialized stress—while also discussing healing—prompted and motivated each other to do deeper inner work.

In a way, the exploration of racial literacy and healing across five workshops was indeed an invitation to do inner work. Evidently, participants took up this invitation in various ways, resulting in a multitude of insights and revelations. The last data point to consider within this section requires a return to Derrick's experience. As we mentioned earlier, he become more aware of the damage racialized stress inflicted upon him. In relation to the theme explored here, Derrick came to the realization that he had to cultivate and extend empathy back to himself. On this, he shared the following:

> In this selfless work of being a teacher, especially if you're considered a good teacher, the last person you think about is yourself. So not only are you burned out by the fact that you are a great navigator of these systems, you're also burned out by the fact that you have cared about everyone else but yourself. So that is a kind of awakening that I've dealt with in these workshops.

For Derrick, there was a sense of empathy and compassion that he was not offering himself as he served his students and worked with colleagues at his school. Being caught up with the nonstop flow of work, as well as the responsibilities and commitment to care for others, led him to forget about his own self and well-being. He was grateful for having had the opportunity to see these more vividly as he engaged in weekly reflections and within workshop discussions. This need for more self-empathy and self-compassion was something that several other participants raised as a realization after discussing their

self-care worksheets with their *accountability partners*. It was this peer-to-peer accountability structure along with the plethora of opportunities for reflection and dialogue that led to participants into doing deep inner work.

Potentiating and Supporting Participants' Healing Journeys

The public expression of gratitude and critical reflection through the sharing of vulnerable stories supported participants to further engage in their own inner work. It seemed as though the welcoming and strong community that was built throughout the PD series coupled with candid discussions helped various participants to potentiate their healing journeys. This surfaced in the data in numerous ways. As an example, consider the quote below from Gina, a Black female teacher who has been teaching special education at the high school level for the last 5 years.

> There's some healing I need to do with myself. I just noticed that, for me, I'm sitting in this hard place right now because I'm a very much a nonchalant type of person. I don't let things sit with me for long. But in the space of work, and even in my personal life, there are things that are sitting with me, which are holding me back.... So there's that part of healing of myself that I need to do. And I would say that having these conversations have made me more conscious and aware of that and aware of how different traumas and stressors have impacted me and giving me the ability to name them.

Gina explicitly talked about the shift she was making to focus on her own healing. She admitted to how being part of the community and PD experience supported her with naming different traumas and stressors. As mentioned earlier, for Daniel, as a White participant, this experience allowed him to develop a sharper sensitivity towards the racialized stress his colleagues of Color endured and got him in touch with his own intergenerational trauma. For Gina and many other participants of Color, the PD series

experience supported them with becoming more sensitive to the weight of their own racialized stress, while also encouraging them to heal from it. Many participants were surprised to realize just how much racialized stress and trauma they had or were experiencing from work. As explored earlier, Derrick's comment on the fact that he was not aware of the extent of the damage that came with navigating White educational spaces is further evidence of this. In Derrick's case, his realization that he may have inflicted harm on other people can be viewed as evidence of some steps he was taking in his inner work and healing journey. As he named this phenomenon, he possibly potentiated his own healing journey—all of which was supported by the community and discussions throughout the PD series.

Again, the combination of witnessing other colleagues publicly reflect on their own journeys as people of Color in the public school system supported many participants with becoming more conscious of the stress they were carrying. For some participants, becoming more conscious of the level of the stress they were carrying resulted in deeper critical reflection. During her interview, Gina tapped into a deep pain that was tied to her ancestral past. On this, she shared:

> But I always knew that this racial stress was there. But now I can also realize how maybe because of this…I mean the history of Black women getting up and doing these things...and you're selfless and you're giving and giving to your kids…. But now I'm recognizing that I'm practicing something that has been historically taught to me that's also hurting me at the same time.

At this point in the interview, Gina arrived at a realization that her experience of racialized stress might be connected to the long-lasting legacy of Black women working and caring for the community at the expense of their own health. Here, she tapped into the feelings of exhaustion and overwork that seemed to connect to her ancestral lineage.

Her emotionally charged tone of voice suggested that the giving of herself to her students and to her community was something compulsive, something she could not control. She shared how this constant giving limited her ability to take care of herself. Prior to making this comment, Gina talked about how her experience working through the workshop's self-care assignments and talking to her accountability partner helped her to see the gaps in how she was caring for herself.

In a similar way, Rebecca—a 20-year veteran teacher—experienced a revelation about being overworked. On this, she shared:

> I was always on survival mode...like my students need this...my students need that...just do this one thing and everything will be okay. But every time that one thing was resolved, something else popped up! And now I am fifty years old and I no longer want to live like that. The work here helped me to self-reflect on the things that will no longer serve me well.

Rebecca, like many other participants, were too busy working to pause and self-assess. The time, community, and assignments dedicated to exploring racial literacy, healing, and self-care helped participants to look more closely at themselves. The realization that something had to change about their self-care was shared across participants. Like Rebecca, being in survival mode seemed to be a commonly shared sentiment. It seemed as though the encouragement to articulate racialized stress alongside completing self-care assignments supported participants with prioritizing self-care. This prioritization, in turn, also contributed to potentiating participants' healing journeys.

Overall, there seemed to be an appreciation for exploring the unique combination of self-care, racial literacy, and healing as central themes throughout the workshops. This intentional combination supported the creation of the necessary conditions for participants to start or activate their own healing journeys with, at least, processing their

racialized stress and self-assessing with regard to self-care. Below, Adam—a Black male teacher—talked about this unique combination:

> Just taking the time to think about taking care of our minds, our bodies and our souls is really important and powerful work. And it's wonderful that it is connected to racial literacy, and conversations about race and unpacking that because first of all unpacking that is healing. Teaching is an incredibly demanding job and being a teacher activist, this piles on more and more work. And just to be able to navigate all of that, you need to be whole.

As a language arts teacher for 16 years, Adam was well aware of the stressors that came with being a teacher of Color. However, he seemed surprised and relieved as he reflected on how professional development workshops like this one could be in place to provide teachers with opportunities to cultivate wholeness and process suppressed feelings of racialized stress.

Exploring Conflict and Exposing Cultural Fault Lines

As with any human endeavor, even though the community that was co-created generated a sense of belonging, it too generated conflict. In a way, debates and discussions were central processes for arriving at knowledge and understanding among participants. Lively exchanges often erupted during the workshops, ending in clarity and mutual appreciation. By the third workshop, participants appeared comfortable with each other and with the reality that the space was a conductor for candid conversations. However, a conflict arose during the third workshop that challenged the group and had a resounding effect on the emotional climate of the community. I view this disruption as a further manifestation and deepening of critical reflection. I also view what happened during the third workshop as a critical incident that served as an opportunity to examine

the PD experience and curriculum at a moment of duress. The drama unfolded during the focus group section of the third workshop.

As discussed in Chapter III, Dr. Bailey-Cruz left the room during the last 90 minutes of each workshop so that I could conduct focus groups with participants. The dialogue below represents part of a 20-minute conversation that erupted at the tail end of the third workshop's focus group without the presence of Dr. Bailey-Cruz. I led and facilitated each focus group on my own. The awkwardness that arose after Josh's comment could be felt throughout the room. Josh was a White Jewish male language arts teacher. The back-and-forth between Yvette and Marcus generated a tension that was palpable. Yvette, a Black woman who has been teaching for over a decade, evocatively expressed her concerns over Josh's commentary. She also pushed back against Marcus when he tried to somewhat defend Josh. Marcus, a Black male teacher and dean at a local school in Harlem, felt moved to help Josh clarify what he was saying. Below is an abbreviated transcript of the moment that transpired. For more context, see Appendix G.

> **Josh:** I want to share how I think we need to find a balance when talking about issues of oppression.... I feel like people have gone to extremes with some things. The other day I saw a comment equating the detention of immigrant children at the border by I.C.E. agents to Nazis committing genocide…. These are not the same thing…. We need to stop being so extreme. These things are very different…. I think this mislabeling is getting out of hand. I also think something similar is happening with the #MeToo movement…you know like how some people have been falsely accused of misconduct and are lumped in with rapists and pedophiles. This too is an example of people going to extremes.
> **Yvette:** With all due respect, I felt uncomfortable in my body hearing what Josh just said. It sounded racist and sexist….
>
> **Marcus:** Sure, Josh's points may sound a little unclear…some of the language he used was loaded and generated tension…but we need to check ourselves too. He might be right on some things concerning #MeToo…

> **Yvette:** As a woman who has experienced abuse...that made me feel uncomfortable!... I have experienced sexual harassment, and those things he said came off as racist and sexist!

The conflict that unfolded during this third focus group jolted the group. Even some of the debates that happened during previous workshop discussions were, at worst, resolved immediately or did not generate the level of unease that the conflict above did. The group seemed to have stumbled on cultural fault lines at the nexus of race and gender. It tangibly felt as though this was the deepest the group had gone thus far in terms of discussion and group critical reflection. Participants were stretched emotionally in a way they had not been before. Indeed, the time they had already spent together since the beginning of the series was filled with candid conversations and the sharing of vulnerable stories that elicited a range of tender emotional responses. Nevertheless, these responses were mostly empathetic in nature. Beforehand, there had not been a moment when a participant said something that caused pain or intensely triggered another person. The moment Josh finished his comments, I could sense the anxiety in the room as participants physically displayed concern over where the conversation would go next and how to respond appropriately.

Frankly, I felt the group's anxiety in my body. In light of Dr. Bailey-Cruz's absence, I was the perceived authority in the room. My main concern was not intervening too much as the researcher conducting the focus group. Should I step in immediately to quell the further escalation of the conflict? Should I step in to support Josh with clarifying his comments? Should I step in to support Yvette who was visibly upset? Should I step in to broker some kind of truce or reconciliation between Yvette and Marcus? These were some of the questions that rushed through my mind as the drama

continued to unfold. An added challenge was the fact that we had very little time left. It was a Saturday and people had to get to their family and personal affairs. I let the group purposely discuss the moment that was unfolding for a few rounds of back-and-forth between Yvette and Marcus. I interjected to provide some stability and explore common ground. I was preoccupied with impacting the course of the research and this conversation in particular. In a way, I was already impacting the course of the conversation. Any decision I made—even my silence—was going to add to the co-construction of the dialogue. I was not a neutral agent or an objective observer. I was already implicated and entangled in the process. I decided that it was best for the group for me to actively support the community by inviting them to take a step back and sit with what had just occurred. This move generated enough calm to carry us through to the last few minutes we had together without any further escalation.

Even though the focus group was over, the moment that transpired lived on. It lived on in the conversations that unfolded at the end of that third workshop. It lived on in the minds of the participants who were present, and it re-surfaced during the following workshop. Word got around. Even participants who were absent heard about what happened. During the fourth workshop, Josh, Yvette, and Marcus were there along with over 20 other participants to engage in dialogue.

After *Writing for Full Presence*, a participant asked what happened during the last session that caused so much disruption. Dr. Bailey-Cruz proceeded to invite participants who felt comfortable to share how they felt about it all. Josh had a handwritten note with an apology to Yvette and some clarifying comments. He apologized for saying anything that may have caused any pain and that he did not articulate himself clearly. From my

perspective, being Jewish made him sensitive to how the word “genocide” was being politicized in the context of immigration debates. I could also decipher where his comments on the #MeToo movement came from. After Josh shared his thoughts, other participants shared how uncomfortable they felt when the conversation escalated. Yvette accepted Josh’s apology, but pointed out that there is a long history of moments when Black men do not support Black women—she was referring to Marcus. She felt Marcus defended Josh and did not support her during the focus group conversation. This was another fault line.

Although he exchanged hugs with a couple of participants who wanted to affirm him, Marcus had been silent throughout the 30 minutes the group took to rehash the conversation. Later on in the discussion, Dr. Bailey-Cruz asked Marcus if he wanted to contribute to the conversation at all. He looked at Dr. Bailey-Cruz with tired eyes, nodded, and said, “No.” It was time for a break. As the group transitioned into conversations with accountability partners over a working lunch, Marcus and Dr. Bailey-Cruz stepped outside to talk in private. He never came back to that fourth workshop. Dr. Bailey-Cruz returned with tears in her eyes, processing the loss of a member of the community.

As a participant observer, this moment shook me. I recall being emotionally exhausted at the end of that third focus group. That moment also represented a point in the research when my presence was noticed and needed unlike any other. I took my role of participant observer seriously throughout the first few workshops. I engaged with participants in small talk at times and participated in some table activities, but I tried not to call too much attention to myself. I surely did not contribute to large group

conversations throughout the series. Participants mainly heard from me at the end of each workshop when I would open up and close the focus group discussions. The fact that I had to navigate and manage a conflict during a focus group was a rare occasion. Not surprisingly, the conflict between Yvette, Josh, and Marcus came up during one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Several participants referred to that moment as they engaged in critical reflection on how they made sense of their PD learning experiences. The transcripts of these interviews alongside my field notes on conversations among participants discussing the situation helped to reconstruct the moment and trace its afterlife. In the following pages, I explore how participants made sense of that conflict and the fault lines that were exposed.

Fundamentally, a variety of perspectives on the conflict emerged. It was clear that a multitude of conversations happened after the third session, which led participants who were not present for that third session to develop strong opinions as well. Since this conflict had such an impact on the social and emotional fabric of the group, it consistently came up during data analysis. For example, consider Cresta who attended most of the workshops, except the third one. While reflecting on her experiences and on her perspective on the conflict that had erupted, she briefly shared the following:

> I feel like I don't know if we really dealt with that. And I wish we did. And I think that in terms of caring not only for Yvette, but then also for Marcus…and for Josh.... I feel like when the conversation got difficult, I don't know if we really resolved it.... I mean it doesn't have to be like Kumbaya happy or completely resolved...but I don't know how well we dealt with that. I don't know. I feel like it wasn't really dealt with because I don't know. I don't know why Marcus didn't say anything. And I wasn't there at the very end when you guys did the circle, so I don't know if he did you know, but I was curious to hear from him, you know?

Cresta was not there when the conflict unfolded but was clearly concerned with how the community was handling it. She did not directly experience the anxiety that permeated the room when it happened. Yet, she still wanted the group to find some sort of resolution and provide care and support to everyone who was involved. Her comments revealed how the conversation that occurred during the fourth workshop did not do enough to bring clarity or coherence for her. It seemed as though it surfaced more unresolved feelings, in this case, with a participant who was not even there for the initial conversation.

Cresta's comment also represented the commitment to care that permeated the community. Participants had developed strong relationships with each other. By this point, it felt as though they had built a family—to the point that one of the elders in the group brought it upon himself to provide support after the conflict. The following is an excerpt from Clifton's interview, a retired Black male teacher and administrator who served the NYC DOE for 30 years:

> I saw Yvette outside in front of the university. I began to share with her how we are all educators and one thing to notice is how Josh may have a speech impediment. So as an educator, when you see that in your students you can recognize they have difficulty getting out exactly what they want to express at the right time. That's just part of our job as educators. We forget that even in our space, there are people who are dealing with all kinds of issues emotional, social, physical, you know, like that. So I expressed that to her and then sent Josh a text telling him to stick with it. So when he came back with his prepared speech, it was because that's the mode that many people with delayed speech would prefer to work with…because they can read it and the delay is not as apparent.

Clifton directly experienced the contentious moment and picked up on something Yvette may have missed. Josh may have made those comments that were hurtful to Yvette while struggling to communicate clearly due to a difficulty with his speech.

Clifton wanted to support Yvette by giving her his perspective on Josh's intentions and limitations. The fact that Clifton texted Josh to check in with him and encourage him to come back to the following session illustrated the commitment to community care that was shared among many participants. Josh had left that third workshop feeling low.

During the same interview, Clifton kept reflecting on this moment among Josh, Yvette, and Marcus. He shared the followed:

> I'm not sure of the name of the young lady who was the one who was adamant that Marcus had not been supportive of Yvette. This brought up the trope of Black men not being supportive of Black women. I have heard Black Women state the issue of Black Men not supporting them. And I have seen Black Men struggle with the ability to express ourselves as openly as Black Women. This is something that has to be explored.

Clifton picked up on Yvette's original gripe with Marcus. He had heard another participant raise this issue during the fourth workshop. A couple of Black women in the group felt that was a concern for them as well. To some participants, when Marcus did not explicitly acknowledge Yvette's experience as a survivor of sexual assault and doubling down on what seemed to be a defense for Josh, it seemed as though he was pushing back against #MeToo. This resulted in further triggering Yvette and activating a particular trope—the phenomenon of Black men not supporting Black woman on certain occasions. Clifton felt that the community was mature enough to be able to explore this issue. Unfortunately, this was not explored in any depth during the remaining workshops. There was not enough time and it was left unresolved.

After the fourth workshop, it was unclear whether Marcus would return to the last session. He told Dr. Bailey-Cruz that he did not feel safe. On this, Dr. Bailey-Cruz said, "Marcus doesn't think he'll come back and I am distraught that we are losing a member

of the community." For months, this community came together with a commitment to welcoming and engaging each other. This incident resulted in the possible loss of a community member who, in fact, did not feel the safety or support the community had extended to others. Moreover, Cresta, Clifton, and several other participants expressed how they felt things were unresolved. They expressed a desire for reconciliation. Unfortunately, the time to do that never came. It felt as though the community had an open wound.

In contrast, a few participants felt the conflict was a good event and a profound learning experience. A few participants decided to exercise their critical reflection to find insight into that contentious moment. One outstanding comment on this came from Bill, one of the White teachers. Below is an excerpt from his interview:

> It really resonated with me like you said, you know, let's take a moment to just listen here and see that we are in a moment where this doesn't usually happen between twenty or so people. I really appreciated that moment. It had a chance. Obviously, we ran out of time and I totally understood. But I think we had a lot of potential to really learn something there…. I felt like it kind of took people by surprise. Meanwhile, we were there to support that issue, you know, push those issues and push those boundaries, and to talk and to really learn from those moments. And I saw that people were like, "Hey, this is getting too intense." So I really appreciated that moment. But I was a little disappointed in people when we actually got to that moment. I wanted to say, "Hey, you know what, we're doing a good job here."

Bill's perspective reflected how a small number of participants thought the conflict was an opening for the group to step through to do deeper listening and healing work. Bill's desire to stay with the moment and learn from it illustrated an appetite for and an orientation towards critical reflection, inner work, and healing that the PD series tried to nurture. He voluntarily raised this moment during my semi-structured interview with him. That contentious moment with the exposure of cultural fault lines became a memory

that many participants like Bill, Cresta, and Clifton used to critically reflect and make sense of their PD learning experience.

The excerpts above revealed the range of responses to that critical moment that occurred during the third session. Indeed, it produced a resounding shock that was felt throughout the community. The exposure of deep cultural fault lines left many wanting more dialogue and reconciliation. This moment, left unresolved, was still a profoundly useful pedagogical moment in terms of how it pushed everyone in the community to engage in deeper critical reflection. During the last workshop, Marcus surprisingly returned. On their own time and terms, Yvette, Marcus, and Josh talked to each other separately to address any unresolved feelings. At that moment, the relationships that were nurtured throughout the series were strong enough to move the community beyond the temporary ruptures. There seemed to be an unspoken sentiment that, when done in community, healing is sometimes jarring and painful.

In a way, the sense of rupture and emotional malaise that this conflict produced was an example of learning, and possibly healing, through disorientation. The dissonance that the moment produced, coupled with the rehashing and re-stitching back together of the moment through further dialogue and clarification, led to a deeper understanding of at least everyone's intentions. People and moments are always imperfect. At best, this community was able to reconsider what happened and—from a collective rearview window—speculate how boundaries were crossed and how to avoid such transgression in the future.

In summary, the PD series provided ample opportunities for reflection and practice. On some level, even the conflict that arose was a form of practice. The

community that was fostered and forged played a strong role in facilitating connection and building trust, which led to the exchanges of vulnerable stories. The PD series seemed to have provided participants with the needed space and support to find refuge and relief from what appeared—at times—to be a racially hostile environment within the public school system. The two-pronged reflexive praxis—with self-care and healing on one side and racial literacy and critical consciousness on the other—seemed to give birth to what I viewed as a *healing praxis*. In the following chapter, I explore this further and think through the implications of these finds in the context of theory, practice, and policy.

Chapter VI

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this final chapter, I synthesize this study by providing a brief summary of findings, some reflections on my conceptual framework, and further interpretations of the results. Subsequently, I explore possible implications of this research on theory, practice, and policymaking. With a primary focus on my close role as a researcher and my relationship to the community who participated in the professional development (PD) workshop series under examination as well as the instructor of the series, I discuss the limitations of this inquiry and its methodology in more detail. I conclude with a brief reflection on how this work relates to teaching, learning, and living in a fragile world that is currently on fire.

Summary of Findings

This inquiry explored the design, implementation, and impact of a healing-centered professional learning experience for teachers of Color. As the previous chapters explored, the PD series provided a space to practice racial literacy and critical consciousness. It created a space for participants to build relationships with each other and share candid reflections on how they were making sense of the content explored throughout the series, especially how it related to their experiences of racialized stress in the teaching profession. The instructor, Dr. Bailey-Cruz, intentionally designed and structured the curriculum in a way that enabled this community building and robust

participant reflection. Opportunities for reflection and practice encouraged participants to share stories with each other, deepening the social connections and mutual support within the community. The communal exploration of healing and racial literacy within the context of participants' professional lives as teachers of Color seemed to cultivate a level of gratitude and empathy the community that was formed.

After an analysis of the PD curriculum's design and implementation, it seemed as though the series was inviting participants to engage in a two-pronged reflexive praxis. On one prong, this praxis was composed of the deployment of racial literacy and critical consciousness as reflexive tools for reading the world (Freire & Ramos, 1970) and making observations on the ways in which racism was manifesting in the local school system. The other prong was comprised of practices that supported participants with attending to their self-care and healing. This praxis enabled participants to name and unpack the ways in which racism manifested in their schools, while at the same time systematically assessing the state of their mental, emotional, and physical health—especially in relation to the racialized stress experienced at work.

Moreover, the PD required that participants use the two-pronged praxis during their time and role as teachers in the local school system. This encouraged participants to practice and created opportunities for them to share reflections on their observations, alongside checking in with each other throughout the series. The results of such ongoing practice and check-ins led participants to reflect actively on the ways in which racism manifested in schools at different levels—individual, interpersonal, ideological, and interpersonal—and processing accumulated racialized stress that came with dealing with this. This processing seemed to generate a cathartic effect, whereby participants felt a

sense of release by articulating their own stories and hearing others share racially demeaning experiences as well. There was a sense of gratitude that emerged in individuals and in the community for the level of vulnerability and culture of belonging that was co-created through the candid sharing. The exchange of lived experiences and in-depth reflection on healing and self-care cultivated a sense of empathy toward self and others. It seemed as though the collective experience supported participants with actively engaging in their own healing journeys. As in any human group, the close and engaging community that was fostered also resulted in stumbling on cultural fault lines and resounding deep conflict. Both the exploration of deep conflict and the potentiation of participants' healing journeys revealed the depth and impact of the ongoing practice and discussion of racial literacy and healing in which the series had invited everyone to partake.

Reflection on Conceptual Framework

Before providing some interpretations of the research findings, it would be generative to revisit briefly the unique conceptual framework that I constructed to serve as a guide. Below, Figure 4 is a visual representation of this framework. As explored in Chapters I and III, I drew on features within each, but mostly the combination of *healing-centered engagement*, *transformative activist stance*, and *indigenist stance* helped to shape my approach in this study. For example, some of the principles within *transformative activist stance* (TAS) are conducting research with an *activist agenda*, tying *inquiry to action*, and focusing on *social transformation*. Taking this stance provided multiple affordances.

First, it allowed me to keep track of my own commitments and motives for pursuing this line of research, and to take note of how this influenced my observations and meaning making throughout the study. I consider carrying out this research as engaging in an "activist agenda" on multiple levels. On one level, I believe that studying *healing-centered pedagogies* within the context of education is incredibly important political and cultural work. On another level, this stance helped me to zero in on how the PD instructor was intentionally attempting to spur healing from, resistance to, and activism against dominant practices and ideologies related to public education through the PD curriculum. Here, too, TAS lends support to keeping track of how the curriculum itself and the instructor displayed or were connected to "activist agendas," where social transformation—through racial literacy and healing—was the modus operandi. I aimed that some of the insights within this inquiry would contribute to theory building in relation to healing-centered approaches as well as highlighting concrete actions for building equitable learning spaces.

Also, as Stetsenko (2016) suggested, the *transformative activist stance* is grounded on *post-objectivist critical* scholarship, which encompasses feminist, critical race, (dis)ability, and post-colonial discourse theories; critical literacies; postmodernist, hermeneutical, Marxist and post-Marxist frameworks; pragmatism; critical pedagogy; and participatory action research, among other theoretical approaches. With this in mind, when appropriate, I later draw on the richness of this stance to interpret findings and to find comfort in being an interdisciplinary researcher. More importantly, TAS played a major role in my exploration of the tensions that came up with my proximity to and previous participation in the community I was studying. By this, I mean to re-surface the

fact that I had a shared history with the educator of the series prior to carrying out this research, and I had developed professional relationships with some of the participants a year prior. Taking this stance aided in consistently reminding myself how implicated and entangled I was with the participants and the data. I explore this in more detail later when I present the limitations of this study.

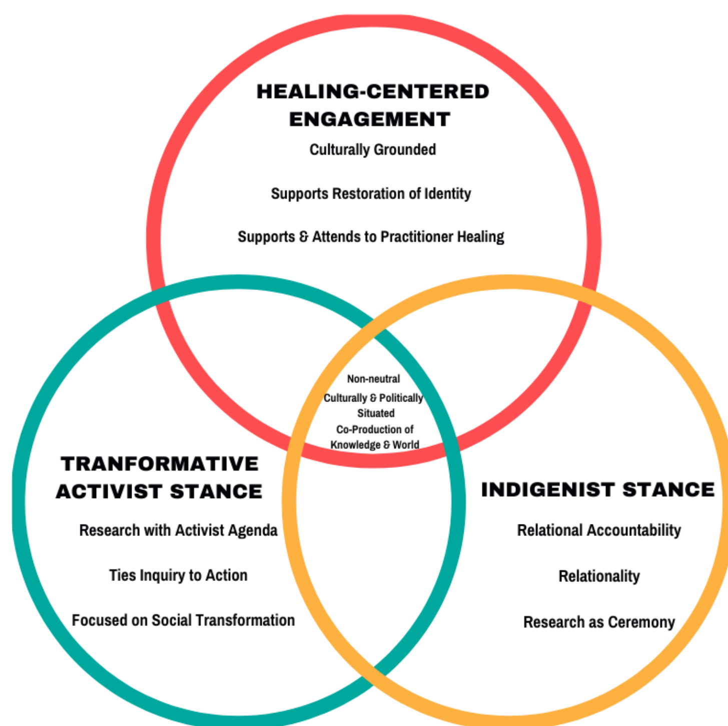

Figure 4. Conceptual framework

With regard to *healing-centered engagement* (HCE), I used it as a guide for paying attention to possible curricular moves and decisions made by the instructor that aligned with or contributed to healing. In this sense, I looked closely at the ways in which the curriculum's content, explicitly or implicitly, covered or explored cultural and historical topics that related to the identities and lived experiences of the participants—most of whom were teachers of Color. In addition, including HCE helped to consider and

highlight how the discussion of the topic of *healing* and the assigned self-care worksheets—which included check-ins with accountability partners—were possible sites or moments to observe if participants were experiencing any shifts in their understanding of healing at all. As a concept that stood out in the scattered literature review of restorative and healing-centered scholarship, HCE fundamentally contributed to helping me to consider how *healing* could possibly be operationalized within a curriculum.

Lastly, I wove an *indigenist stance* into my approach to this study to integrate appropriate indigenous research methodological concepts like *relationality*, *relational accountability*, and *research as ceremony*. These concepts refer to the centrality of building relationships with participants and with all the elements of the research process by upholding the principles of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity wherever possible (Wilson, 2008). They also remind researchers of the importance of maintaining those relationships with clear commitments to integrity, harmony, and not causing harm. These commitments helped to intentionally build respectful and generative relationships with participants, with the plethora of concepts and knowledge explored throughout the study, with the space where the research was conducted, and with myself. An *indigenist stance* allowed me to see myself and all elements of the research process as a web of relationships. As explored in Chapter III, this refers to the concept of *relationality*, where reality is known and experienced through relationship (Wilson, 2008). All of this helped me to tend to relationships, to tease out relationships, to pay particular attention to how relationships were unfolding in the field, and to keep track of accountability across these levels. In addition, the concept of *research as ceremony* reinvigorated my spirit and intellectual zeal throughout this study by infusing the process with an orientation toward

the sacred. I acknowledged the privilege that comes with being able to pursue this work. I gave thanks at each phase of this study and tried to treat participants, myself, and my doctoral committee with the same level of conscientious care and gratitude. I even consulted an indigenous elder who is also a scholar in this tradition to ask for permission to take up an *indigenist stance* in my work here. He gave his blessings.

Lastly, the ultimate result of combining all of these constructs led to clearer perspectives of how I viewed my role and place as researcher, how I viewed emerging data, and how I interpreted interactions among participants throughout the professional learning experience. The central part of the Venn diagram in Figure 4 represents this convergence. In essence, I understood my place throughout the process as a non-neutral researcher and participant. I knew that my positionality was culturally and politically situated, just as it is for everyone else. As far as data were concerned and the process of making sense of participants' behavior, I considered both the knowledge that was being explored and the life-world that was being shared within the community to be co-produced by everyone involved. All in all, this generated an understanding that knowledge, people, and the world itself are not static, but are fluid and constantly being reproduced, negotiated, and contested.

Interpretation(s) of Findings

Indeed, it appears as though the design and implementation of the racial literacy and healing PD series were enactments of a *healing-centered pedagogy*. The *healing-centered* component was characterized by having *healing* as a core theme for exploration for the precise purpose of providing a space and praxis for teachers of Color to heal from

the ravages of racism on their lives in the context of schooling. In this case study, the *healing-centered* was specifically tied to generating a response to the systemic racial disparities in the education system that land disproportionately on the backs and minds of teachers of Color who participated in the PD series. I interpreted the results of this study in two particular ways. First, I viewed the two-pronged reflexive praxis within the curriculum—which combined racial literacy and critical consciousness on one side and healing and self-care on the other—as the development of a *healing praxis*. I defined *healing praxis* as a cluster of methods and reflexive tools that enable groups and individuals to reflect on, process, heal, and act to transform inequitable systems at ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels. I viewed the two-pronged praxis embedded in the PD curriculum and cultivated throughout the experience as a *healing praxis* in light of how it provided participants with clear ways to think through and deconstruct racism at various levels, while at the same time equipping participants with the tools to do inner work. This inner work—anchored by *healing* and *self-care*—supported participants with processing the impact of racism on their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. One of the core questions the PD curriculum was inviting participants to answer was concerning how do we heal from racism. The two-pronged healing praxis was, to a center degree, a partial answer to that question.

In a broad way, the PD curriculum was a historically grounded healing praxis that invited participants to reckon with the legacies tied to the social construction of race in the United States. For example, participants were asked to reflect on the concept of *post-traumatic slave syndrome* (Degruy, 2017) and the adaptive strategies and behaviors that African Americans still exhibit as a response to having been in bondage. The educator

required participants to explore the 400-year legacy of the arrival of enslaved Africans to U.S. soil in 1619 by reviewing the 400 Years of Inequality Project's 20-foot banner. This artifact illustrated how the intricate evolution of slavery into other forms of entrenched dehumanization and codified discrimination created, in the end, an ecology of inequality (LaVeist et al., 2019).

Essentially, as I suggested in Chapter IV, I viewed this broad and expansive historical exploration as a significant circular move that aimed to encourage participants to think critically about the intergenerational; impact of structural violence. Moreover, I saw a connection between structural violence (Gilman, 1997)—the social structures and social institutions that may harm some people while rewarding others—and the social structure the PD series provided for participants to explore such history and topics like *healing* and *racial literacy*. Here, I interpreted the PD curriculum, the community that came together, and the physical space where the workshops were held as an example of a *healing structure*. By *healing structure*, I mean a social institution or social structure—outside of health care institutions—that enables communities and individuals to exercise, manifest, and work on their own healing and well-being, especially in response to the legacy of structural violence.

To be exact, I interpreted the space that the PD series provided participants as a *social healing structure*. Here, scholars in the field of spatial analysis provided frameworks for thinking about how a given space is socially constructed and socially produced. In her study on spatializing culture, Low (1996) explored how space is "semiotically encoded and interpreted" through its social production and social construction. According to Low, the physical creation of a space is produced by social,

economic, technological, and ideological forces. The combination of these forces is the *social production of space*, which creates the political, economic, and historical foundation upon which—in this case—the professional development workshop series was based upon. In contrast, Low defined the social construction of space as "the symbolic and existential experience of space as mediated by social processes such as exchange, conflict, and control" (p. 862). She framed this entire process as "the actual transformation of space—through people's social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and actions that convey symbolic meaning" (p. 862). Both of these concepts may help to analyze further how the PD series was *socially produced* and *social constructed* to create a *social healing structure*, through which participants engaged and made sense of workshop themes and content.

As discussed in Chapter V, the PD series provided a space for individuals to reckon with racial battle fatigue (Smith et al., 2007) and racial disparities in education. Participants used the two-pronged healing praxis—specifically racial literacy—to identify the presence of these race-related phenomena and to notice how they were experiencing racialized stress from the onslaught of microaggressions (Adams, 2016). In community, they were able to talk about and process the fatigue and emotional toll that came with experiences of racially insensitive moments while at work. For example, in Chapter V, I highlighted the experience of Michelle who expressed anger and frustration over her co-workers who were being dismissive and what she perceived as racially demeaning. Here, I viewed the racially demeaning moments that participants like Michelle endured as examples of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992)—a form of nonphysical violence that produces a dehumanizing effect. For Michelle, the PD experience helped

her to restore epistemic trust (Fogany & Allison, 2014); for her, this kind of trust was compromised by having ongoing racially demeaning experiences—recurring symbolic violence—with colleagues at her school. Yet, by hearing others who had similar experiences during the workshops, Michelle found a sense of refuge and support—a kind of restoration of epistemic trust.

Furthermore, I believe the PD series functioned, at times, as a space to restore epistemic trust and potentially was an antidote to epistemic violence (Dotson, 2011)—the pernicious ignorance to and erasure and silencing of historically suppressed ways of knowing. I suggest that the curation of a space that centered the texts and voices of scholars of Color, in addition to enabling participants to produce insights and knowledge from their own lived experiences as teachers of Color, was a reprieve from narrower and more heteronormative curricula. In this case, I consider the restorative function that the PD series played was an example of *epistemic healing*. Khan and Naguib (2019) framed epistemic healing as a process where ways of knowing and being that have been historically silenced can be legitimized, honored, and integrated. This concept—the PD series itself—can be viewed as a process that supports communities that have been historically oppressed or marginalized to reclaim, reengage, and reassert their ability to produce legitimate knowledge and ways of being.

Another way that I interpreted the results of this study was by looking more closely at the co-created community of care that was cultivated. Supported by the syllabus and the two-pronged *healing praxis* that it engendered, the community was able to partake in a dynamic learning experience that played an educative and restorative function. Similar to the principles within critical pedagogy, I viewed the community and

PD learning process as a participatory and liberatory co-production of knowledge and practices. Reflecting on this, hooks (1994) framed "education as a practice of freedom" (p. 12).

On a few levels, I considered how the workshop series enabled participants to practice such freedom, even if only in the limited sense of deploying a reflexive praxis and partaking of an intentional learning community. What I primarily mean by this is that I interpreted the healing and learning the community was engaging in as similar to what Leigh Patel (2016) referred to as *fugitive acts of learning*. For Patel, this kind of learning is comprised of resistance to a racial capitalist order with its roots within a settler colonial structure that still endures. Scholars like Patel framed *fugitive acts of learning* as *marronage*. Patel drew on the term as a metaphor, for *marronage* describes the fugitive strategies and resistance deployed by Marron societies in Brazil, Jamaica, and slaves within the antebellum period in the United States of America. In spite of colonial and plantation life, subjugated people managed to organize underground libraries, underground railroads, hush harbors, and communal practices in defiance of enslavement and brutal oppression. Similarly, in spite of the racially hostile environments many of the teachers of Color in the PD series experienced, the workshop series served the dual purpose of a space both for healing from and resistance to a hegemonic educational system ensconced within a racial capitalist order. Coming together during each workshop to process racialized stress, deconstructing the tentacles of racism, and exchanging critical reflections were a collective form of *marronage* and *fugitive acts of learning* from participants' normal experiences as teachers in the classroom. I also considered these acts *fugitive* because I made the assumption that more traditional professional development

opportunities that are sponsored by the NYC DOE do not necessarily engage in resistance to the system itself.

In a sense, I view the PD series as a kind of hush harbor. Hush harbors were locations where slaves would gather in secret to exchange thoughts, emotions, and practices for letting go of all the hardship they were enduring (Cornelius, 1999). Out of these spaces, people gained the necessary support to "keep on keeping on," but also developed strategies and practices for rebellion and resistance. For example, many historians suggested that the Negro spirituals originated in these kinds of spaces (Kynard, 2010). I suggest that the co-created space for processing racialized stress and trauma within the PD series resembled a modern-day hush harbor. As teachers of Color exchanged stories of their trials and tribulations from racially demeaning and insensitive moments, they found support and reinvigorated their commitment to survive and thrive.

As explored in the literature review in Chapter II, the community of care that was fostered throughout the PD series is in line with what Ginwright (2018) understood to be *healing-centered engagement*. For Ginwright, *healing-centered engagement* was comprised of the following features: (a) It is explicitly political rather than clinical; (b) It is culturally grounded and views healing as the restoration of identity; (c) It is asset-driven and focuses on the well-being we want rather than the symptoms we want to suppress; and (d) It supports adult providers and educators with their own healing. I surface *healing-centered engagement* here to frame and situate the *healing-centered pedagogy* that this PD series enacted within the broader literature and academic discourse that is part of the restorative and healing-centered paradigm in education. With this in mind, I consider the PD curriculum and experience as a whole to be political as opposed

to clinical, and certainly culturally grounded, with its focus on providing a "brave and safe" space for teachers of Color to reflect on their history and lived experiences. In terms of supporting the healing of educators, the PD series created ample space—even with a peer-to-peer accountability partner system—to prioritize this.

Lastly, I close this section by clarifying the connection between the second feature of *healing-centered engagement*—healing as culturally grounded and the restoration of identity—and the PD series. Here, I framed the PD series as a culturally grounded and healing-centered experience that was supported with the restoration of participants' identities by intentionally integrating their lived experiences with racialized stress as core into their learning process throughout the series. I viewed this as similar to the practices from healing-centered pedagogies within indigenous communities where psychic restoration, cultural preservation, and self-determination played crucial roles in community healing and resiliency (Duran, 2006; Katz, 2017). These interpretations of this study's findings contribute to continuing to make sense of the possible implications of this work.

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Policy

This singular case study captured a snapshot of a professional learning community and experience. With this, there is a limit to the relevant and authoritative insights that could contribute to future theorizing, educational practice, and policymaking. However, as seen in some of my interpretations above, the realm of theory is a generative space where this study and some of the concepts that it explored could have surfaced some considerations. As explored in the literature review in Chapter II, a

restorative and healing-centered educational and research paradigm is still emerging. An intention here is for this study to contribute to the wave of budding scholarship examined within Chapter II that explored healing-centered education and related pedagogies. I claim that, in some regards, this case study makes humble contributions.

On a theoretical level, this study connects to a lineage of studies and scholarship that have made the conceptual connection between critical pedagogy and the role of healing in the context of education and liberatory praxis. The highlighting of critical consciousness—a core concept within critical pedagogy—as an instrumental framework for the design and implementation of the PD series' healing-centered curriculum affirms what many scholars have suggested before. Several studies (Camangian, 2013; Cammarota, 2011; Chavez-Diaz, 2015; Villanueva, 2013)—explored in Chapter II—pointed to the synergy between critical pedagogy and healing-centered approaches to education. This study found that the use of critical consciousness alongside racial literacy to construct part of a two-pronged healing praxis enabled participants to practice, to build community, to process racialized stress, and to potentiate their healing journeys. These findings affirmed the academic literature that highlighted the power of critical pedagogy to support social justice-oriented and liberatory education.

Also, this study demonstrated the synergy between both critical consciousness and racial literacy as compatible reflexive tools. A number of studies have also affirmed this phenomenon (Epstein & Schieble, 2019; Nash et al., 2017; Nyachae, 2018; Radd & Grosland, 2016). However, what could be considered unique in this specific inquiry is the conceptual combination of racial literacy within the two-pronged healing praxis. To be clear, what I mean here is that the integration of racial literacy with critical

consciousness, healing, and self-care to construct a cohesive praxis expands lines of research that previous explored either teacher racial literacy on its own or racial literacy and critical consciousness independent of healing and self-care in relation to teacher professional development (Kholi, 2018; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2008).

Additionally, if the framing of the PD series as a space and example of *marronage* and *fugitive acts of learning* holds any weight, then the findings here might reveal insights into what can happen when an intentional community of educators of Color comes together to resist and heal from the very educational system in which they work. Scholars like Patel (2016) have discussed the importance of studying spaces where marronage might be taking place, yet access to these spaces is limited. They are often ephemeral, and their sporadic occurrence raises challenges for present and future researchers. Lastly, with regard to theory, this study offers contributions to pursuing inquiries within the healing-centered and restorative paradigm that explores concepts like epistemic healing (Khan & Naguib, 2019), epistemic trust (Dotson, 2011), and structural healing further.

At the level of practice, this case study revealed some insights into ways of structuring a professional learning curriculum to enable the use of reflexive tools that may contribute to individual and community healing and racial literacy development. The two-pronged reflexive praxis—*healing praxis*—that the curriculum operationalized might provide an example for educators interested in doing similar healing-centered or racial justice-oriented work. Essentially, the *healing praxis* that surfaced in this case study may

provide practitioners with a generative example of how to explore healing and racial literacy development in a structured way.

Possibly, some of the findings in this study could inform educators who are interested in taking a healing-centered stance or enacting a healing-centered approach to their pedagogies in the context of supporting others, especially educators of Color, with unpacking, naming, and processing the impact of racism. Albeit specifically situated, the experiences and insights in and from this study revealed some of the ongoing harm and damage that racism inflicts—in this case, upon teachers of Color. The PD series created a space to talk about, name, and ultimately process the emotional and psychological fatigue that comes with dealing with the impact of racial disparities in education. This study could influence future research on teacher preparation and teacher professional development curricula focused on racial equity and racial literacy in schools.

At the level of policy, it is important to remember that the racial literacy and healing PD series explored here was sponsored by the Male Educators Collective (MEC), an initiative within the NYC DOE that garnered support though an Equity Mandate (Zawadi, 2019) calling for more comprehensive responses to issues of racial disparities across the system. In this case, it is reasonable to assume that upon reading this dissertation, the MEC could identify possible strategies and concepts for designing and implementing future professional development offerings, especially those that involve university-based scholars. MEC could also use parts of this research to validate the work they are doing to provide support and transformative learning experience to teachers of Color in the system.

Again, although this case study looked at one professional development offering with a few dozen participants, it did affirm the broader call to heal teachers and prioritize their well-being (Curry & O'Brien, 2012; Hwang, Bartlett, Greben, & Hand, 2017; Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Soini, & Salmela-Aro, 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Truch, 1980). In an academic article titled "A Call for Healing Teachers," Arturo Garcia (2019) examined the arduous challenges that early and mid-career teachers face with fatigue, overwork, ideological misalignment with school administration and practice, and lack of social-emotional support. This article and other scholarship point to a growing demand to provide not just one-off support and professional learning experiences, but comprehensive policies that center healing in the context of teacher professional development (Dover, Kressler, & Lozano, 2020; Dutro & Garcia, 2018; Kholi, 2018). Shawn Ginwright's (2015) book titled *Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers Are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart* is one of a few pointed and telling texts proclaiming and demanding attention to this issue. An aspirational goal and an implication for this case contribute to this constellation of scholarship that looks at the power of centering healing not only in teacher professional development, but also in policymaking related to racial equity more broadly. At the bare minimum, this case study serves as a useful document to think about the specificity of one Male Educators Collective PD offering, which helps the initiative to continue to leverage university-based educators to provide unique expertise and experiences to their members.

Limitations of the Study

To a certain degree, the strength of this study lies in its descriptive power as it provides a snapshot of the design and implementation of an ever-evolving professional learning experience and community. However, as discussed in Chapter III, there were a few shortcomings regarding research design and researcher positionality that produced some methodological flaws. Regarding the study's design, a core limitation was the timing and the kind of qualitative data through the execution of semi-structured interviews. In light of issues with unpredictable participant attendance, I interviewed 17 people at three different junctures—right after the third workshop, right after the fourth workshop, and after the last workshop. I interviewed a few participants a little over halfway through the series and the bulk of them after the fourth session. An additional challenge here was the fact that many participants had missed one, at most two sessions, creating an attendance issue. It is important to recall that each session was held for 5 hours on a Saturday morning, which may have limited who could join. All of these factors created some variability in terms of participants' responses, thus impacting the reliability of the data. To address some of these issues, I tried to ensure that the earlier interviews were with participants who had attended the first workshop series the year prior and could still speak on the impact of the experience with substance. I also worked harder on taking detailed participant observation field notes to capture participants' perspectives and expressions to adjust for what I may have missed through these staggered interviews.

Also, in light of the small purposive sample, the data were situated in terms of scope and applicability. The majority of participants who joined the PD series did so voluntarily and were part of a subset of teachers of Color within the school system who had previous commitments and openness to discussing the topics being explored. Thus, less motivated participants may not have been similarly primed to experience such favorable engagement with similar professional learning experiences. In addition, all participants were part of the Male Educators Collective and had a shared history with each other and with the educator of the series. Therefore, there was already a level of comfort with the instructor's teaching style and pedagogy.

On a more significant level, this study was also situated in a unique researcher-facilitator relationship with an extensive shared history. In this case, Dr. Bailey-Cruz has played various roles in my development that undoubtedly influence my perspective on the power and impact of her instruction. As I discussed in my positionality statement and limitations sections in Chapter III, Dr. Bailey-Cruz was a professor of mine and a colleague for a few years before I began conducting this research. I knew her work and knew her well.

At times, this comradery may have tilted my perceptions of her practice toward admiration as opposed to more critical analysis. What complicates this limitation further is that she was a mentor and a significant part of my support system throughout this study. This last layer creates more entanglement because alongside teaching the PD series that set out to observe her and her work, she provided guidance on how to think about research more broadly as well. This has substantially impacted the research. There was a hyper-subjectivity regarding how I was in relationship to Dr. Bailey-Cruz and how I was

connected to the participants. Additionally, as I explored before, I met many of the participants the year before when I facilitated a small number of discussions.

To respond in earnest, I was aware of this situatedness from the beginning. Thus, I took several measures to acknowledge some of the influence that would emerge by establishing a few boundaries. For example, I never discussed any data or observations concerning the study with Dr. Bailey-Cruz at any point throughout the data collection phase of this inquiry. I presented some findings to her in the later stages, but I viewed this as a member-checking function. Also, she and I agreed that she would leave each workshop session during the last 90 minutes so I could conduct focus groups without her presence. In large part, the role she played regarding the dissertation committee was mostly consultative and procedural with moments where we discussed the role of theory in conceptualizing research. In certain ways, these moments have shaped some of the contours of this study. Nonetheless, this entanglement does impose limits to the broader knowledge claims I can make here, but my proximity to her, to the community, and to the data afforded me the opportunity—to certain degree—to gain a command of the universe of the facts and facets of this particular research context. With all of this in mind, my observations and analysis of the data presented here were within my awareness that my perspective was not only clearly not neutral, but also socio-culturally and relationally situated. This approach certainly rubs up against more tightly bound and traditional qualitative research methods, where a semblance of objectivity is preferred. However, from a framework of relationship-situated knowing and being, it is only within my relationship with Dr. Bailey-Cruz that this research was even imaginable. Thus, rather than "bias" the findings, our bond can be seen as strengthening the claims to knowledge

and praxis that I offer here. While my proximity to the educator and community can be viewed as a limitation, I suggest that this proximity and my reflexivity around this closeness makes this qualitative research stronger. The clarity with which I attempted to present how situated and entangled this process was enriches the quality of this study. This move to be upfront about this entanglement is very much part of approaches to research that are infused with indigenous ways of knowing and Black feminism, where the collective production of knowledge (Hill, 2020; Wilson, 2008) is of more importance than claims to neutrality and a removed sense of objectivity. I deliberately drew upon these marginalized approaches to research to resist against traditional qualitative research methodology and to demonstrate that there is power in this refusal. All in all, however, it is beyond the scope of this study to make generalizable statements about healing-centered pedagogies. More research on sites where healing in the context of education is taking place is sorely needed. This was a thick description of one site at a precise moment in time.

Concluding Remarks: Teaching with a World on Fire

In closing, the power and relevance of this study lies in the detailed delineation of the PD curriculum's logic and sequence—the structured integration of the two-pronged healing praxis throughout the series—where racial literacy and healing served as anchoring concepts. Although the community of teachers of Color that came together to learn was small, the learning was deep. The PD workshop series was grounded by liberatory principles of education, most of which came from critical pedagogy. The sharing of ideas and personal experiences that unfolded across the workshops created a

rich tapestry of rich narratives and voices—voices that resembled the spiritual strivings of people with a long history of fighting for freedom.

As a research journey, I found moments to be creative and combine a unique conceptual framework—including a *transformative activist stance*, *healing-centered engagement*, and an *indigenist stance*—that enabled me to wade through the muddy research waters with a compass. I learned, unlearned, and re-learned plenty. I leave this work re-learning that all bodies are created equal, but not all are situated as such. There are still major systems, institutions, and practices that need to be changed, especially as they relate to teachers of Color. In this context, healing was a guiding star for finding the toolset to resist and restore. My core hope is that this work finds a home in the coming wave of scholarship and canon that takes healing in education so seriously that we clamor to quantify it.

By the time this study came to a close, several forces had already been set loose to create urgency for a restorative and healing-centered paradigm in education to emerge. As Chapter II illuminated, the growing interest in mindfulness, social-emotional learning, restorative justice, and trauma-sensitive teaching in education situate healing-centered approaches to education to have a potentially lasting impact in this growing movement for a more holistic education, especially within public education. These trends and waves of educational practice are varying responses to the reality that our world is as economically stratified as ever before, leaving millions devastated and continuously recovering from structural, symbolic, and epistemic violence. How are we to continue to educate under such conditions?

As many of us are aware, the plot has thickened. We now have to contend with a finite planet, with finite resources. As the acceleration of climate change causes major financial and environmental disruptions—spurring waves of mass migrations and social unrest—our education systems will have to adapt and respond to the call to achieve system-wide equilibrium. The situation has become further complicated because by the time I wrote this, the outbreak of a global pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19) was already afoot as well. The world has changed. This current moment reveals the fragility of our civilization yet underscores the primacy of our interconnectedness. In this study—with its imperfect findings—I find some light. I hope this research is a seed in the fertile ground of work aiming to restore and heal our precious planet through restorative and healing-centered education.

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Appendix A

Invitation to Study and Consent Form

TEACHERS COLLEGE

C O L U M B I A   U N I V E R S I T Y

525 West 120th St. * New York, NY 10027 * 212-678-3000
www.tc.columbia.edu/institutional-review-board
Study Participant Letter of Consent

Protocol Title: A Case Study of a Racial Literacy & Healing Professional Development Workshop Series
Principal Investigator: Angel Acosta, Teachers College, aa3749@tc.columbia.edu

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INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called "A Case Study of a Racial Literacy & Healing Professional Development Workshop Series."
You may qualify to take part in this research study because you are currently participating in the Racial Literacy and Healing Workshop Series hosted by the NYC Men Teach program. Approximately 25-40 people will participate in this portion of the study and it will take no more than four hours of your time outside of the regularly scheduled course time across the semester to complete.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

This study is being done to gain a better understanding of the teaching and learning that occurs throughout the professional development workshop series that focuses on racial literacy and healing. The main goals are to understand the series' curriculum and participants' experiences.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an individual interview with the principal researcher. This interview will not last more than 60 minutes, but can be broken up across multiple interviews given your schedule and availability.

During the interview you will be asked to discuss and reflect on your general experiences in the workshop series, including with instructional materials, various activities, and key issues/themes/concepts that inform the series. With your permission this interview will be audio-recorded. After the study is completed and the final writing of findings is

written, the audio-recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to participate. Again, you will be given a pseudonym or false name in order to keep your identity confidential and the recording will be stored in a password protected file. No one will listen to these files other than the principal investigator.

Additionally, throughout the series, you will be asked to participate in five focus group discussions run by the principal investigator to engage in a collective discussion with other participating teachers and educational leaders engaged in the series. Participating in any focus group session will be completely voluntary. Focus groups will not be recorded. I will be taking detailed notes throughout each focus group session.

Additionally, everyone will be asked not to share what is discussed in the focus groups. Each session will 90 minutes based on the schedule selected by all participants. The focus groups will take place at Teachers College, the time and specific location to be selected based on group response to a Doodle poll. Your individual interview will be held when and where is most convenient for you.

In addition to the above, the principal researcher will observe five professional development workshop sessions. The purpose of these observations will be to document and gain insight into the structure and functioning of the series and to provide context for the responses in individual interviews and focus group sessions. There will be no video or audio recording during the series' workshops, but the researcher will take detailed hand-written field notes. In addition your participation in the professional development workshops (total of twenty-five hours), you will invited to participate in two 60-minute one-on-one interviews (total of two hours) and five 90-minute (total of 7.5 hours). These activities will be completely voluntary. For the educator of the professional development workshop series, an additional two hours will be needed to conduct a thorough document review of all workshop instructional materials.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. However, there are some risks to consider. You might feel embarrassed to discuss problems, tensions or feelings of confusion and/or discomfort that you experienced in the workshops. **However, you do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you don't want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.** You might feel concerned that things you say might get back to the instructor. Please be assured that **no information shared during your interview or focus group will be shared with the instructor**. Additionally, the principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password-protected computer and in a personal file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of education to better understand the best way to support educators to effectively teach culturally diverse student populations.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid to participate, but there are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when you have completed the interview, focus groups, and the workshop series is completed. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven't finished.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The investigator will keep all written materials in an unmarked file drawer in a locked apartment where he lives alone. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored in password-protected files on a computer that is also password protected. What is on the audio-recordings will be transcribed and the audio-recording will then be deleted at the completion of the study. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. Regulations require that research data be kept for at least three years.

For quality assurance, the study team, the study sponsor (grant agency), and/or members of the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the data collected from you as part of this study. Otherwise, all information obtained from your participation in this study will be held strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by U.S. or State law.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator. The results of this study may be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in this research study.

______I give my consent to be recorded ____
Signature

______I **do not** consent to be recorded ____
Signature

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

___I consent to allow written materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College ____________________________
Signature

___I **do not** consent to allow written, materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University ____
Signature

OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes ___________________________ No__________________________
Initial Initial

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes ___________________________ No__________________________
Initial Initial

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Angel Acosta, at 917-868-0064 or at aa3749@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Celia Oyler at co74@tc.columbia.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future student status or grades.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study

Print name: ____ **Date**: ______________

Signature: ____

Appendix B

Participant Interview Protocol

Interviewee: _______________________________________ Interview Number: ______
Interviewer: ____
Interview Location: ____
Date: _____________________________________
Start Time: ___________________________ End time: ________________

Participant Background

1. Describe your K-12 educational experience.

2. Tell me about your journey to becoming a teacher or educational leader. What led you to pursue a career in the field of education?

3. Discuss your decision to participate in this racial literacy and healing professional development workshop series: How does it fit within your role in the field of education and your vision for yourself as an educator?

4. Prior to participating in the workshop series, what understandings and/or experiences did you have of/with racial literacy and healing?

5. What workshop structures/materials/components have you found most useful in your process of learning more about healing and racial literacy?

6. Describe one workshop session that stands out for you. What makes this session stick out for you?

7. What keys lessons did you take away from the workshop series? How do you plan on integrating these lessons in your personal and professional life?

Appendix C

Workshop Series Educator Interview Protocol

Interviewee: ______________________________________ Interview Number: ______
Interviewer: ____
Interview Location: ____
Date: ____________________________________
Start Time: __________________________ End time: ________________

1. Tell me about the development of the racial literacy and healing workshop series:

2. A number of definitions and conceptualizations of “racial literacy” and “healing” exist within the literature. How do you define/conceptualize these terms?

3. From your perspective, what do you find are teachers and educational leaders’ primary reasons/motivations for participating in the workshop series?

4. Why are racial literacy and healing such important concepts to explore together during a professional development workshop series?

5. What particular scholars and educational material did you drawn upon to design this workshop series?

6. What kinds of preparation beyond the curriculum do you engage in before teaching and facilitating this workshop series?

7. What do you hope participants will learn from this workshop series?

8. Tell me about your teaching experience and history:

Appendix D

Focus Group Protocol

Opening Activity: Engage in a two minutes mindfulness meditation practice. After a moment of mindfulness, encourage participants to think about the last racial literacy and healing workshop(s). Give participants five minutes to write down one memorable or meaningful moment. Encourage participants to try to remember as many details about this moment and why it resonated so strongly with you or remains so memorable. Consider the following questions: How did it make you feel? What did it make you reflect on as an educator? What memories, feelings, experiences, etc. did it bring up from your own K-12 learning experiences? How did you respond or react to it in the moment or later?

Opening Question: Once time is up, go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves and give them the option of either sharing their moment or providing a word/phrase/sentence that sums up their overall experience of the course generally or the specific moment that they shared.

Transition Question: In general, what are some aspects or components of the workshops that you appreciated?

- Write down words or phrases that capture their responses on whiteboard or poster board.

Discussion Questions:
1. Reflecting on the list we just made, which components/aspects of the workshop were most
important/meaningful to you and why?

- Cues/Probes: Which are important/meaningful to you as an educator?
- Which are important/meaningful to you personally?

2. Why is exploring racial literacy and healing important for the work that you do?

3. How does this workshop series compare to other professional development experiences you have had during your time in the field of education?

5. What are some topics or questions on racial literacy or healing that you would like to explore more or go deeper in conversation with?

6. Are there any other questions or issues that we should address?

Closing Activity: Engage in a two minute mindfulness medication practice.

Appendix E

Vignette of Workshop #1

Vignette from Workshop #1

"Good morning beautiful people," said Dr. Bailey-Cruz upon entering the classroom at Victoria University. It was around 10AM on a brisk Saturday in October. Twenty or so educators from the NYC public school system awaited her arrival to launch the Male Educators Collective's (MEC) second annual professional development workshop series. There was a felt sense of familiarity in the air. Dr. Bailey-Cruz proceeded to go around the room shaking hands, hugging and kissing people—almost everyone in her line of sight was greeted. She expressed love to those she already knew and gently introduced herself to new participants. After making her way around the packed university classroom, she stopped to hug me. I welcomed the embrace. A few more participants trickled in. More hugs and warm smiles were exchanged between old and new community members. The visible comradery after a long week of teaching in one of the nation's largest school districts reflected how this was a priority to those who were there.

Many of the participants knew each other already. Most of them had participated in similar professional development learning experiences organized and sponsored by MEC for the last three years. Even new members understood the tight-knit nature of the community that convened for these offerings. Bayard Thanes, the director of MEC, and Dr. Bailey-Cruz stood up peering over the intergenerational crowd of teachers and some administrators, most of whom were people of color. During the formal welcoming, Thanes reminded everyone that the purpose of the series was to explore racial literacy, healing and self-care.

With a PowerPoint presentation behind her displaying the day's theme *Racial Literacy Development & Self-Care for Teachers*, Bailey-Cruz began to frame the overarching goals of the five professional development workshops. She said, "Before I continue, I want to take a moment of silence to recognize that we are standing upon stolen land." A few participants closed their eyes, while others gently stared at the ground. This was a land acknowledgement practice she used to open all of her lectures and workshops. She invited participants to engage in this protocol to pay respect to the people who were stewards of this land long ago. This opening acknowledged the imperial and colonial history of the country. She commented on how colonization is a process that is still occurring and how the four hundred year legacy of the arrival of enslaved Africans to the shores of Virginia in 1619 still lives with us. In pensive postures, participants noticed the historical foundation their workshop facilitator was laying down. I took copious notes from a seat by a window.

As she talked about her expectations for herself and participants, Bailey-Cruz uttered, “I want to create a space where people can bring their whole selves.” As she moved on with her presentation, she looked at a female teacher in the middle of the room and said, “I see that you're nodding your head, is there something on your mind?” Pausing at times to check in with participants, she continued talking about community agreements and the kind of culture she wanted to cultivate throughout the series—one in which “the community will rise” to meet the needs of the collective. She alluded to how, although breakfast was not provided by MEC this morning, participants brought food for each other anyway. As she talked about the previous year’s inaugural PD series, she framed how the work had evolved through a generative process of listening to participants’ needs and a robust collaboration with close colleagues. The racial literacy and healing PD series was birthed out of the culturally responsive PD workshops that MEC sponsored a couple of years prior. Bailey-Cruz applauded the work that the Male Educators Collective had done and connected it to the successive efforts of NYC mayors and Chancellors of Education to address issues of racial disparity through an equity-focused mandate. Thanes gently interjected to mention how the population of male teachers of color in NYC went up from 8% to 13% in light of the concerted effort to support and retain these teachers over the last few years. He was proud to say MEC had a hand in this. Everyone clapped. Thanes alongside few other participants acknowledged that there was much more to be done.

This year’s series was expanding upon last year’s focus on racial literacy and healing to also include more work on self-care. Before inviting audience participation, Bailey-Cruz opened up by saying, “I too am healing and am working on understanding how to live life in a more full way.” I could hear a few moans of approval. A couple participants chimed in to surface the insights from last year’s series on the trauma that comes with being a teacher of color and the need for a space to process this. Out of the group of twenty-five, there were only three White male teachers present. The MEC professional development offerings were open to all teachers in the system who were interested in issues of equity. These White teachers listened intently as their colleagues of color reminisced. They knew the series was designed to center the experiences of educators of color.

In an effort to build community, Bailey-Cruz handed out various decks of cards from the board game Life Stories. In small groups, participants responded to get-to-know-you questions from each card. The room was abuzz. I gave myself a brief break from taking notes. I got pulled into my group’s conversation on how one would go about the perfect day. Ten minutes of this had gone by and participants were well into their third or fourth card. Bringing us back together, Bailey-Cruz dove right into more academic content. She asked everyone to read the quote on the screen:

“There is clear evidence that a larger pool of effective teachers of color makes a difference in the lives of students of color as well as White students (Foster, 1997; King, 1993). Teachers of color do more than just teach content. They dispel myths of racial inferiority and incompetence and serve as surrogate parents, guides, and mentors to their

students (Dilworth, 1992; Dilworth & Brown, 2007). They also serve as accessible models of intellectual authority. Moreover, diversity among teachers increases teachers' and students' knowledge and understanding of different cultural groups, thereby enhancing the abilities of all involved to interact with each other. It is clear that diversifying the nation's teaching force is essential to the racial and ethnic integration of American society, a goal that the majority of Americans support."

Here, one of the first debates between participants ensued. "A teacher of color can't just be a body in a classroom," said a Black female teacher as she declared that there are people of color out there who have a "colonized mentality" when they teach, which according to her, inflicts harm on students. Brows began to furrow as participants discussed and held the tension between increasing the number of teachers of color in the classroom, but also ensuring that these teachers are critically conscious and culturally relevant in their teaching practice. After a few back-and-forth comments, Bailey-Cruz intervened to channel some of the tension and excitement that was building up in the room toward the next item on her agenda. She stated, "It does go beyond just representation, and a body in a room does not real equity."

Casually, Camille—an African-American teacher who had attended the previous year's PD series—raised her hand to share a frustrating experience she recently had at a conference teaching social studies and educational equity in Long Island. "I want to share a frustrating experience that I had in relation to this work," said Camille. She proceeded to share how a White female teacher at the conference walked up to her to give her a pamphlet on teaching the subject of slavery. Camille was curious about why this woman assumed she, as a Black woman, specifically needed this particular unit of study. According to Camille, this White teacher was working behind a booth at a predominantly White conference displaying a variety of social studies-related curriculum pamphlets. After Camille shared this, other participants expressed support and understanding by calling out the ignorance in the White teacher's action and affirming that this moment was indeed a microaggression. This was the first extensive moment of a participant sharing a frustrating or traumatic race-related microaggression.

The group kept talking about the politics and relatively conservative social reality of public education in Long Island. Without raising his hand, a Black male teacher said, "Good intentions are not enough," in reference to the White teacher offering the pamphlet, not knowing that it was an ignorant gesture to offer it only to Camille. Several hands went up. Participants seemed ready and anxious to chime in. Bailey-Cruz said, "We're gonna get to all the hands." Camille took the floor again and explained how her experiences at the conference with other teachers of color were odd as well. She said, "I'm Black and have been Black all of my life, but there are Black folks who have a colonized mindset." She alluded to the possibility that teachers of color at this conference were engaged in superficial equity work. I could hear snaps and whispers throughout the room. The community was in sync with Camille. A Black retired teacher, Tonya,

immediately added her gentle voice to the conversation and reminded the group of the conservative politics of teaching on Long Island.

Bailey-Cruz invited new voices to move the conversation forward. Michelle, a former participant and middle school special education teacher wanted to share what was coming up for her. She mentioned how some of the pre-assigned workshop readings resonated with her, especially the piece by bell hooks on belonging. Michelle proceeded to share how she was sick and tired of the ways in which public education is traumatic for teachers of color and utterly inadequate for students of color. She said, "We really need a revolution." Michelle continued on to tell a story of how teachers and administrators in her school have tried to interfere in her equity work. Referring to her colleagues interrupting her advocacy, she asked herself out loud, "Why are you blocking me?" Bailey-Cruz thanked Michelle for being vulnerable and acknowledged Camille, whose story opened the conversation up to vulnerable sharing. Bailey-Cruz took the moment to recognize Michelle further. "I see you Michelle and can see how much you have evolved as a teacher and thinker around these issues," she said.

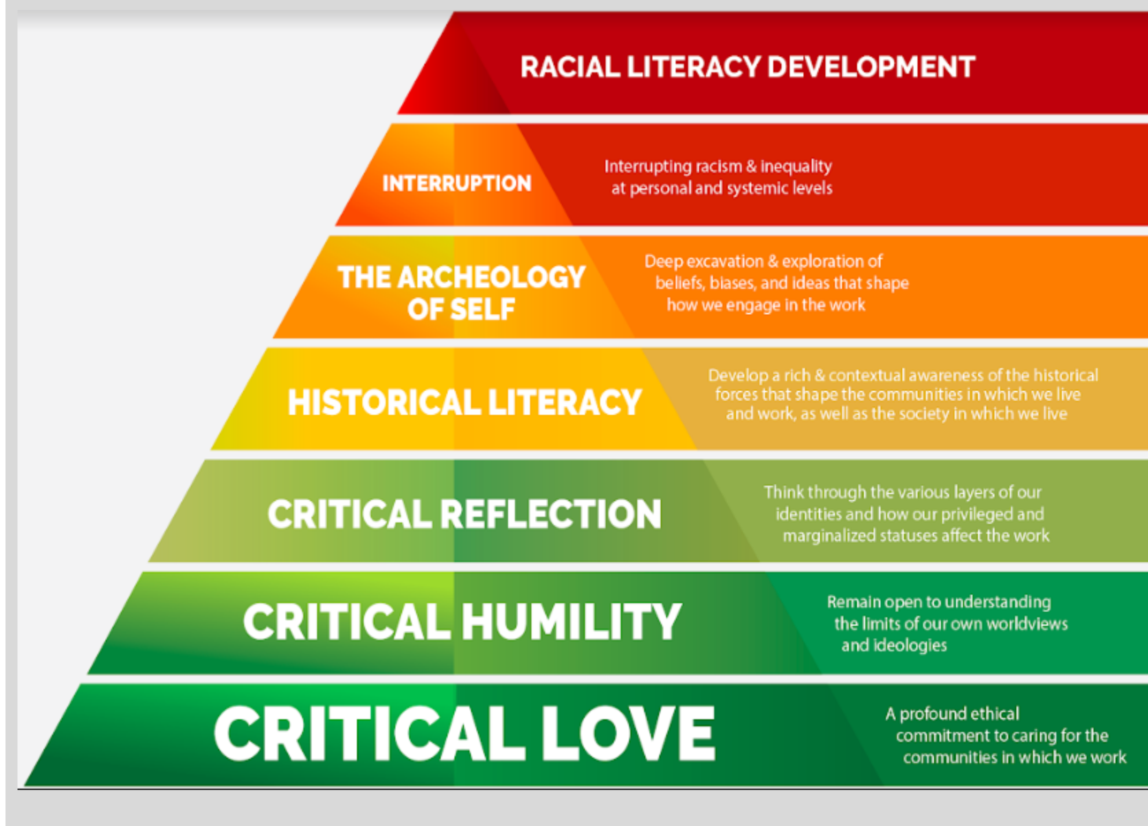
Bailey-Cruz noticed that participants had been eager to contribute. Inviting Freda to share, she said "thank you for waiting." Freda wanted to add another layer to the conversation in regard to how she has been struggling with her own students. She said, "I had to convince my students that I was Black because they didn't believe me." I could hear a collective groan when Freda shared this. Multiple participants responded to her by affirming the reality of colorism in the Black community specifically. Bailey-Cruz looked at her watch. It was time to transition into a working lunch. She reached behind her to grasp a stack of workshop packets and handed them out. Each packet had a detailed outline of the goals of the PD series, assigned readings and key worksheets. "I want you to turn to the self-care wheel and worksheet," Bailey-Cruz instructed. "I want you to, in your tables, find an accountability partner who you will discuss the various aspects of self-care over lunch and for the rest of these series," she explained. After clarifying her directions, she invited everyone to have lunch. The room erupted in chatter.

Appendix F

Vignette of Workshop #2

Vignette from Workshop # 2

By late morning, the room was abuzz and participants had already engaged in a writing ritual called *Writing for Full Presence*—where Bailey-Cruz gave participants five minutes to write whatever came to mind. She had people write any thoughts and feelings that would keep them from being fully present throughout the next five hours. There were twenty-five participants in the room, six of whom were new to the community. Before she gave a short lecture on the tenets of racial literacy development, she invited participants to share what came up for them during their writing. A few hands went up. One participant shared how financial woes were impeding her from being fully present. Another participant shared how he felt as though he connected to his ancestors through the writing process. The last comment was made by Alex, who is a gender-fluid Latinx middle school teacher. They briefly shared how they had experienced a really oppressive moment in school the week prior. Bailey-Cruz took note of how Alex's hands were shaking as they spoke. "I can see how you are emotionally unsettled at this moment, thank you for sharing and I can see how this is still present with you," said Bailey-Cruz. Alex didn't share details of the incident. Bailey-Cruz continued with her lecture.



After framing the different levels of racial literacy development seen in the figure above, Bailey-Cruz asked participants to share how they may have recently experienced the 4 I's of oppression—ideological, interpersonal, institutional and individual—in their own personal or teaching contexts. During a previous workshop, each participant received a 4 I's worksheet as part of their packet. Michelle raised her hand. She shared an experience she recently had with a doctor that represented institutional oppression. Michelle felt as though her doctor was not listening to her needs. She felt something was seriously wrong, but the doctor was suggesting to just take over-the-counter medication. She also talked about what happened to the popular tennis player Serena Williams when she almost died from childbirth and the long history of Black women not getting adequate medical care. Everyone listened intently. Bailey-Cruz thanked Michelle for sharing.

Josh, raised his hand. He talked about a recent professional development workshop experience he and a few other colleagues in the room had attended. He said the facilitator in that PD asked the group to reflect one their privileged identities. He chose to reflect on his Whiteness and think through how it might be a form of ideological oppression. "What came up for you in that reflection?, asked Bailey-Cruz. Josh expressed that he needed to do more work to understand the implications of his White privilege. Camille, who went to the same PD, raised her hand and said that she had chosen her education as a privileged part of her identity. A few more people shared. An older Black female participant talked about a recent conversation she had with a female student of hers on straightening one's hair as a woman of color. This brought up the ideological and institutional ways in which European beauty standards still permeate the public consciousness. The exploration of the four I's led to a robust discussion. Bailey-Cruz tried to conclude this portion of the conversation by making a point about how racism produces dysfunctional views on hair texture and beauty, which tends to disproportionately impact Black girls.

Right when Bailey-Cruz was going to move on to the next topic, Alex raised their hand. and decided to share more details on the incident that made them emotional earlier. They began to describe an awkward moment with an administrator in their school. During a small group discussion in school, another teacher was talking negatively about a 6th grader who identified as transsexual. In front of Alex, this teacher was refusing to acknowledge the student's gender identification. This was triggering for Alex. "It was like I was talking to the wall," said Alex. They began to get emotional while retelling the story, but kept talking about how frustrating it felt to hear this and how this generated a lack of trust toward that colleague and toward the school staff since Alex didn't feel comfortable sharing that they were gender-fluid and gender nonconforming as well. They already felt uneasy being a Latinx teacher on a predominantly White teaching staff. They said, "I don't feel safe sharing who I am there. It's painful." Bailey-Cruz immediately acknowledged Alex's feelings and thanked them for sharing the raw emotions and vulnerable story.

After holding some space for silence, Bailey-Cruz then invited others in the room who knew more about the subject to support and give some advice. Simone, a twenty-five year veteran teacher shared some insights since she has been facilitating professional development workshops for teachers on the topic. Simone encouraged Alex to continue finding “healing spaces like this one,” but also to leverage the local union chapter leaders to see if they could look into the laws that determine how we treat students and to use these laws to require staff to treat students respectfully. Simone also encouraged Alex to bring professional development workshops to the school to support staff with learning more about the needs of LGBTQIA students. Afterwards, several participants expressed how they had limited language for exploring conversations about LGBTQIA issues and inquired about Simone’s PD. Bailey-Cruz noticed this and invited Simone to lead a discussion during the following month’s PD workshop on this. She gracefully agreed to do so.

Appendix G

Vignette of Workshop #3

Vignette of Workshop #3

The third workshop brought about a similar flow in regard to candid sharing and debating of ideas. However, the openness that had previously characterized the group's modus operandi produced a moment that shook the entire community to its core and elevated conflict to a concerning level. In the subsequent pages, I provide more context on this particular workshop and a vignette to bring the development of this conflict to life. The third workshop was markedly different from an instructional perspective. Bailey-Cruz wasn't there to open the conversation. She had coordinated with two participants, Simone and Camille, who would lead the morning's discussion with a presentation and teach-in exploring various supports for LGBTQIA students. The emotionally suffocating feeling Alex had expressed during the previous workshop concerning not feeling as though they could be their full self at work as a gender-fluid Latinx person and the disrespectful ways their school staff talked about a transgender student led Bailey-Cruz to open up the PD curriculum in order to let the "community rise." The structure of the third session was shifted to accommodate the teach-in. This pedagogical decision by Bailey-Cruz affirmed Alex, but also created space for other participants to learn more about the topic. She trusted Simone and Camille so much that Bailey-Cruz decided to join the group a couple hours later in the workshop.

With a presentation clicker in their hands, Camille and Simone launched their teach-in. Their PowerPoint presentation was replete with images, videos, quotes and probing questions. The figure above displays one of their opening slides. They started the conversation by sharing their backgrounds, the guidelines for the conversation and some statistics. They drove home the point that homophobia hurts everyone and results in violence, prejudice, and discrimination. Around twenty-five participants were there with open minds, taking copious notes.

After hearing the high rate of suicide, isolation, depression, and lowered self-esteem in students who identify as LGBTQIA, one could feel the heaviness in the room. To lighten the mood, Camille and Simone played a series of affirming videos exploring music, activists and scholarship on and by the LGBTQIA community. One of these videos was a short Ted Talk by the current Chancellor of Education for the NYC Department of Education, Richard Carranza. Carranza told a touching story of how his twin brother came out of the closet and how his love for his brother has moved him to create policies that support students with different gender expressions and sexual orientations.

Participants were appreciative of Camille and Simone's teach-in. They patiently facilitated a sensitive conversation and answered plenty of questions. One moment that stood out was when they supported participants with understanding the expansive terminology and identifications that students may use to express themselves—gender-nonconforming, same-gender loving, gender fluid, gender queer, nonbinary, pansexual, asexual, aromantic, transgender to name a few. By the time Baily-Cruz arrived, participants had explored a rich discussion that opened everyone up to things many of us did not know.

By the time Simone and Camille finished their heartfelt and informative teach-in, it was almost time for the workshop to end. At the end of each workshop, I hosted a focus group with everyone seated in a circle. Similar to the last two workshops, we reassembled the room to begin a 90-minute open circle. We began each focus group with a few minutes of silent meditation. I decided to do a longer meditation for this third session. I set a timer for fifteen minutes. We all closed our eyes and meditated. Immediately after the meditation, I asked participants to turn to a neighbor and share how they experienced that longer meditation. After this, it was an open circle, where participants could talk about whatever came up for them in relation to the day's workshop, the previous workshops or the assigned readings. For about forty-five minutes people organically talked about how powerful it was for them to hear the complex reality of LGBTQIA community and ways to support students. There was a deep expression of gratitude for Simone and Camille and an acknowledgement of how much people were unaware of.

During the previous focus groups, it was typical to randomly bounce around different topics. I usually let participants take the conversation wherever they felt they needed to take it. I just kept track of time and provided some guidance when we veered too far off topic. Often, participants would share how they were making sense of or struggling with what they were learning in the workshops. After a few rounds of listening to each other

talk about how they either appreciated or had difficulty with the opening meditation, the conversation took a sharp turn. The following vignette illustrates, in dialogue form, part of the closing conversation.

After some shared silence, Josh chimed in.

Josh
(with some trepidation)
I want to share how I think we need to find a balance when talking about issues of oppression...I feel like people have gone to extremes with some things. The other day I saw a comment equating the detention of immigrant children at the border by I.C.E agents to Nazis committing genocide…

(a few participants shifted in their chairs)

…These are not the same thing….We need to stop being so extreme. These things are very different…I think this mislabeling is getting out of hand. I also think something similar is happening with the #MeToo movement…you know like how some people have been falsely accused of misconduct and are lumped in with rapists and pedophiles. This too is an example of people going to extremes.

(the group remained in awkward silence)

Yvette
With all due respect, I felt uncomfortable in my body hearing what Josh just said. It sounded racist and sexist…

Marcus
Sure Josh's points may sound a little unclear…some of the language he used was loaded and generated tension …but we need to check ourselves too. He might be right on some things concerning #Metoo…

Yvette
(in a trembling voice)
As a woman who has experienced abuse...that made me feel uncomfortable!...I have experienced sexual assault and those things he said came off as racist and sexist!

Marcus
(swiftly)
How do you know I'm not a survivor as well?

Josh
(in agony)
I didn't mean to hurt anyone…I just meant to say that sometimes people go to extremes…

Researcher

(in calm tone)

Some of us have had real personal experiences that often generate the sensitivity we often feel around these issues. These issues have structural roots. We are going through a major transition as a society and many of these issues show up in our lives in very specific ways, which might trigger us…I recommend that we take a step back and recognize that this moment is uncomfortable... but that we can hold it and handle it in community.

Viviane

I think what just happened in this circle is representative of the difference between intent vs impact…I don't think Josh had the intention to cause harm or start any drama..

Researcher

(in calm tone)

We just went over our allotted time together. We don’t need full closure on this…Just know that we do have the community in place to work through this…I want to encourage everyone to come back to the PD and return to this…This is a space where we can go deeper...

Appendix H

PD Syllabus

Developing Racial Literacy in Teachers of Color
Professional Development Series

2019-2020 Workshop Series Plan | 5 Saturdays ~ 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Session 1: Mapping the three Tenets of Racial Literacy in our Classrooms and our Everyday Lives | Saturday ~ October 26, 2019

In this session, participants will learn about the three tenets and five components of racial literacy development and their connection to their classrooms and their everyday lives.

Assignments: Identify teaching moments that include RL tenets & Where I'm From Poems
Applying Five Components of RLD to our Personal & Professional Lives

Readings: The State of Teachers of Color [Jackson & Kohli]
Preface, All About Love, hooks

In Session: Overview of Series | Writing for Full Presence | Open Circle | Where I'm From | Tenets and Components of Racial Literacy | Self Care Plans & Accountability Partners | Meditation | Focus Group Reflections

Session 2: Archeology of the Self: Exploring Social Location | Saturday ~ November 9, 2019

In this session, participants will develop ways to deeply reflect on their identity, positionality, and how this impacts their role as an educator of color.

In Session: Writing for Full Presence | Open Circle | Reading/Performance: Where I'm From | What Are we Trying to Heal? | Self Care Plans & Accountability Partners | Meditation | Focus Group Reflection Time

Assignment: Trauma Reflection & Therapy Plan

Readings: Fighting to Educate Our Own [Kohli & Pizzarro]

Secondary Traumatic Stress for Educators [kqued.org]

Session 3: The Role of Trauma (Historical, Personal, Educational) in Teaching | Saturday ~ November 23, 2019
In this session, participants will consider all that hinders and helps them take care of themselves as an educator. Participants will explore the concept of trauma-informed education and how our individual traumas may manifest in our teaching and relationships with students and colleagues.

In Session: Writing for Full Presence | Open Circle | Articulating Trauma| Self Care Plans & Accountability Partners | Meditation | Focus Group Reflection Time

Assignment: Trauma Reflection & Self Care Plan

Readings: Fighting to Educate Our Own [Kohli & Pizzarro]

Secondary Traumatic Stress for Educators [kqued.org]

Session 4: Understanding the 4 I's of Oppression | Layering the Tenets | Saturday, December 14, 2019
In this session, participants will learn about and explore in depth the four aspects of Oppression as an Interrelated System.

Assignment: Voice Memo or Video Diary on Self Care [not for sharing]

Readings: Introduction & Chapter Two, All About Love [hooks]

In Session: Writing for Full Presence | Open Circle | Self Care Plans & Accountability Partners | Meditation | Introduction to Individual Equity Plans |
Focus Group Reflection Time

Session 5: Developing Individual Equity Plans for Our Classrooms & Our Schools|Saturday, January 18, 2020

In this session, participants will take a deeper look at their IEPs and examine for oppressive, deficit language. Introduction to SMART Goals to realize the goals outlined in the IEPs will be the focus of the session.

In Session: Writing for Full Presence | Open Circle | Peer-presentation of IEPs | Meditation | Focus Group Reflection Time

Appendix I

Self-Care Worksheets

SELF-CARE WHEEL

This Self-Care Wheel was inspired by and adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing for Social Change (2013). Dedicated to all trauma professionals worldwide. Copyright @ 2013 Olga Phoenix, All Rights Reserved.

www.OlgaPhoenix.com

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES

Free Self Care Activities You Can Do Any Day, Everyday

INSIDE THE HOUSE

- Call someone you enjoy talking to
- Color (with crayons, colored pencils, etc.)
- Cook your favorite meal or a new meal
- Create a vision board (put together images, words & ideas that represent how you want your life to be in the future)
- Create an idea board (compile together ideas you have on a board or large paper)
- Create Art (music, poetry, stories, paintings, drawings, etc)
- Dance (to your favorite music)
- Do your hair for fun
- Find a fun game you can play
- Find a fun workout to try
- Freewrite (write down the first things that come to your mind)
- Journal
- Light a candle or inscent
- Listen to a relaxation CD or video
- Listen to your favorite music
- Look through pictures and/or create a scrapbook
- Make a list of things you like about yourself
- Make yourself a cup of tea or hot drink
- Meditate
- Paint Your Nails
- Pick Up An Old Hobby
- Plan a new life
- Play "dressup" (try on clothing, make new outfits)
- Read A Good Book
- Read inspirational/motivational blogs
- Re-arrange a room in your home
- Sage your home
- Soak Your Feet
- Take A Hot Bubble Bath
- Take a relaxing nap
- Watch inspirational/motivational videos
- Watch your favorite movie
- Write a letter to someone you love
- Write a list of things you want to accomplish in your lifetime
- Write a list of things you want to do
- Write a list of Everything you are grateful for

OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE

- Do Yoga outdoors
- Look At The Stars
- Plant or Garden
- Search for Free Activities in your city, and participate in the one you like the best
- Set up a "date" or get together with a loved one
- Sit on a porch or balcony
- Spend time at a coffee shop
- Spend Time In Nature (Beach, Park, Lake, Hiking, etc)
- Spend Time With A Friend
- Take A Walk
- Visit a local library
- Visit a family member or friend

LION HEART LIFE HEALING

This List Was Created By Lion Heart Life Healing
For More Information, Please Visit www.lionheartlifehealing.com

Appendix J

"Where I'm From" Prewriting Activity

1) Describe where you live. What does it look like? What does it smell like? What does it feel like?

2) What objects or belongings can be found in your home? (list at least 3) pictures of our living heroes and heroines and ancestors.

3) What are the names of people in your family? (they can be alive or have passed away)

4) Describe in a few words 2 or 3 family traditions.

5) What sayings, words, or phrases are important to you or members of your family? (preferably in your home language)

6) What are some beliefs that represent where you are from?

7) What foods are important to you or your family? (can be in your home language)

8) List 2 or 3 important childhood memories.

9) Describe the weather where you are originally from.

10) What are your favorite things to do?

Appendix K

The 4 I's of Oppression Worksheet

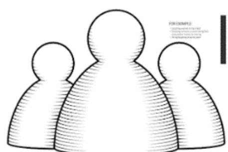
The 4 I's of Oppression

Ideological

- The idea that one group is somehow better than another and has the right to control the other group.
- Creation of a dominant narrative about a group.
- Process of "othering" and creating an "us vs. them" mentality.

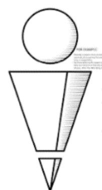
Institutional

- How institutions and systems reinforce and manifest ideology
- The idea that one group is better than another is embedded in institutions, laws, media, public policy, etc.



Interpersonal

- The way we play violence out on each other
- Ideology structured into institutions gives permission and reinforcement for individuals of the dominant group to mistreat individuals in the oppressed group.



Individual

- How we internalize the ideological ideas of oppression
- For the dominant group: believing the ideology of oppression and seeing the world through that ideology
- For the oppressed group: believing the ideology of oppression and internalizing the negative messages about themselves

By Amanda Mendoza. Source http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/THE-FOUR-IS-OF-OPPRESSION-1.pdf

The 4 I's of Oppression

Ideological	Institutional
Interpersonal	Individual

Appendix L

Initial Codes from NVivo Software

Note: These quotes were generated in Mid-February after all data was coded in NVIVO Software.

Name	Description
400 Years of Legacy	Anytime the 400 years legacy of slavery., NYTimes 1619 Project and the 400 Years of Inequality Project is mentioned or referred to.
A Desire to be Present	Whenever a moment or comment was made that pointed to an expression of really wanting to be in the room or doing the work.
A Sense of Belonging	Whenever participants displayed behavior or made comments that referred to feeling at home, at ease and/or welcomed.
Accountability Partners	Whenever Accountability Partners met or was referred. Each participant was assigned an partner to discuss self-care worksheets in Appendix I along share perspectives on healing.
Chinese American Participant	Anytime the single Chinese American participant shared or made a comment. I took note of this because she was the only one from that community present.
Assigned Readings	Anytime the assigned readings referred to or came up in discussions.
Awareness of Structural Inequality	Whenever participants made comments that displayed a sensitivity to how structural forces impact present day conditions in the context of education.
Black Women	Any time the social realities of Black Women were discuss in groups or in peer-to-peer discussions.
Blackness	Any time participants made statements or comments that direct referenced being black or referring directly to blackness.
Calls for Revolution & Transformation	Any time there a comment that called for revolution, change or societal transformation.
Celebration	Whenever individuals or the community celebrated something in the space.

Name	Description
Classroom Space	Any notes that represent the physical composition of workshop classroom.
Collective Agreement	Whenever there is a clear expression where the group affirmed or agreed on something.
Collective Gestures and Emotional Expressions	Whenever the group deeply felt something. Expressions claps, groans, moans and snaps during whole group discussions.
Colonized Mindset	Whenever a participants directly said this in reference to talking about others who have more closed minded views on society, especially as this relates to teaching.
Community Building	Whenever there was an activity or discussion that focused on community building within the series.
Community Within Community	When there were references to or connections the various sub-communities within the larger community of participants.
Critical Care	Whenever I perceived the instructor was engaging in this kind of approach toward teaching and justice.
Critical Humility	Whenever this concept was referred to directly or displayed in participant's behavior.
Cultural Responsive Teaching	Whenever culturally responsive is mentioned directly.
Current Events	Any time a particular current event in society surfaced and discussed.
Differing Opinions	Whenever there were clear moments of debate between participants.
Disruption	Whenever the topic of disruption surface, mainly in regards to disrupting systems of inequality in education.
Downtime Chatter	Any time participants talk during non-instruction time.
Elder Shares Advice	Any moment an elder teacher in the room shared insights.
Emergent Quality	This code represents when there is direct connection to the emergence and emergent properties of the community and PD instruction.
Emotional Labor	Code represents any time someone shared something that they felt was exhausting or required emotional labor.
Equity	Code represents whenever the word equity was used or alluded to.

Name	Description
Expressions of Identity	Anytime someone claimed a part of their identity in whole group discussions.
Gratitude	Any time there is a direct or indirect expression of gratitude.
Hate	Anytime the word hate or topics related to it came up
Healing	Any time healing explicitly discussed or mentioned.
Holding Space for Healing	Code that alluded how I perceived the space generated or is conducive to healing.
Humanizing Pedagogy	Any time this was directly referenced or embodied in the pedagogy.
Hush Harbors	Anytime the concept was raised or the group displayed similar qualities.
Impact of Gholdy Mohammed	Anytime her work came up.
Indigenous Practice & Acknowledgement	This code represents whenever there was moment where there was direct acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge or land practice.
Issues of Gender Fluidity & Sexual Orientation	Whenever discussion about or in reference to the LGBTQIA community surfaced.
Literacies	This code represents whenever any kind of literacy was referred to.
Local and National Education Policy or Leadership	Whenever direct comments or discussion about educational leadership and policy surfaced.
Long-Lasting Impact of PD	Whenever I perceived possible long-term impact of PD.
Love	Whenever the topic was explored directly or expressed in the room.
Mindfulness and Meditation	Any time these concepts were discussed or practiced.
My Assumptions	Any time I made assumptions and was aware that it was an assumption.
My Direct Involvement	This code represents when I directly got involved with any aspect of the workshop in front of participants.

Name	Description
My Impact from Previous Involvement in the Community	This code marked moments when I saw my influence from my previous involvement.
MEC History & Context	Any data that illustrated Male Educators Collective history outside of the workshops.
Oppression	Any time this came up in any way. In particular to the 4 I's of Oppression Worksheet.
Other-Mothering and Mother Archetype	Whenever educator displayed behaviors of other-mothering towards participants.
Our Students	Any time participants used this phrase to talk about the student whom they taught.
Participant Innovation & Experimentation	Whenever participants discussed how they were innovating or experimenting with PD workshop content and themes outside of the series.
Participant's Perceptions of Me	Any time I could sense how participants felt about me or my presence in the room.
Participant(s) Being Vulnerable	Any time a participant shared comments that was revelatory
Participants Affirming Each other	Any time participants expressed words or gestures of support and affirmation towards each other.
Participants Direct Suggestions, Insights or Recommendations	Any time a participant shared a resource, insight or advice to other participants.
Participants Kissing, Hugging and Showing Affection	Any time participants show public displays of affection.
PD Series Evolution	This code represents every time someone talked about the history of the PD series, indirectly or directly.
Perspectives on Diversity	Any time participants talked about diversity and inclusion, especially in education.
Processing Pop Culture	Any time topics concerning popular culture arose.
Physical Contact with Participants	This code is when the teacher displayed or engaged in physical contact with participants. Hugs, pats on the backs, kisses on cheek, etc.
Racial Literacy	Any time the topic was discussed or referred to.
Racism	Any time the topic was discussed or referred to.

Name	Description
Researcher Somatic Awareness	This code represents any feelings I felt any interesting or abnormal feeling as a researcher or any physical sensations that I should take not of.
Resilience in Teaching	Any time the topic was discussed or referred to.
Ruptures in the Research Process	Any time I felt a certain level of difficulty with maintaining my role as research clear. Anytime I felt my objectivity was being compromised.
Ruptures and Tensions within Participant	Whenever there was abnormal tension between participants.
Self-Care	Any time the topic was discussed or referred to.
Self-Work	Any time the topic was discussed or referred to.
Sense of Community	This code represent whenever there were moments when one can sense a clear sense of community between participants.
Sense of Family	This code represents when the sentiment of familial bond was activated or displayed.
Struggling as Researcher	This code represents moments when questioned myself or am experienced some kind of internal struggle while conducting the research.
Whiteness & White supremacy	Code represents allusions to whiteness or white supremacy directly or indirectly.
Teacher Acknowledging Watershed Teaching Moment	Any time the teacher recognized a moment that led to momentum in discussions.
Teacher Displaying Vulnerability	This code represents whenever the teacher displayed or shared anything vulnerable.
Teacher Diversity Gap & Issues	Any time issues of retention, recruitment and development regarding teachers of color arose.
Teacher Recognizing Participant Identity & Experience	Any time the teacher affirmed participants' identities Any time the teacher mirrored back what she had seen in terms of growth.
Teacher Recognizing Participant's Bodies and Feelings	This code represents whenever the teacher directly acknowledged participants' feelings or body language.
Teacher's Direct Suggestions	Code represents anytime the teacher gave direct insight that came out of organic conversation.

Name	Description
The Effect of Space	Any time I noticed the workshop space was shaping participants' experience.
Toni Morrison	Anytime sister Toni came up in discussion or workshop material.
Trauma	Any time the topic was addressed directly or indirectly.
Venting & Emotional Reflexivity	Whenever there were moments when participants or anyone in the community shared story or comments that resembled venting or deep emotional reflection.
Video	Anytime a video is used.
Watershed Teaching Moment	This code represents a moment that contributed to adding momentum to the conversation and/or shaped the rest of the remaining dialogue.
White Teachers Participating	This code represents whenever the three white participants participated or were clearly engaged. They were the minority in the room so I kept track of their participation.
Workshop Rituals	Any rituals, practices or activities that happened during each workshops.

Appendix M

Codes from Participant Interviews

Note: These quotes were generated coding excerpted quote within semi-structured interviews with participants.

Name	Description
400 Years of Inequality	Anytime the 400 years legacy of slavery., NYTimes 1619 Project and the 400 Years of Inequality Project is mentioned or referred to.
Archaeology of Self	Any time the concept was directly referenced.
Thinking through Implications of Healing	Any time participant was explicitly talking about some dimension of healing in relation to their life, teaching practice or the PD workshops.
Indigenous Land Acknowledgement	Any time a participant discussed the resonance of the Land Acknowledgement practice done by the educator during the first workshop.
Hush Harbor	Any time a participant referred how this concept stayed with them after they first heard about it.
Surfacing of Workshop Readings or Curriculum Materials	Any time participants reflected on or made a comment about the specific assigned readings or other workshop materials.
Love & Gratitude	Any time participant expressed love or gratitude while reflecting on their PD experience or on their personal and professional development.
Meditation & Mindfulness	Any time participants discussed the mindfulness and meditation practices facilitated throughout the experience
Self-Care & Self-Work	Anytime time participants referred doing or struggling with their own self-care and self-work.
White Participants Sharing	Any quotes that came from White participants. They constituted the minority in the group.
Teachers Expressing Challenges that come with teaching in urban schools	Any time participants explicitly discussed the challenges that come with teaching in populated, testing-mandated and underfunded schools.

Name	Description
Teachers Expressing Racial Stress & Trauma	Any time participant reflected on or shared stories on how experienced microaggression or racially demeaning experiences.
Interruption	Any time participants discussed wanting to or the difficulty that comes with interrupting racism or inequality.
Sharing Vulnerability	Any time a participant shared something vulnerable about themselves.
Critical Feedback on Curriculum	Anytime a participant shared some constructive or critical feedback about the PD workshop series and its curriculum.

Appendix N

Contemplative Sits and Walks with Data Protocol

Contemplative Sit with Codes Sessions

Step-by-Step Process:

1. Write out all codes on separate flashcards.
2. Find a comfortable way to sit. In a chair, meditation mat, or Seiza bench.
3. Lay out all flashcards with codes on the floor
4. Set a time for 10 to 15 minutes.
5. Sit comfortably and close eyes or keep them slightly opened with a soft gaze for the allotted time.
6. (Optional) Once time is up, take notes for a minute or two about what came to mind.
7. Once this contemplative practice is done, decide how much you will sit with the data (20-30 minutes recommended per session).
8. Set a timer for the desired time.
9. Use this time to find relationships between codes and refine codes in a paced way to create clusters.
10. Take any important notes on particular observation during the allotted time.
11. (Optional)When timer is up, set another time for 2 minute and perform step 5.
12. Repeat sessions throughout research process

Contemplative Walk Through the Data Sessions

Step-by-Step Process:

1. Print out any data you wish to explore (ex: excerpts from participants' interviews, clippings from document review, names of participants, etc.)
2. Write out all codes or codes you wish to explore on separate flashcards.
3. Lay out flashcards with codes on the floor in rows (laying them out in a spiraling labyrinth is recommended).
4. Select a piece or excerpt of data.
5. Read selected data.
6. Set a time for 5 minutes.
7. With data in hand, walked in silence through the gallery/labyrinth in a relaxed and slow pace thinking about the codes you and how they relate to the data in hand.
8. Walked through codes labyrinth for 5 minutes.
9. Once timer is up, take notes for a minute or two about what came to mind.
10. Repeat sessions for desired number of data excerpts.
11. Uses notes from these sessions to contribute to your research notes, memos and tools for analysis.

Appendix O

Racial Literacy Development Image