

**A qualitative study of the ways middle school teachers made meaning of a
professional development program on cultural competency**

by

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Abstract

This qualitative study examined how and if 5 middle class, white teachers made meaning of professional development designed to foster cultural competency. The training took place in the spring of 2006. The primary district purpose for the mandated professional development program was to assist teachers in reflecting on the cultural barriers between themselves and their students and to promote culturally responsive teaching strategies. The urban middle schools where the study took place are ethnically and socio-economically diverse; one is low achieving. Both middle schools report a significant achievement gap between the minority and majority populations. One year after the conclusion of the professional development activities the respondents demonstrated that the cultural competency professional development had minimal affect on their teaching.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

-- The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences.

--the only objects, insights, perceptions, which remain perennially unwithered and unstaled are those which sharpen vision for new and unforeseen embodiments of the truth they convey. The 'magic' of poetry—and pregnant experience has poetic quality—is precisely the revelation of meaning in the old effected by its presentation of the new.

John Dewey, *John Dewey On Education*, p.432

Mary Crupp, Naming the Issues

There is always going to be the couple [of students] who succeed. There always is. But why should it be five of them succeed and have to work really hard in the poverty level, whereas 80 – 90 % succeeded in the upper middle class? Why is it that the upper middle class [kids] have parents that will go to the soccer game or ask about the soccer game? They know their kids' friends' names. They know what they are doing at night, maybe not exactly, but they know if it is a movie or a friend's house. [They ask] are their parents home? I see kids in my classroom; one of my kid's parents is a stripper. She is gone every night. Every night 8 to 10 kids hang out there, because there is no parent [supervising]. It is a different culture. He is white. I do not think it has anything to do with an achievement gap based on a color culture. I think it has to do with a poverty culture. He has flunked everything for years. She [the mom] obviously doesn't think it is in her power to change that. She could really, really want to; she could care more than any other

parent, but she doesn't think it is up to her. I think we need to tell parents it is up to them.

It is up to parents? Blame the parent, blame the school, blame the teacher, but how can we create the conditions whereby we progress beyond blame to make a difference for students? Throughout my discussion, I have protected my respondents' personal stories and disclosures, and the public school district where I conducted this qualitative study by assigning pseudonyms for all the respondents, the school district, and the community where this district is located.

Mary, in her statement above, presented mixed messages in her responses to my questions about the Riverdale Community School District's (RCSD) effort to close the achievement gap by requiring middle and high school teachers to participate in a professional development program on cultural competency during the spring of 2006. Her depiction of the mother who is a stripper and cannot supervise her son and his friends demonstrates her disdain for parents in poverty. Yet, this disdain stems from her personal struggles as a child who lived in poverty, and succeeded in moving out of poverty. In fact, Mary said she so resented her parents and their lack of care of her that when she was an adolescent she pursued legal severance from her family. While she remains in contact with them, Mary stated her tenuous relationship continues to cause her emotional harm.

This quotation foreshadows many of the problems I present in this investigation into how middle school teachers made meaning of a mandated cultural competency professional development program. One problem that Mary presented is that issues of race and poverty are endemic to in public education. Another problem is that these white,

female, middle class teachers tended to separate out the issues of race and poverty, representing a lack of understanding of the interconnectedness between them. The most significant problem was the district's quick-fix professional development attempt to reform teachers rather than address the larger structural issues affecting teacher and students; this resulted in further frustration and in resistance and rejection.

In this chapter I discuss my personal and professional background that is relevant to the reader understanding my arguments. I divided this chapter into four sections. In the first section entitled, *Judy as Participant Researcher*, I present the reader with personal and professional experiences that have motivated my interest in cultural competency and teacher professional development. The second section is titled *Riverdale Community School District Professional Development Program*. This second section describes the cultural competency professional development program I participated in and investigated in this study. The second section is divided into three subsections. In the first subsection, *All school training*, I describe the two professional development days that the teachers engaged in as an entire staff. The second subsection provides the reader with information on the main part of the professional development program, the *book talks*. In the third subsection I describe one of the options teachers had if they wanted to pursue continuing education credit for their participating in the cultural competency professional development program: the *multicultural website*. In the third section of this chapter I present the research questions. The last chapter section, section four, is the rationale for this investigation. In this section I discuss three factors that influenced the need for cultural competency professional development.

Judy as Participant Researcher

This section is divided into two subsections: the personal and the professional. In the personal subsection I will disclose events that have shaped my perspectives on race, poverty, and education. In the second subsection, I describe professional opportunities that have motivated me to pursue higher education and have provided me with multiple perspectives on the problems in professional development.

My inquiry into issues of power and privilege began seven years ago. This desire to develop a greater understanding of the power structures was the result of my position as an outsider--the art teacher--in my work settings, and my frustration with the status quo that favored ease and efficiency over intellectual investigation and change.

Personal Background

Since my earliest memories, I have been particularly sensitive to issues of power and control. Born in July of 1960 to a young, conventional mother and an ambitious, paternalistic father, I am the oldest and only daughter in a family of six. I mention this because from an early age I observed the familial rules of power, and rebelled against the traditional female paradigm exemplified by my mother. I wanted to be as powerful as my three younger brothers were. It is during these years I developed a feminist consciousness in response to the oppression I felt in my family. I further developed my feminist consciousness in college through friends, professors, and memberships in women's and human rights organizations.

As the older sister, I mothered and competed with my younger brothers. The brother who influenced my interests in multicultural education is my "Irish twin;" he was born 12 months after I was born. He is what is colloquially referred to as "black Irish"

meaning he is olive-skinned with dark hair and eyes. This is significant because when my family moved to Wenham Massachusetts, home of the oldest fox-hunting club in American and home to Boston Brahmin families Winthrops, Cabots, and Lodges, my brother was treated negatively because of his skin tone. In this old town of Anglo-Saxons, Jews and Catholics were not allowed to join the country club; African-Americans would not have been welcome either, but none lived in the town. In addition, at the country club even into the late 1990s, women had to use a separate entrance and could not drink in the bar. Against this sexist and racist backdrop, my brother suffered in ways that I did not. I tried to be his protector, but being a girl made this a problem. My inability to do much about his troubles fitting in added to my anger at gender inequities.

The characterization of my hometown illustrates the ways race and poverty are intertwined. During my childhood I was aware of the otherness or outsider qualities of African Americans. It was a big deal when one moved into our town, the bastion of upper class Caucasians. My best friend was Jewish and dealt daily with bigotry and ridicule from children of the Protestant religion. This upper-class town culture made me feel, a typical middle class girl, inferior. My socio-economic inferiority complex, my perceptions of race problems, and my empathy for my best friend motivated me to reflect on inequities, and to pursue intellectual and creative ways to process my experiences. While my personal experiences are minor in the context of the kinds of injustices minorities have experienced, I was deeply affected.

Professional Background

Since 1984 I have taught in public schools in Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Iowa. Brantlinger (2003) would classify me as an “in the middle” educator. She

characterizes teachers who are “in the middle” as being well-liked by their teachers and as emphasizing several non-academic attributes of schooling: civic, social, and personal. The “in the middle” teachers said Brantlinger (2003) “included rather modest academic goals: (1) ‘get the kids to think,’ (2) ‘have children learn, think, and expand knowledge’ “(p.83). However, some of her characterizations of “in the middle” teachers such as passivity to political action do not apply to me. Throughout my career, I have found myself disrupting the system not necessarily because I desired to be disruptive, but because of a predisposition to go another way. This predisposition influences the way I made sense of my respondents’ data.

Over the past twenty-four years working in the field of education I have experienced or observed numerous instances of patriarchal power in action silencing alternative views of truth, knowledge, and authority. At times dispassionate and distanced and at other times angry and active to my circumstances, I sought out books by a variety of thinkers as a way to understand power relations in my professional life. These activities led me to pursue action to change some of the circumstances in the schools where I taught.

One example is from my time teaching in the wealthy suburb of Riverdale. Using theories of learning and assessment, I led a teacher study group on how we could redesign student semester tests so that the assessments would reflect our philosophies of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and interdisciplinary learning. This research and action, originally supported by the administrator, failed because of the hidden power wielded by the veteran staff. They derived their power from the arguments of what Brantlinger (2003) calls the “already there” and “upward striving” people in our culture.

Our students hailed from parents, “already there” and “upward striving,” who have the most socioeconomic means and control. These parents are concerned with maintaining superiority through rigorous education and educational dominant paradigms exemplified in traditional testing models rather than performance models. My colleagues, the veteran teachers, stopped our advocacy for change and alignment of instructional philosophy and assessment, because they argued the parents would not accept the changes. They had rigorous semester tests, and so should their offspring. In the end the administrator did not support the efforts of our study group and enforced the status quo. I resigned from the district that year to pursue my Ph.D.

My interest in multicultural education and in professional development devoted to reflection on minority issues in education stems from my family background and my graduate education. My graduate work awoke me to the historical and theoretical factors that perpetuate institutional, status quo efforts in education. These efforts and our society’s lack of concern for minorities constitute the harsh conditions that urban educators find themselves amidst. As a result of my education, I vowed to work in a low performing urban school. Since 2004 I have worked as a Title 1 reading teacher at FDR middle school in the Riverdale Community School district; this is the school where two of my respondents work. My experiences and my respondents’ stories point out the myriad personal and professional paradoxes that exist in our workplace. These paradoxes will be explored in this dissertation.

The Riverdale Community School District Professional Development Program

I was interested in Riverdale district cultural competency professional development program, because of my interests in minority students and in how change

occurs in teachers through professional development programs. In the fall of 2005, I contacted the curriculum director and learned about the district's focus on cultural competency and multicultural education. I offered my services to design a website as an ancillary resource for teachers. My offer was accepted and I was asked to incorporate the concepts and goals of the training in the website experience. After designing the website, I submitted it to RCSD curriculum reviewers and to the outside professional development expert. The website development and approval process lasted from October 2005 – December 2005. I presented the website material and procedures for using the website to district principals, curriculum directors, and teacher leaders in January 2006.

In the winter of 2006, the Riverdale Community School District (RCSD), which is a large, urban public school district in the Midwest, mandated that all 1700 middle and high school teachers participate in a cultural competency professional development program. One goal of the cultural competency program, as stated by the Director of Intercultural Affairs, was to develop a transformational understanding of the ways teachers' cultures can inhibit the academic success of minority students. Another goal of the professional development program was to promote teacher reflection on the use of culturally relevant teaching strategies. The RCSD cultural competency professional development program included a text and training sessions that were chosen and developed by an outside professional development expert who worked at state intermediary education agency. In addition to designing the website for this professional development program, as a middle school reading teacher in the RCSD district, I participated in the cultural competency professional development program.

In the description of the RCSD's cultural competency professional development program, I divide this discussion into three sections. The first section focuses on the all-school training sessions. The second section focuses on the text, *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People who Teach*, and the book talk sessions. The third section is on the website. I have not included the actual website address because I would reveal the location of this investigation.

All-school Training

The first all-school session, in February of 2006, provided teachers with an overview of the training and a concrete sense of the changing district demographics. After completing a baseline survey on their attitudes about diversity, the teachers engaged in an activity to assess each teacher's ethnic and generational backgrounds. One teacher had to guess her partner's ethnicity, and preferences of food, music, movies and hobbies. After partners shared their feelings about this activity, the leaders led the group in a discussion on stereotypes. Next, the teachers were asked to go to the table that displayed the decade when they came of age and to write down all the things they could remember about that decade: fashion, politics, art, music, fads, role models, etc. Finally, the first session concluded with the teacher leaders providing the teachers with a colored facemask. The leaders gave some people chains. The teacher leaders asked us to group by facemask color, which visually presented the ratio of ethnic diversity in the district. The chains symbolized poverty. The session concluded with a presentation on the changing demographics of the district.

The second all-school session occurred at the end of the professional development program in May 2006, and consisted of teacher reflections on the cultural competency

training and future expectations. The session began with the teachers taking a posttest survey assessing their attitudes on diversity. After completing the survey, the teachers were asked to sit in grade level teams and complete a matrix on how the teams would incorporate cultural competency into their lessons.

Book Talk Groups

The text used in the cultural competency professional development program, *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People who Teach* was written by Kikanza Nuri Robins, Randall B. Lindsey, Delores B. Lindsey, and Raymond D. Terrell (2006). As stated above, the Director for Intercultural Affairs and her consultants wanted to engage teachers in the transformation paradigm of multicultural education. This book introduces the terms and concepts of transformational multicultural education such as equality, equity, culture, diversity, multiculturalism, etc., and emphasizes the importance of culturally competent practice. Robins et al., (2006, p. 47) list five essential elements for cultural proficiency. They are:

- Assessing your culture
- Valuing diversity
- Managing the dynamics of difference
- Adapting to diversity
- Institutionalizing cultural knowledge

Robins et al. (2006) used theory, case studies, and workbook activities to engage the reader in understanding the concepts and connecting the ideas with their own experiences. The case studies centered on a fictitious community with 25,000 public school students. An influx of immigrants of African and Hispanic descent recently moved

into this fictitious community. The case studies presented problems and conflicts from the perspectives of families, teachers, administrators, and community members. In the chapter on barriers to cultural proficiency, the readers reflected on a group that they do not feel successful understanding and teaching. The teachers wrote a description of the members of the group and wrote assumptions they hold about that group. Teachers reflected on how their assumptions may impinge on effective communication and understanding.

The text promoted transformational multicultural education in a variety of ways. The reader was prompted to reflect on biases and cultural entitlement and was provided with practical examples of individual and institutional barriers to working effectively with diverse students. The chapter on managing the dynamics of difference made the case, eschewed by most in education (Senge, 1994), that conflict is positive and productive. In particular, Robins et al. (2006) identified conflict management strategies such as clarifying values, adjusting to personalities, and seeking to understand cultural differences. Finally, the last chapter of the book asked the reader to commit to change because of self-discoveries made during the book activities and readings.

Multicultural.riverdale.org Website

In designing the website, I needed to support the theories and activities advanced in the RCSD cultural competency professional development program. Again, the website address listed in this paper is not accurate because the real address would reveal the location of this investigation. Robins et al., (2006) believed that “cultural proficiency is an inside-out approach, which focuses on those insiders to the school or organization, encouraging them to reflect on their own individual understandings and values” (p. 5).

The goal, stated Robins et al., (2006) of learning to be culturally proficient is to integrate organization or individual values and practices in such a way as to be able to “interact effectively in culturally diverse settings” (p.11). They believed that multicultural transformation can occur when the teacher understands his/her own culture, reflects on aspects of his/her entitlement, and then sees his/herself as adaptors to diversity.

Three researchers, Nieto, (1999) and Zeichener and Hoeft (1996) described teachers in America as predominantly middle class, white, and frequently negative about diversity. While assuming the teachers in RCSD are negative about diversity issues would be unproductive and inappropriate, the majority of the RCSD teachers are middle class and white. Nieto (1999) asked teachers to “call on their own experiences of marginalization;” (p.132) this idea is supported by Derman-Sparks (2002), Gorski (2005 b), Nieto (1999), and Banks (1991). Gorski (2005b) points out that in multicultural educational research there is less focus on the personal transformation of the teacher, and more focus on multicultural curriculum and pedagogy. Therefore, in designing the website, I wanted to help teachers call up their own cultural backgrounds and revisit times when they or their ancestors were marginalized.

After logging on to multicultural.riverdale.org, a welcome page appeared that prompted the teachers to choose an identification number and to complete some basic demographic information. Next, they were directed to the index page, which states the purpose of the website and lists all the interactive pages. There are five interactive pages beginning with the immigrant roots page and concluding with the feedback page.

Immigrant roots page.

The immigrant roots page featured the immigrants to the USA from Europe, Africa, Mexico, Cuba, Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and India. These groups represented the ancestry of the RCSD teaching staff and student body as evidenced by RCSD demographic reports. I excluded Native Americans because they did not immigrate to the United States. Their stories of marginalization can be found other places on the website. In addition, a teacher with some Native American ancestry could choose a different ancestry group to research.

On the immigrant roots page, the teacher chose an ancestor group and researched the immigrants' life experiences. The teacher also chose a different ethnic group (one of their students), and compared and contrasted the differences in immigrant experiences. The immigrant research link sites included Ellis Island; Angel Island; the National Archives; the Smithsonian Institution; Voices in Exile, an on-line news resource; Black voices at AOL; Thinkquest; city and state historical societies; and universities. These sites are dedicated to preserving history, have minimal or no advertising, and for the most part are non-profit.

Generational values.

After researching and responding to the questions on the immigrant roots pages, the teacher interacted with the generational values page. The purpose of this page was to build on the all-school training sessions where teachers discussed ideas and role models from the various decades when they came of age. My purpose for asking teachers to research significant events in politics, entertainment, and the arts or sciences in this decade and in the decade when they came of age was to assist them in reflecting on the

complexities of and differences between both periods. I also wanted the teachers to reflect on how these differences can change their teaching. For example, one teacher from the pilot study wrote:

They [students] are much more used to technology and [have] no sense of historical context. Everything is new or--if even a year old - ancient history. The heroes seem to be more polarizing also; many offer radical (and sometimes radically bad = gangsters) ideas on how life should be lived. The acceptance of diversity seems to be headed in reverse for many of them too. It means that my struggle to put things into context must be ceaseless--constantly grounding what is new in the past.

One goal of the training was to help teachers move beyond the shallow, circular conversations of concern and begin to adapt so as to better meet the needs of students. In the passage above the teacher grasped how to move beyond her concern that students are becoming less tolerant. She wanted to assist students in understanding the context of radical ideas so that students can be better critics rather than mere consumers of information and experiences.

In searching for an online resource that would be relevant, collaborative and supportive of multiculturalism, I chose to use Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopedia, as the source for information about the decades. Gorski (2005b) developed criteria for evaluating websites. Under the category of multiculturalism, he listed: variety of media approaches; interaction between author and user; participation in an interactive, collaborative way; critical and evaluative opportunities using online tools; provides for a multiplicity of voices; free from oppressive material (p. 142). Wikipedia meets these

criteria. It is currently the largest, open source, collaborative journalistic resource that allows the reader to edit articles on research topics. The reader can access information about articles' authors and editors and can respond to them on the site's community bulletin board. There are in excess of 3,000,000 articles in 100 languages on this website. James Wales, the founder of the Wikimedia foundation, stated that multiple perspectives on the variety of topics are encouraged, and that the writing should educate the reader to understand the debates within that topic in a neutral way (Lamb, 2005). In addition, each article has links that take the reader to a variety of multimedia resources to learn more about the topic.

Wikipedia, while critiqued by academicians and journalists, has also garnered praise from academics and journalists as the largest and most highly regarded reference website (Lin, 2004). Some educators are concerned with the accuracy of an open source online encyclopedia that can be edited by anyone. After researching Wikipedia and comparing it to two reputable and widely used resources, Rosenzweig (2006) states “*Wikipedia*, then, beats *Encarta* but not *American National Biography Online* in coverage and roughly matches *Encarta* in accuracy” (p.118). He goes on to say that

Professional historians have things to learn not only from the open and democratic distribution model of *Wikipedia* but also from its open and democratic production model. Although *Wikipedia* as a *product* is problematic as a sole source of information, the *process* of creating *Wikipedia* fosters an appreciation of the very skills that historians try to teach. (p. 135)

This resource serves the purposes of multicultural.riverdale.org by stimulating the teacher to research topics of interest and by modeling an open, collaborative, and critical

framework for ideas. This framework, audacious to some, represents, say Ray and Hocutt (2006), an exciting way to stimulate constructivist teaching. Dewey (1929) states that, “education stalls, when the imagination is dormant” (p. 45). By learning to engage with this website to learn about their generation, the teachers were experimenting with a teaching process and a venue motivating to students.

Hidden biases.

Moving from researching one’s cultural and generational background to examining hidden biases was a decision steeped in multicultural transformative practices (Banks, 1991, Gorski, 2005b, Nieto, 1999). White people sometimes describe themselves as color blind, as a way of demonstrating that race does not matter. Bell hooks (2003) discussed the disinclination of white teachers to talk about race issues. This can have detrimental effects, because white teacher beliefs do not necessarily translate into informed or enlightened practice. To engage teachers in this discovery I looked to teaching for tolerance resources. Tolerance.org offers many free ways for teachers to address bias. Project Implicit, one resource on their website, is sponsored by Harvard University, is designed to assess bias. The researchers explain, “it is well known that people don't always 'speak their minds,' and it is suspected that people don't always 'know their minds' understanding such divergences is important to scientific psychology” (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwood, 2006). On this website there are a total of 14 tests to assess biases. Teachers were required to take seven of the Project Implicit’s tests: skin tone, religion, Native, Asian, Arab-Muslim, disability, and sexuality. I chose these tests from the researchers list because they represent the student body we work with, and support the purpose of this website. I excluded age, race, presidents, gender (science and

careers), and weapons because these were redundant, irrelevant to the purpose of the website, or not compatible with the aspects of culture being dealt with in this professional development training.

Immigration today.

The next page, immigration today, was designed to elicit responses and ideas for ways teachers can address the cultural gaps between themselves and their students and families. Banks (2002) advocated for teachers to learn multicultural theory and to have professional development experiences that allow them to understand the complexities of the cultures of their students. Many RCSD students and families are recent immigrants to the USA from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, India, Mexico, and Central America. The interviews included on this page are from a parent and three students from some of those regions. The sources of these interviews came from reputable organizations such as the Library of Congress, American Memories Learning page, and Scholastic, Inc. Giving the teachers an opportunity to examine their immigrant roots and to connect their experiences to their students' cultures attempted to model what Banks (2005) called multiple acculturation. What he means is that Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture is not the mainstream, rather the "common U.S. culture and society emerged from a complex synthesis and interaction of diverse cultural elements that originated within the various cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious groups that make up U.S. society" (p. 252).

In these interviews the adults and children articulated ways American culture is foreign. The parent described his culture's view of women, free speech, and his lack of experience with amenities Americans take for granted. The children described their fears, their positive impressions of America, and the stark differences in resources between

their country and America. Interacting with these diverse cultures requires sensitivity to the values and experiences of the families. Teachers may need to adapt certain assignments, may need to suspend judgment about the way a parent might handle a situation between adult and child, and may need to provide examples and experiences that explain aspects of middle class white culture that are taken for granted.

Understanding poverty.

Ruby Payne's book (2003) and training sessions are synonymous with professional development on poverty in education. Her work presents many problems that will be discussed later in the paper. For the purpose of the website, I chose an interview of her by the California School Board Association. I also chose articles by Gorski (2006), her most vocal critic, and Kozol (1989, 1995, and 2005) to facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues of poverty in public schooling. Veteran teachers spoke about how Payne helps them deal with real situations (Keller, 2006). Kozol (1989, 1995) forthrightly tells the stories of real people living in poverty. He immersed himself in their lives and learned firsthand how institutional and societal inequities perpetuate poverty. Kozol (2005) and Gorski (2006) argue that we, as a nation, must address these inequities in the public and political arenas.

In the interview published online by the California School Board Association Payne (2006) summarized three points relevant to understanding the practical aspects of her views. The first view she addresses is that students in poverty engage in physical means to solve problems. The second point she addressed is the lack of parental support for education. She said, "Now, what that means is this: a lot of times in generational poverty – two generations or more – parents will be very hesitant for their kids to be

educated. Because when children get educated, they leave. Then you've lost your possession" (Payne, 2001, ¶ 3). Payne's assertions are widely challenged for their classist views. For example in a world of biotechnological wizardry the upper classes also consider children as possessions. Teachers constantly bemoan the fact that the parents or guardians of students in poverty do not support the academic goals of the school. In developing an understanding of different perspectives, teachers might be able to distance themselves from the frustration and think of ways to bridge the gap in values. Many parents who live in poverty did not feel welcome in school and were not successful students. Her third point was is that children from poverty often say that they will not learn from a teacher they do not like. Payne said,

The primary motivator of whether or not kids in poverty will learn is whether they like the teacher. It's that relationship. It comes down to two things: you've got to teach them how to live in the paper world, and you have to have a relationship of respect with them. (Payne, 2001, ¶10)

To help teachers reflect in a transformative and critical way, I included Gorski, (2006) and Kozol's (2005) views and research. They serve to put Payne's practical and simplistic writings in the larger societal context and to open the door to critical reflection about her research. Kozol (2005) and Gorski's (2005a, 2006) works allow teachers to see the large political issues and practices that effect American education. To exclude Payne's work would be to allow the teachers to distance themselves from the responsibility of examining their personal beliefs about children and families in poverty. To exclude Kozol (1995, 2005) and Gorski's (2005a, 2006) works would endorse Payne as the only relevant thinker on poverty. This would deny the teacher the opportunity to

learn about critical analysis on the societal reasons for poverty. In conclusion, the readings on the poverty page are designed to educate teachers to the debate, to provide knowledge about Payne's work as a widely used trainer, and to juxtapose her work with scholars who can assist in critical reflection and transformative action. Transformative actions, like the authors Robins et al. (2006) call for, are crucial in overcoming what Bloom (2001), in her study on how schools perpetuate stereotypes of the poor in their policies, identifies as "hegemonic thinking, which results in negative evaluations [of the poor in school meetings], deskilling, and infantilization of the mothers" (p. 313).

Connecting personal experiences and growth to student achievement is an ongoing process that requires the teacher to be a learner and to keep current with students' needs now and in the future. The last page of the website, teaching and student achievement, is designed to encourage reflection on the competencies teachers should foster to increase student achievement. The RCSD required that this be a component in the website and in the cultural competency professional development. EnGuage is a website sponsored by Learning Process Points, formerly of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL). I chose this resource, sponsored by the United States Department of Education, to assist teachers in obtaining current and easily assessable information on the learning needs for the 21st century. This site includes all the commonly referenced literacies. However, it also includes as literacies that are important, but less commonly seen as integral to the school curriculum, such as visual, multicultural and global awareness. These literacies encompass a range of perspectives and require cross-disciplinary planning. For example, in the multicultural literacy strand criteria are listed that include a transformative curriculum approach.

The questions I asked the teachers to consider on this page are designed to address their potential as transformers and as critics. I included a quotation by Nieto (1999) to challenge teachers to move beyond excuses and powerlessness and think about planning for action. A review of the enGuage page will allow teachers to learn what literacies the government sponsored researchers endorse for success in the 21st century.

The last page of the website is a feedback page. On this page the teacher can evaluate the appearance, design, navigation ability, and usefulness of the website by rating each component on a scale of one to five. They may also make suggestions in narrative form. Finally, I included my e-mail address if they would like to contact me to discuss website content and design.

My Research Questions

Cultural competency training, the professional development response in this Midwestern urban district, is what I examined. Specifically I was interested in how and if these respondents made meaning from the RCSD professional development program on cultural competency.

Did the mandated cultural competency professional development program make a difference in the teachers' work lives?

If the program did make a difference, how did this process happen?

What teacher and program characteristics made the difference?

If there was no affect on the teachers, what were the causes?

Did their personal experiences and education influence the impact of the program?

What broader implications can we derive from the lack of impact?

Rational for This Qualitative Study

My concerns about poverty, the intersections of poverty and race, and a passion for equity ground this study. According to the Census Bureau (Goldenberg, 2007), over the last decade immigrants have been pouring into the nation's biggest metropolitan cities as well as into rural areas. In 2001, according to statistics taken regarding the percentages of workers living under the 200% calculation of poverty, 80% are African American, 84% are Hispanic and 64% are Caucasian (Mishel, Bernstein, and Schmitt, 2001). Of these populations over 50% of African American and Hispanic families live at or below the poverty line, while only 20% of the Caucasian families earn less than 200% of the poverty line and constitute more than 50% of the families living in poverty (Anyon, 2005). These statistics support what several education professionals, political leaders, and scholars have noted; minority workers remain in poverty and at lower levels of poverty than their Caucasian counterparts.

In *Preparing Teachers for Diverse Student Populations: A Critical Race Theory Perspective*, Ladson-Billings (1999a) discusses this growing minority and poor student population and the fact that teachers will be predominantly middle class and white. She calls this disconnect the "demographic imperative." Currently in the large mid-western district where this study will be conducted over 90% of the teachers are white, middle class, and female; this mirrors predictions that by 2020 95% of classroom teachers will be white, middle class and female (Hodgkinson, 2002). In contrast, Hodgkinson (2002) reports that over 50% of the public school student body will differ from the teaching staff in social class, race, ethnicity, and religion.

No Child Left Behind (2001) put the achievement gap between minority students, defined by race, class, and gender, and their non-minority peers at the forefront of educational monitoring and reporting. This has caused public school districts to focus more intently on the reasons for the lower achievement scores of minority and poor students. One possible solution to this problem is to consider the disparity in experiences between the teacher and their students. These differences, it is hypothesized, constitute barriers that inhibit productive teacher/student interaction.

Multicultural education has been a requirement in many pre-service programs since the 1980s (Gollnick, 1992) yet there is little evidence that teachers are willing to teach or are effective at teaching minority students. In 1982, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) articulated a standard for multicultural education that states “Multicultural education should receive attention in courses, seminars, directed readings, laboratory and clinical experiences, practicum, and other types of field experiences” (NCATE, 1982, p. 14). Gollnick (1992) reports that in a review of institutions seeking accreditation, only eight out of the 59 schools applying were in full compliance with the multicultural standards. Many researchers (Bohn & Sleeter, 2000; Cummins, 2001; Gallavan, 2000) also found a lack of multicultural programming for pre-service and in-service teachers. This paucity adds to recent concerns about the ability of the present and future teaching force to reduce the achievement gap between minority and poor students and their non-minority peers. The demographic imperative and lack of pre-service and in-service multicultural education training supports further investigation of professional development programs in multicultural education.

In addition to the demographic imperative, professional development in K-12 education is undergoing reform. The teacher's role as a learner and implementer of new learning is one of the central questions guiding K-12 professional development reform. Due to significant focus and funding stemming from NCLB initiatives, professional development designers and researchers are working together to ensure greater accountability between the professional development program and its influence on teaching and learning. This is because districts are being held accountable for reducing the student achievement gap between the minority and poor students and their non-minority peers.

The minority achievement gap problem is framed by three conditions influencing decision-makers. The first condition is that a white, middle class, and female teaching force is not well prepared to meet the challenge of educating minority and poor students. Yet, there is and will be an ever increasing number of minority students in their classrooms. The second condition is the K-12 professional development reform movement, which has intensified due to NCLB pressures. The third condition is that the federal government sanctions districts for not meeting the challenge of educating minorities to at least a minimally competent level in reading, math and science, and not providing an educational environment that will sustain minority students through high school graduation. Professional development programs in cultural competency are one response to this three part problem.

Chapter Summary and Dissertation Overview

I began the introduction to this qualitative study by furnishing the reader with a respondent passage foreshadowing some of the themes that emerged from the data. Mary's discussion of the concerns she had teaching at FDR middle school is part of a larger national discussion on the minority achievement gap and the demographic imperative. To remedy these problems in RCSD, district administrators chose a cultural competency professional development program, and mandated that all 1700 middle and high school teachers participate in the program. I studied five middle school teachers' experiences with the cultural competency professional development program and learned that the program was not successful. The reasons for the program's lack of success will be discussed in the following chapters.

In chapter two, the literature review, I discuss the theory and current research in two areas of inquiry pertinent to this study: multicultural education and professional development. I discuss multicultural education first because cultural competency, the topic of the RCSD's professional development program, is the most current theory in the history of multicultural education, and was the focus of the program. The multicultural concepts and theories that have developed since the 1970s frame the current issues regarding cultural competency and the minority achievement gap. In the second section of chapter two, I present the history, current theories of, and research in professional development. The professional development literature is essential to understanding why this program was not successful, and how this study contributes to the continuing conversations about teacher professional development.

In chapter three, I discuss my methodology and the methods I used to collect and analyze the data. This is a qualitative interview study. I conducted one in-depth interview with each of the five respondents. I also conducted one focus group interview with all five of the respondents. In addition to the interviews, I visited their classrooms on one occasion. The purpose of this visit was to observe the classroom layout, the student resource materials, and visuals on display.

Chapters four and five contain the data analysis. Several themes emerged from the data, so I divided the data chapters into two separate chapters. In chapter four I provide the respondents' personal views about diversity. Also, I analyze these personal data as they relate to the data the respondents presented about cultural competency in their schools. While the respondents did not engage deeply or consistently with the materials used in the cultural competency professional development program, they had much to say about multicultural issues in education. Briefly, the main idea that emerged from the respondents' views on cultural competency is that it is imperative to consider the teacher's personal attitudes and experiences with this issue.

In chapter five, I present and analyze these respondents' data about the implementation of the professional development program. I address the significance of this study to the larger issues in professional development. The main ideas present in the professional development data are, as Fullan (1993), said that professional growth is a bottom-up and a top-down process. There needs to be a positive cultural of support, which includes teachers taking their professionalism seriously and administrators providing differentiated opportunities for improvement.

In chapter six, I conclude with further analysis regarding my data collection processes. I situate my findings in the larger educational conversations about professional development, cultural competency, and school reform. Finally, I present my personal and professional growth that resulted from this research endeavor.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature: Multicultural Education and Professional Development

The key to learning is the teacher who must combine continuous inner and outer learning. Moral purpose and change agency are —caring and competence— intimate partners. Neither equity nor excellence by themselves gets us anywhere. Finally, teachers more than most people are in a privileged position to pursue the meaning of life through the merging of microcosm and macrocosm.

Michael Fullan, *Change Forces*, p. 144

This research asks how teachers in a large, urban, public school district made meaning of a mandatory cultural competency professional development program. The impetus for district leaders to design this professional development program, and require all secondary teachers to participate in the training came from district data demonstrating a significant achievement gap between minority and non-minority students. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110 (NCLB) requires districts to publish student achievement results comparing minority and non-minority achievement, and to make yearly progress in closing the gap. The reporting requirements and the placement of schools on the school in need of assistance list, which includes sanctions for lack of growth, motivated district professional development decisions.

Before I analyze and present findings, I need to explain the historical and theoretical frameworks that support the choices of content and delivery methods of the cultural competency professional development program. Cultural competency, the newest version of multicultural education, aims at individual teacher transformation. NCLB mandates professional development as the main strategy to attack the achievement gap. The field of professional development is complicated and plagued with the criticisms of lack of rigor and meaningful influence. So, marrying these two sub-fields in education

presents may potential problems. Before I can extrapolate meaningful results from my research, these problems must be explained and contextualized.

This review of the literature has two main topics and several sub-topics. Multicultural education is the first main topic. In this discussion, I explain the development of the tolerance perspective and how it led to the two other perspectives in multicultural education, transformation, and cultural competency. I also discuss the pre-service and in-service research in the field of multicultural education.

Professional development is the second main topic of this literature review. This section is important because apart from the content of professional development, the methods districts use to teach teachers are based on theories and perspectives that can undermine the learning. In this section of the literature review, I summarize the evolution of professional development in education. This evolution informs the results and provides the foundation for suggestions for future work in this field.

*From Tolerance to Transformation to Cultural Competency: A Review of the
Literature in Multicultural Education*

In the multicultural section of this literature review, I describe the development of three main perspectives in multicultural education. They are tolerance, transformation, and cultural competency perspectives. The following question guides my discussion: what does the evolution of multicultural education have to say about demographic and achievement challenges facing public school educators in 21st century in America? The importance of discussing these perspectives, in an effort to answer my dissertation research question, is threefold. One, I present the perspectives and the criticisms of these perspectives and articulate the dialogue that permeates current practices in multicultural

education. Two, this dialogue serves as a conceptual framework for the interpretation of data gathered in my investigation. Three, broader implications drawn from the research must be part of the larger discussion in multicultural education.

Tolerance, transformation, and cultural competency are the three main perspectives in multicultural education programs and practices. Simply defined, the tolerance perspective focuses multicultural education programs and practices on the cultures and achievements of minorities. The transformation perspective aims to promote change in the oppressive structures that exist in education and the larger culture by addressing oppressive and racist practices and policies in education. Cultural competency focuses on the teachers' internal barriers and cultural differences, and asks teachers to integrate the dynamics of difference into the larger school framework. This way programs and policies are more culturally sensitive and relevant to students. The following discussion explains the three perspectives, the scholars who advance these perspectives, and their critics. The conceptual framework for this dissertation and the work on the website, multicultural.riverdale.org, grows from the development of multicultural education as a concept and reform movement in education.

History of the Reform Movement

During the 1960s, African-Americans and justice-minded Caucasians sought to end discrimination in public places and institutions, such as public housing and education. This cultural upheaval engendered a reform movement in education called multicultural education. Banks (2005) has defined multicultural education as a concept, a process, and an educational reform movement. Beginning in the 1960s until now, we know that certain students, those who look like and are raised in environments similar to

their Caucasian teachers, do better in public school than others. Education professionals call this disparity the achievement gap. Multicultural education, as a reform, seeks to address the problems inherent in minority student achievement.

African-Americans, feminists, and the disabled, are three human rights groups which were instrumental in beginning the multicultural reform movement in education. Each group contributed differently to the development of multicultural education as a concept and an early reform movement. Since the 1990s, their contributions to this movement have merged into a more singular effort to study and promote the transformation of oppressive structures that exist in education.

In the 1950s, African-Americans demanded equal rights in education. On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court decided on behalf of Oliver Brown against the school board of Topeka, Kansas, and stated that separate schools for blacks and whites were inherently unequal. This decision created a set of challenges and actions that are still relevant in public education today (Eaton, 2007). The early challenge was how to desegregate the schools without violence. After the turbulent attempts to desegregate schools in the 1950s and 1960s, the challenges turned to how to make the curriculum more ethnically balanced. Banks (2005) has said that early efforts to integrate diverse ethnic groups into the curriculum were hasty. Perhaps hasty, however the pressure that African-Americans put on school districts to teach about the experiences, the achievements, and the perspectives of blacks was important to the multicultural conversation. In addition to demanding that diverse cultures be represented in curricula, African-American groups also pressured school districts to hire teachers of color and to include diversity in all district decision-making bodies.

The success that African-Americans achieved inspired the feminists in the 1970s to take up the multicultural challenge. Banks (2005) has said that the feminist movement was “one of the most significant social reform movements of the late twentieth century” (p.6). Feminists, such as Steinem and Freidan, armed with statistics on gross workplace inequities in pay, positions of leadership, and respect, demanded equality in the workplace and in education. Feminists advocated for equal representation in curricula and asked for revisions in the dominant, but inaccurate stories told to school age students about the history of America. These early efforts cultivated a climate that allowed Gilligan (1982) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) to challenge male dominated conceptions of ethics and epistemology.

New conceptions of ways of knowing shifted our understanding and acceptance of hierarchical models in cognitive and moral development that prior to the feminist reform was the norm. This paradigm shift generated theories of knowing and created long lasting structural changes in the way we deliver education in the 21st century. One current trend in education, differentiation, owes its cognitive foundation to the new ways of knowing promulgated by the feminists.

Education theorists have defined the concept of differentiation as providing a diverse group of students with multiple options to process information and to demonstrate their learning on the same topic and in the same class (Tomlinson, 2000, Hall, 2002). Differentiation in teaching and learning grew out of the need for school districts to accommodate students with disabilities. The significant legal victory for the rights of disabled students, Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Pub.L. 94 – 142,

stimulated the growth of multicultural education because federal power, in the form of oversight and funding, mandated differentiation for disabled students.

This legislation has had far-reaching influence, because it has mandated ways in which to educate disabled students. One mandate is that disabled students be educated in the least restricted environment. This means that teachers work in teams with students and families to develop learning goals. To meet these goals educators mainstream disabled students into the regular classroom. Learning about the needs and characteristics of the disabled, as a minority group, is required in many teacher preparation programs. The disabled's legacy to the conversation of multicultural education is the advancement of differentiated instruction and the promotion of the parent's voice in the educational decision-making process.

African-Americans, feminists, and the disabled contributed much to the multicultural reform movement in education. Their influences are evident in pre-service and in-service programs and practices in K-12 education designed to create equity for minority students. The federal government has defined minority students as those of low socio-economic status, disabled, of color, female, and English language learners (NCLB, 2001). NCLB, a reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), has strengthened the federal mandates in ESEA to provide equal education for all children by requiring districts that receive federal money to report to the community, to the state, and to the federal government on minority student achievement compared to their non-minority peers. These reporting requirements and the sanctions that accompany a district's lack of success in reducing the achievement gap have stimulated more growth in multicultural education. The events of the 1960s and 1970s serve as touchstones

informing the different perspectives being practiced in multicultural education today. The three perspectives discussed next are tolerance, transformation and cultural competency.

Tolerance

The tolerance paradigm in multicultural programming and practices, is commonly known as heroes and holidays, because this approach advocates for the insertion of information about heroes/heroines, holidays and cultural artifacts into the existing curriculum (Banks, 2005). Leaders in the African-American and the feminist communities pressured the educational community to re-write texts so that they represented the achievements of women and minorities. Tetreault (2005) has said that this was an important effort in making the curriculum “look like” the students in classrooms across America. However, as she and others have also noted, the women and African Americans who are included in art, science, social studies and literature texts tend to be those who fit the male norm (Nieto, 1999; Banks, 2005; Tetreault, 2005).

Nieto (1999, 2000) has critiqued the tolerance paradigm, and has offered a reason why this perspective is so popular in K – 12 education. Many in the field of education espouse the value of tolerating differences in our human interactions. This sentiment suffuses multicultural education, and as Nieto (2000) has stated, tolerance is the term most associated with multicultural education. Furthermore Nieto (2000) has said scholars in the multicultural education field uniformly critique the tolerance perspective because it supports the status quo. She believes districts easily adopt this “feel good” component to the curriculum because it is less controversial and requires less work to implement.

While districts may adopt the tolerance perspective because it is easy to implement, there are systemic reasons for this shallow choice to multicultural education.

As has been stated, the tolerance perspective grew out of the legal battles fought during the civil rights and feminist movements. In the late 1970s researchers conducted a survey on the status of multicultural education in their programs in teacher preparation institutions. Ladson-Billings (1995) has reported that the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) produced a directory of institutions providing multicultural education in their programs, but did not discuss the content or quality of the programs. Later, as scholars began to publish articles on multicultural education, accrediting bodies, such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), began to develop standards and ask for proof of implementation of multicultural education programs. Initially there were separate multicultural education standards, but in 1989 NCATE integrated the multicultural education standards into the other content standards. The following definitions appear in the 1989 NCATE accreditation document used to evaluate teacher preparation institutions.

Cultural Diversity refers to the cultural background of all students and school personnel with particular emphasis on their ethnicity, race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, and family variations, particularly single-parent families. Multicultural Perspective is recognition of (1) the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters and 2) the importance of culture, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and exceptionalities in the education process. (NCATE, 1989, p.61)

Gollnick (1992) examined NCATE's data and reported that only 13.6 % of the institutions seeking NCATE accreditation met the multicultural education standards for

implementation. Given that many teacher preparation institutions eschew rigorous multicultural education, it is difficult to fault schools and districts for adopting an easy approach, such as heroes and holidays. In addition, Goodlad (1990) noted that teacher education suffers from low status, incoherence and an “unclear identity” (p.748), thus adding to the disconnect between teacher preparation and the practice of multicultural education in classrooms.

In conclusion, the tolerance perspective, the most widely practiced form of multicultural education, does not seem promote culturally relevant changes in education policies and practices. Since the 1970s the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students has widened rather than narrowed (Lee 2002; Orfield, Losen, Wald and Swanson, 2004), which implies that more dramatic efforts need to be undertaken to change the way we teach. As Nieto (1999) and others point out, inclusion and tolerance of minority perspectives in curricula has to be accompanied by pedagogical changes. This is a much harder task, and one that requires collaborative efforts between scholars and practitioners.

Transformation

Many scholars advocate for transformative multicultural education and articulate a variety of changes in the educational system. The transformative perspective refers to change in pedagogy, policies, and educational practices. Banks (2005) has said that unlike the tolerance perspective of adding minorities to the curriculum, transformative multicultural education asks students to understand multicultural concepts and issues from a variety of viewpoints. Transformative multicultural education is about the

development of change agents in the American education system for creating more democratic and socially just schools.

This desire to create more democratic and socially just schools was influenced by a significant philosophical movement in Germany in the 1920s. “Critical Theory” (Bohman’s, 2005, emphasis on capital c and t), in philosophical terms, is synonymous with the Frankfurt school (Bohman, 2005). Established in the 1920s, “The Frankfurt school was a tight network of independent radical philosophers, economists, and sociologists associated with the German Institute for Social Research--essentially a Marxist think tank” (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 109). Max Horkheimer, manager of the Frankfurt School after 1930, defined “Critical Theory” as a theory “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244). With its emphasis on the promotion of democracy, Horkheimer and others believed that “Critical Theory,” “must be explanatory, practical and normative” (Bohman, 2005, ¶ 3). These thinkers promoted the idea that any social critique that uncovers limits to human potential should also indicate who and how these problems will be addressed (Bohman, 2005).

The Frankfurt School provides the historical basis for the theories I draw upon to serve as a framework for data interpretation. “Critical Theory” spawned a number of critical theories dedicated to philosophical approaches in identifying and solving practical problems (Bohman, 2005). These other critical theories, such as feminism, grew out of the turmoil in America in the 1960s and 1970s, and have influenced education in the emergence of multicultural education as a reform movement. As stated earlier, the tolerance multicultural curriculum served as the first response to how these critical theories influenced educational practices. Drawing from “Critical Theory,” the next phase

of influence required change in the structure of the institution of education. This engendered critical pedagogy, which promotes teachers as change agents.

An important event in the development of the concept of change agents is “the merger of critical pedagogy and multicultural education” (Sheets, 2003, p. 114) in the late 1980s and 1990s. Sheets (2003) has explained that this merged ideology promoted structural transformation of oppressive schooling policies and practices. The proponents of structural transformation advocated for social justice and action in order that all students, especially the underserved, have equitable access to education. This development continues to be significant, because it changed the course of multicultural education and generated deeper discussions about how to reform the educational system, so that it is truly democratic.

Beyond equitable access, critical pedagogy theorists, such as Sleeter and McLaren (1995), have advocated for societal transformation whereby property relationships are changed. Developed in the 1980s against the backdrop of the United States’ oppressive political practices in Latin America, critical theorists such as Giroux, McLaren, and Sleeter called for a redistribution of wealth. Drawing heavily from the Frankfurt School’s emphasis on Marx, they believed that multicultural education needed to do more to critique the educational structures that kept material wealth in the hands of a few.

Critical pedagogy theorists criticize multicultural education for not going far enough to transform oppressive structures in education and society. These theorists believe that teachers should be change agents who transform the school experience and societal oppression. To achieve this, critical pedagogy theorists encourage their followers to challenge the existing power structures and to promote social justice. Sheets (2003) has

said McLaren, Sleeter, and others owe their ideas, in part, to Freire's work and to the "Frankfort School."

The works of the Frankfort School and Freire are significant to the continuing dialogue on how to achieve equity for the poor and poorly served minorities in our public education institutions. However, Sheets (2003), has made a very reasonable point regarding the reality of schools and the role education plays in society. She has said that, while the liberals embrace critical pedagogy, the idea that teachers will be as able to transform society is unrealistic. Despite this criticism, critical pedagogy offers the necessary skepticism needed to mitigate against shallow multicultural practices and visionless programs.

Critical race theory.

"Critical Theory" engendered two important transformational approaches: critical race theory and whiteness studies. Similar to critical pedagogy, critical race theory pushes for societal transformation. Sheets (2003) has stated that critical race theory "evolved from the legal scholarship of law professors of color in the late 1970s and early 1980s in response to the stalled progress of traditional civil rights litigation" (p116). Critical race theorists are activists who challenge the "conventional accounts of educational and other institutions and the social processes that occur within them" (Powers, 2007, p.154). In order to realize the promise of democracy, two central theorists, Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, asserted that race is the basis for this challenge and from the issue of race grows the issues of cross-racial relationships, class, and gender (Powers, 2007, p154).

Critical race theorists (CRT) define the status quo as the normative structure of the white world. These theorists believe this is an appropriate theory in education because

of the pervasiveness of racial inequities in public education. CRT point out that education has been structured on a master script, which erased the African-Americans' stories (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Powers (2007) has recounted the story of Angela Harris, an African-American, whose tale of law school experiences illustrates the detrimental effects of what Apple (2000) has defined as "official knowledge." Harris (1992) reported on how the law curriculum was devoid of diversity and describes the damaging effects of having her identity erased from the curriculum. As a result of Harris's (1992) and other's experiences, there have been efforts to redress wrongs. However these efforts, in the forms of policies and practices, stem from a deficit way of thinking about African-American students, because they promote making blacks the same as whites.

Moreover, critical race theorists believe that the educational system needs to be transformed from one that is race neutral, and based on a set of purportedly scientific objectives, to one that acknowledges the diversity of all races. They advocate for uncovering race neutral beliefs present in federal, state, and local educational policies and practices. Unfortunately, standards movements and NCLB reinforce the deficit model of minorities even though these reforms are trying to reduce the achievement gap.

Whiteness studies.

Critical race theorists take race to be the basis of inequity in America. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have claimed that race is more significant than class and gender in explaining the achievement gap and unequal school experiences. This assertion comes from the confluence, according to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), of race and property: property being a defining element in American society. "Whiteness" studies, an offshoot of critical race theory, draws from three tenants of critical race theory defined by Delgado

and Stefania (2001). These tenants are story-telling, narrative analysis, and the analysis of power Delgado and Stefania (2001). Whiteness theorists tell stories of oppression, and analyze the societal constructs perpetuating the monocultural concept of being white. These personal stories allow others to connect to the experiences in ways that elevate the discourse, rather than create guilt.

“Whiteness” refers to “a racial discourse, whereas the category ‘white people’ represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin color” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 119). Whiteness subsumes all white people into a monocultural entity that has inflicted violence by oppressive domination. Howard’s (1999) view doesn’t necessarily conflict with Leonardo’s, but he has asserted that “White racial identity is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon” (p. 114). Howard (1999) cited Wall (1989) and Hall (1996) in advancing his beliefs that “whiteness” is a politically and culturally created category, which is always in flux. The significant points of this view are that white people, including teachers, cannot say they are color-blind as a way to demonstrate they are not racist and do not discriminate on the basis of race. Students of color and white students benefit from a critical analysis of “whiteness” because they can uncover the detrimental effects of whiteness, and begin to transform oppressive structures.

In the beginning, whiteness studies can be characterized as dealing with the material aspects of whiteness through personal narratives. Peggy McIntosh (1990) wrote a groundbreaking essay, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, in which she revealed tacit racism in ordinary daily life. By asking the reader to reflect on the privileges that are accorded to white people in everyday life, McIntosh challenges whites to grasp our inherent privileges, and to see how racism pervades the everyday experience

of living in the United States. McIntosh focuses our attention on the material differences between white people and black or brown people. She led the way in the development of whiteness studies; her work was built upon by feminist philosophers such as Bailey (1999) and Cuomo (1999) among others.

Despite the provocative and insightful works of these whiteness studies theorists, a pervasive educational problem persists. Thompson (2004) has highlighted this problem in her example of college students taking an ethics course.

Not long ago, I heard a white anti-racist philosopher talk about a whiteness moment in one of her undergraduate classes. When someone in the audience asked her about how the black students' responded to her intervention, she said 'I don't know exactly what they thought, but I think they appreciated that I said something.' Someone asked how the white students had responded. 'I think it kind of went over their heads', she said. 'Did you come back to the issue later in the course?' she was asked. 'No,' she said. (p. 387)

Thompson's point is that many well-intentioned educators take a passive approach to teaching about whiteness. Her concerns center on whether teaching is tacitly addressed to white students, and whether there is a dichotomous approach that swings from rejecting the colorblind arguments to creating race traitors (Thompson, 2004, p. 388).

While theorists have established that whiteness is a dynamic concept, much of the work, says Thompson (2004) has been individual and static in nature. The "good whites" are motivated by a sense of duty, shame, guilt, or self-growth (Thompson, 2004). She proposes that "Thinking of anti-racist change relationally, however, may differ from thinking in terms of motives tied to a particular relationship....Thinking relationally

means focusing on how our lives are caught up together” (p.392). Howard (1999) also suggests that the project of creating equitable places to learn means that “white educators cannot travel alone on the road to authenticity and social healing” (p.116). Thinking and educating relationally, Thompson (2004) has said, means that I engage with others in ways that require us to look beyond the “maps” created by our expectations and our anti-racist development. “Failing to look past our maps, we fail to see students of color in the classroom at all, we fail to see the white students beyond the need to be fixed, and we fail to see other possible worlds” (p. 394). So, she and Howard, like the other theorists mentioned in this section on transformative multicultural education, want change and transformation. Thompson and Howard offer a path that has the potential to take the whiteness discourse from the rarified enclave of the scholarly community to the public education classrooms, because they focus on relationships in action in the classroom and the school community.

The sub-theories within the transformational perspective suggest broader implications for, what Banks (2005) identified as the processes and directions for this educational reform movement. For the purposes of this review and my research, I turn to Nieto (1999) who said

Multicultural education, and all good teaching, is about *transformation*.

I do not refer to just individual awareness but to a deep transformation on a number of levels---*individual, collective and institutional*. Each of these levels is needed to foster student learning. (p. xviii)

Multicultural professional development programs for teachers should present the material as a process of individual, collective, and institutional transformation by providing the

theoretical perspectives, the processes for self and collective reflection, and the opportunity to analyze the status quo in light of teaching and learning environments. The next phase of multicultural education as a concept is the development of cultural competency.

Cultural competency

Several theorists have developed cultural competency models for public education. Mason, Benjamin, and Lewis (1996), articulated the cultural competence continuum from miseducative and damaging practices to culturally competent practices. These authors state that this concept is not like a recipe or set of strategies, but rather “it is a quality that when applied with a sense of respect, integrity and concern for justice and equity permeates all aspects of our being” (Edgar, Patton and Day-Vines, 2002, p. 237). Edgar, et al. (2002) have said that there are five principles that serve as the foundation for cultural competency. They are “valuing diversity, conducting self-assessment, being aware of the dynamics of difference, acquiring knowledge of culture, and adapting to culture” (p. 237). Robins et al. (2006) have adopted these attributes in their book *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People who Teach*. This text is being used in the cultural competency professional development program I am studying in this research.

The prevalence of cultural competency training has been chronicled in the text, *Leading with Diversity: Cultural Competencies for Teacher Preparation and Professional Development* published by the Education Alliance at Brown University. The authors of *Leading with Diversity: Cultural Competencies for Teacher Preparation and Professional Development*, Trumbull and Pacheco (2005), have articulated the guiding

assumptions of their research. These assumptions are that learning should build on the students' and teachers' prior knowledge, that diversity should be an explicit part of the school improvement process, that the particular school context matters, and that cultural competence professional development should be ongoing. Trumbull and Pacheco (2005) have said cultural competency professional development is critical because when teachers enhance their cultural knowledge and experience success with minority populations, their self-efficacy increases and positively influences minority student participation and achievement.

In the preceding discussion, I have noted how scholars advance the notions of multicultural transformation. Examining cultural barriers that exist between teachers and students addresses one aspect of the problem. The next step is to see these differences as opportunities for growth. This step advances the critical race theory agenda by moving teachers away from seeing the students' deficits and from focusing on practices to get them to be like the dominant group, toward what Ladson-Billings (1994) has called culturally relevant practices. She explains, "Recently African-American scholars have begun to look at specific cultural strengths of African American students and the ways teachers leverage these strengths effectively to enhance academic and social achievement (p.17). This view requires cultural competence because one needs to know and understand the different culture to identify strengths. The teacher also needs to understand the "dynamics of difference" in his/her interactions with the student. Finally, the teacher and the student are being challenged to adapt to each other's culture in the process of learning.

In summary, the tolerance, transformation, and cultural competency perspectives reflect the climate of race relations and political discourse in America. These perspectives' influence on teaching and learning are evident in the ways professional development is designed and implemented. For example, professional development in the tolerance paradigm is designed to expose middle class white teachers to food, history, and art of minority cultures. Because NCLB pressures districts to make gains in minority achievement, multicultural professional development programs emphasize cultural competency. It is believed that culturally competent teachers can create and implement strategies to meet minority students' needs. In the next section of this literature review, I will present research on professional development in multicultural education.

Pre-service and In-service Research in Multicultural Education

While it has been established that professional development programs designed to address problems endemic to the growing demographic imperative are needed, further research in this area must add to the body of knowledge on multicultural education. This need exists in both pre-service and in-service settings. Since the 1980s teacher education programs have been required to provide some training in multicultural education. However, this training has been neither consistent nor widespread. The following discussion of pre-service and in-service research indicates future directions for multicultural professional development. While the focus of this research is on the multicultural professional development taking place in public schools districts, important insights can come from research of both pre-service and in-service programs.

Pre-service.

A recent reform of the teacher preparation programs in California now requires institutions of teacher education to include working with diverse students in their curriculum (Aminy & Neophytos-Richardson, 2002). In their study of one such program, Aminy and Neophytos-Richardson (2002) have supported the view that multicultural programs need to help teachers “become conscious of the prejudgments that order their lives based on their cultural traditions and past experiences” (p.6). The program sought to influence pre-service teachers to move from the tolerance standpoint to “higher levels of multicultural education and realize their shortcomings” (Aminy & Neophytos-Richardson, 2002, p1). The methods of achieving this were readings on Muslim culture, a video documentary on race, and an essay about going beyond the tolerance perspective in multicultural education. These researchers concluded that multimedia approaches to meeting this goal were effective, and that intense self-reflection, as well as group dialogue, can deepen teachers’ thinking about multicultural education issues.

Another pre-service program designed to promote cultural competency in pre-service teachers was researched by Vavus (2002a). Vavus (2002a) hypothesized that pre-service teachers’ autobiographical reflections on their identity formation as a teacher would enhance multicultural experiences and lead to an “identity-shift toward anti-racist, culturally responsive teaching” (p. 1). In addition, these researchers hypothesized that the teachers would connect this new identity to the importance of closing the minority student achievement gap. Therefore, in their pre-service training the prospective teachers were required to be involved in critical discourse on multicultural texts, lectures, and workshops. This strategy was coupled with a year-long autobiographical research project.

Some of these autobiographical experiences included writing about their family history, their K-12 schooling experiences, and their emerging identity as a teacher. Vavus (2002) concluded that the personal identity component did produce a shift in the students' thinking toward an anti-racist, culturally responsive teaching. However, only one pre-service teacher reported making the connection to closing the minority student achievement gap.

The last pre-service study, by Kitsantas and Talleyrand (2005), to be discussed in this section supports the previous studies in the definition of multicultural competency as transformation to anti-racist practices. These researchers have reported that traditional teaching strategies, such as autobiography, coursework, and field experiences, used in teacher preparation programs are successful in advancing the tolerance perspective. Unfortunately, the programs that employ these strategies have shown little gains in increasing cultural competency (Kitsantas & Talleyrand, 2005; Sleeter, 2001). Research has been conducted on the efficacy of using online resources to promote cultural competency skills (Stafford-Levy & Wiburg, 2000) with positive results. Kitsantas and Talleyrand's (2005) findings add to the body of research supporting technology use as a strategy to promote multicultural competency.

Kitsantas and Talleyrand's (2005) studied a program that used traditional methods in teaching multicultural concepts, and then provided a variety of online opportunities for teacher practice. In the professor directed instruction, the teachers engaged in role-play and gained feedback from their instructors on the implementation of their learning. The theory behind asking the pre-service teachers to continue their learning using online materials is that students need to practice their new skills independently to gain

automaticity (Kitsantas & Talleyrand, 2005). Self-reflection on the learning, implementing, and practicing processes is important. In this study, the use of online material allowed for self-reflection and promoted continued learning. The benefit of incorporating online experiences and resources into a multicultural class is to model life-long learning. Kitsantas and Talleyrand (2005) write the “use of online resources can be efficient and cost-effective since they provide boundless opportunities for learning and exposure at one’s own work or home environment” (p10).

In-service.

In-service cultural competency professional development being conducted in urban settings has sought to build on university and public school collaboration. Murrell (2006) has indicated that the demographic challenge is significant, and that teachers must gain cultural competency skills, but he has noted that meeting these challenges in urban schools is very difficult. He conducted a study of two programs to understand how schools of education can collaborate with low-performing, high-need urban schools to create new practices to address achievement challenges.

The model Murrell (2006) examined is called the Circles of Co-Practice. This partnership model between an urban university and an urban school district has been tested in two locations: Northeastern University in Boston and University of Illinois at Chicago. This program joined practicing teachers with university professors and their education students in learning in the teachers’ urban classrooms. The pre-service students worked with classroom teachers and their professors to examine literacy instruction. This cross-pollination of professional experiences, attitudes, and interests yielded rich results and future possibilities. Murrell (2006) has reported that the practicing teachers were

included in the clinical supervision of pre-service teachers. Parents and the community were involved in information sessions about the circle of co-practice. Murrell (2006) has advocated for an extension of this co-practice model by involving professors from the liberal arts and sciences. By doing this, the possibility for deep discussions on race and equity issues in the schools would be increased because teachers would learn how to engage students in reflecting on these issues in the content areas. Murrell (2006) notes one drawback to this model. It is that the Circles of co-practice program was tested in high performing schools, where the school leadership was actively supportive of the program and of multicultural issues. Circles of co-practice seek a democratic expansion the social and professional environments; achieving this in a low-performing school might be a difficult task as trust, confidence, and leadership is often low.

Carlise, Jackson, and George (2006) conducted an in-service study in Massachusetts in a low performing school. This is investigation of the Social Justice in the Schools Projects (SJES). These projects federally funded through the Massachusetts Coalition for Teacher Quality and Student Achievement, pair university faculty with low performing schools to increase student achievement and social justice practice in the schools. Carlise et al.'s (2006) study is about the SJES project implemented at the lowest performing elementary school in Massachusetts; this designation is based on standardized test scores. The researchers have described the school as having a principal with vision and commitment to reflective practice. They also found a small core of teachers who were involved in creatively adapting their curriculum and pedagogy to meet student needs.

These researchers worked with the school staff to conduct a dialogue about what they thought was working well and what needed improvement. These conversations resulted in the staff articulating areas of concern about cultural insensitivity, family involvement, multicultural awareness, and curriculum. After identifying these areas, the staff asked the researchers to provide them with information on effective social justice curricula.

The teachers adopted a social justice curriculum called Open Circle. However, the implementation of this program school-wide and over time was halted due to staff concerns about other professional development needs. Carlise et al. (2006) have described the factors, which are typical in the NCLB era that impeded the implementation. The Open Circle program provided the teachers with a framework for discussing cultural competency and social justice issues. Yet, in the face of low-test scores and other demands, the principal made the decision to eliminate professional development programs that did not focus on academics. Therefore, these researchers reported that the teachers did not feel comfortable continuing with the implementation of the curriculum. Carlise et al. (2006) concluded that it is crucial for social justice models to make overt the connections between theory, experience, and empirical evidence that the initiatives positively influence reading, math, and science student achievement.

Section Summary

The evolution of multicultural education has provided many theories and counter theories pertinent to the demographic and achievement gap challenges in public education. The lessons of whiteness studies and critical race theory need to be considered professional development programs because these concepts focus on the issues of

unequal power and property between whites and people of color. Unequal power means that people of color have had less material resources in education. Therefore the public schools serving these students are not adequate (Kozol, 2006).

The dilemma in the implementation of these theories and ideas in public education is that the current political climate dictates standards that are in opposition to questioning the status quo. Administrators and teachers are constantly asked to make choices about professional development programs that may or may not be transformational and may or may not influence the very structures that create the minority achievement gap. As dire as this seems, practitioners and researchers must find ways to make personally relevant the content of in-service professional development programs that are offered and required. The next section of this literature review presents the professional development theories and practices that can limit the teacher's quest for relevant learning, but can also promote teacher growth and change. This discussion is important, because it supports our quest to effectively marry promising multicultural education and professional development theory and practices in order to address the problems of the demographic imperative and the minority achievement gap.

Professional Development Literature: Models and Programs

Given the NCLB (2001) mandate to provide quality research-based professional development and the preceding arguments presented in the multicultural education literature review, effectively coupling these two sub-categories in education requires an understanding of best practice in professional development. Best professional development practice is transformational.

This investigation examines a cultural competency professional development program. My analysis is informed by the discourse in multicultural education and professional development. In this section of the literature review, I will present an overview of the organizing principles in K-12 professional development and the learning theories from which they stem. I will also discuss models of professional development and how they have evolved. As is evident in the multicultural studies above, self-reflection on the part of the teacher is critical to transformation and implementation of new learning. Teacher reflection is a significant element in the design of professional development programs. Current research on this component of professional development will be discussed.

Visit any school district in the nation on a designated professional development day and you will find teachers who groan and moan about the fact that they have to sit through professional development classes. Many feel, and some would be willing to state openly, that teacher professional development is a waste of time. A plethora of researchers, including Holland (2005), Cohen and Ball (1999), Borko (2004), Lieberman and Miller (1990), Guskey (1995), Corcoran (1995), and Loucks-Horsley (1990) support this anecdotal sentiment, and argue that teacher professional development is in disarray. They also claim that many professional development initiatives lack standards, curriculum coherence, implementation accountability, and connection to teacher needs. Rarely is evaluation of professional development connected to student achievement results and the aims of research-based reform. Indeed, many teachers are likely to concur with Fenstermacher and Berliner (1983) that professional development programs often

treat teachers as passive receptacles to be filled with standardized content that promotes educational fads rather than addressing local student and teacher needs.

Since the 1960s, teacher professional development has seesawed back and forth from a behaviorist perspective, which views teachers as robots to be programmed, to a cognitive perspective, which views teachers as thinkers in action (Eisner, 1998). Eisner developed creative and appropriate responses to the challenges of teaching and learning. Given the problematic dichotomy between the behaviorist and cognitive approaches and especially, United States students' mediocre performance on The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) conducted in 1995, the field of professional development has been targeted for reform.

Because of the lack of achievement on the TIMSS as compared to peers in Japan and other first world countries, the House and Senate passed Goals 2000: Educate United States Act, Title III H.R. 1804. This act recognizes the positive connection between teacher professional development and student achievement. Sprinthall, Reiman, and Theis-Sprinthall (1996) believe that by providing states with needed funding, Goals 2000 put professional development at the forefront of educational reform in public education. These efforts were extended with the passage of NCLB in 2001. However as Knapp (2003) has observed, Goals 2000 and NCLB engendered professional development programs that were costly and ungrounded in research-based reform initiatives. These legislative reforms sponsored professional development programs yielded inconclusive or obscure results and lacked accountability for gains in student achievement. As bleak as this may seem, some studies of these professional development programs illuminate characteristics of promise in professional development design.

The following professional development discussion is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on The Expert Model of professional development and the second section, Expert Model: Interactive and Reflective Professional Development, focuses on elaborations on the expert model. Each section contains subsections on the characteristics of each professional development model, the research based on these professional development models, and implications for meaningful professional development practices. Because changes in professional development stem from the expert model, The Expert Model section begins with an overview of the historical development of the model and the concerns with this model. To conclude, I address changes in professional development models that have been made and are antithetical to professional development practices that de-skill the teacher.

The Expert Model

Characteristics from the expert model imbue all of the professional development research reviewed here. The purpose of discussing the expert model and its limitations is that this model has informed district practice and professional development research for the past five decades. Moreover, because the NCLB requires that all professional development conducted in districts be scientifically research-based, the expert model continues to prevail at the current time (Borko, 2004).

Historical development of the expert model.

Scholars define the expert model as the use of experts and expert-developed materials to educate teachers about content, learning processes, and strategies. The behaviorist version of the expert model was prevalent during the 1960s and vestiges of this approach can be found in professional development practices since then. During the

1960s, the Soviet Union's presence on the moon before the United States spurred the use of content experts to develop "teacher-proof" math and science curricula. These curricula detailed instructional methods and materials on the assumption that educators could transmit information to students in standardized ways without their idiosyncratic or subjective interpretations.

Another expert design, drawn from behavioral professional development practices of the past is the process/product concept developed by Good and Brophy (1984). The concept uses the authority of experts, quantitative research methods, and claims of increased student achievement to convince school districts to adopt expert models. Expert-based professional development designers teach standardized strategies, which teachers are expected to follow faithfully, when working with students. The assumption is that by adhering precisely to such strategies, teachers will obtain the same student achievement results as researchers achieved in their studies (Sprinthall et al., 1996). On the one hand, behaviorist ideas were used to develop the materials the teachers would use and when this proved ineffective, behaviorist theories were employed to center professional development on instructional strategies, rather than materials, to be used by the teachers.

Concerns about the model.

Researchers who employed, and in the NCLB Act era still employ, the expert model as described above and use the gold standard of quantitative research design¹ to prove the effectiveness of the design, have had their results called into question. One concern with the expert model is that results are inconclusive as to the transfer of learning (Sprinthall et al., 1996). Alton-Lee (2006) has summarized Nuthall and Alton-Lee's

critique of the research on the process/product version of the expert model. These researchers identified a potential for misleading results and a lack of replication, and raised concerns about purported evidence of the linear relationship between teacher behaviors and student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2006, p. 614). Shulman (1986) and Apple (1981), who analyzed behaviorist professional development practices, have shared these concerns.

Another concern is that the behaviorist perspective views teachers as empty vessels. These vessels are to be filled with expert knowledge so that they can deposit this information to their students who are in turn viewed as empty vessels. Freire (1972) calls this the banking theory of education. Similarly, Apple (1981) has long expressed concern that the proliferation of “teacher proof” curricula and the expert model are de-skilling teachers. More recently, Apple (2001) has argued that “progressive and democratic educational constituencies [have failed] to articulate a forward looking, strategic alternative to neo-liberal governance and teacher de-skilling,” which “marks a ‘tragic absence’ in public debate and educational activism” (p. 97). Because of the lack of international competitiveness on the TIMSS and the absence of public debate about the values and purposes of education in a democratic society, the science of teaching and the expert model have re-emerged in the NCLB professional development research agenda. While professional development in this NCLB era rarely requires teachers to behave or use materials in the behaviorist ways described above, it is defined by expert-identified practices based on scientific research. Generally, current professional development providers expect teachers to embrace without question the expert ideas informing the training.

Expert model research.

Several professional development programs promote the connection between teacher training and student achievement. These programs have been the subject of studies that examine the veracity of the claims. In the following studies that I review, researchers state overtly that one of the investigation objectives was to test the direct relationship between professional development and student achievement. Guskey (1986) has supported this research focus because he believes that teachers are motivated to change their teaching methods when they see students demonstrate higher levels of learning.

In choosing the following studies, I reviewed several factors. First, I examined the impact the professional development programs have in the field based on practitioner endorsements. I also considered the opinions of researchers and policy makers when choosing the professional development studies. Then, I evaluated whether the professional development programs exemplify the expert model, and included them because they claimed to connect professional development to student achievement. The discussion begins with the most simple professional development program that exemplifies the expert model connected to student achievement. The discussion ends with the professional development programs that are more open-ended and less obviously connected to student achievement.

The first professional development program, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), is a professional development program that has been applied to a variety of content areas and grade levels. Briefly, this program involves teachers listening to students' thoughts about a process or topic and the teacher guiding the student to deeper

levels of understanding. A district in a large, urban Midwestern state used this program to improve first grade teachers' math instruction and their students' achievement in math problem solving and computation. This CGI training used experts (in this case university professors) to provide learning theory and to coach teachers on how to listen to students' thoughts about problem solving in math. The expert trainers also coached the teachers, using CGI, in how to elicit learning from their students. The researchers believe that students display a variety of approaches to problem solving in math. Thus, teachers must work to lead the child, within his/her framework of understanding, to mastery. Unlike the expert professional development models that proscribe materials and methods, this program used experts to educate teachers on students' cognitive levels and to model embedding computation in problem solving. All instructional decisions were left up to the teachers.

Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, Chi-Pang, & Loef, (1989), studied the implementation of the CGI program. This study compared student achievement in 20 classrooms where the teachers were using the CGI to students in 20 classrooms where the teachers had participated in the regular, district-sponsored professional development. The researchers were looking for differences in student achievement in computation and problem solving, student confidence levels in learning math, teacher beliefs about how children learn math, and teacher knowledge of students' abilities.

Results from this study have not unequivocally demonstrated that CGI, an expert-driven professional development program, increased student achievement. The results have indicated that the math problem-solving scores for the students who were taught by teachers trained in the CGI program were only slightly higher than the scores of the

students who were taught by teachers not trained in the CGI program. Moreover, lesson content and structure varied as CGI teachers spent more time on word problems when teaching addition and subtraction content than did the control group. However, the 40 teachers did not differ significantly in the time spent on whole class instruction, guided practice, and independent seatwork. The CGI group of teachers posed problems to students more often, and students were more likely to employ a variety of strategies to complete the math problems. Findings demonstrated that CGI teachers were able to predict the levels of achievement of their students more accurately than control group teachers did.

The CGI professional development program exemplifies the expert model because university researchers provided the teachers with the CGI training and coached them in the strategy. However, this professional development program deviates from the behaviorist version of the expert professional development model because CGI trained teachers chose how the implementation would occur. What this means is that there were more opportunities for teacher modeling of higher order thinking and more opportunities for students to learn math in ways natural to their thinking style. According to this study, while the bottom-achievement-line was inconclusive in demonstrating the superiority of the CGI professional development program, the range of variables looked at point to the positive. One reason for flat achievement findings is that the students in this district are all relatively high achieving, which limits the possibility of having statistically significant findings.

There has been a proliferation of professional development programs, like CGI, in math, reading, and writing. The generic professional development initiatives practiced in

districts across the nation are less structured instances of teacher learning and more open-ended district sponsored professional development. These programs include increasing achievement by a researched-based strategy called reading across the curriculum (Barton, 1997). Another common professional development initiative is attending professional conferences. Teams of teachers and administrators in schools wanting reform have studied the principles of the Coalition for Essential Schools. Florida Writes is a program implemented in low achieving schools to increase reading and writing achievement. I mention all of these professional development program initiatives because they have been employed frequently, and were the subject of Langer's (2000) study on professional development.

Langer (2000), who sought to discover the characteristics in teachers' professional lives that yielded high achievement in students, investigated the professional development programs just mentioned. She based her study on a sociocognitive view of learning made known by Vygotsky (1987) and Bahtkin (1981). Langer (2000) focused on how current professional development knowledge in reading and writing affects student achievement. Over five years, Langer and her research assistants examined the impact of professional development on reading and writing practices in four states, 25 school districts, and 44 middle and high school classrooms,. These schools represented diverse student bodies. Some schools had 90% African American students and others had 90–100% Caucasian students, with free and reduced lunch percentages ranging from 5% to 86%.

After interviewing teachers, students, and administrators as well as looking at student work products, Langer (2000) found that the teachers who were “beating the

[achievement] odds” cast a wide professional net. For these educators, their engagement in professional development expert model experiences affected how they taught and made curriculum decisions in three ways. First, the teachers implemented expert ideas directly and/or modified them to fit their curriculum. Second, the teachers filed them away to inform practice indirectly and/or to be used later. Third, they sometimes rejected expert model ideas that did not complement the teacher’s pedagogical or theoretical beliefs. Langer concluded that professional development redesign efforts need what Lieberman and Miller (1990) call a “culture of support.”

Most professional development designers do not consider a culture of support; rather, they design programs to fix the teacher. By contrast, Langer advocates for scholars and education professionals to look at re-culturing the setting. She found that teachers improved student achievement when they worked in nurturing settings. Langer described these settings as including coordinated efforts to improve student achievement, improvement activities that provided strong teacher agency, and teacher commitments to teaching and professional growth. These environments also included caring attitudes towards students and colleagues. In conclusion, Langer (2000) discovered that the best professional development programs are the antithesis to teacher-proof programs that de-skill the teacher. Instead, the best professional development programs aim to create a culture of intellectual energy and support as teachers design opportunities for their students’ academic and personal growth.

Districts and researchers alike want professional development programs that support teacher professional development networks and assist teachers in the implementation of expert-based practices. In the 1980s and 1990s both California and

Vermont instituted state-wide initiatives intended to support instructional change by promoting expert-based teaching practices and aligning professional development programs to subject-area frameworks, textbooks, and assessments. One of the largest reform movements in the country, generating many professional development programs is the California Mathematics Reform Initiative. California also developed the California Subject Matter Projects (CSMP) while Vermont implemented a statewide portfolio assessment system. The CSMP in California centered professional development, designed to change teachers' thinking about pedagogy in math and other subjects, on learning expert-driven material in mini-workshops and institutes. In Vermont, changes in math pedagogy were fostered in professional development programs designed to help the teacher create portfolio assessments for their students. Both states followed the expert model by asking experts, university professors, intermediary agencies and state officials, to conduct the professional development opportunities.

Pennell and Firestone (1996) collected data on the California and Vermont professional development programs in a variety of ways. They conducted interviews of state level officials, regional, and local trainers, 69 teachers and 25 administrators and observed meetings, training events, and classrooms. They examined a variety of influences on the impact of the professional development programs, including the number of years of teaching, previous in-service training experiences, and teacher beliefs about teaching and learning.

Moving outward, the researchers looked at the social factors that influenced a teacher's adoption of professional development practices. They found that teacher networks of support during and after the training positively affected implementation.

However the lack of time for training and planning, financial constraints, and administrator and parental resistance to abandoning the traditional textbook impeded implementation of new strategies. Pennell and Firestone (1996) argue that teacher beliefs, experiences, practical circumstances, and social structures significantly affect the adoption and authentic implementation of a change in instruction. They conclude that

program planners must also face the fact that change programs are not simply offering rational responses to self-evident problems; they are pursuing agendas that are likely to challenge many teachers' and administrators' and, parents' beliefs about teaching and learning. (p.73)

Thus, Pennell and Firestone (1996) have posited that attempts by governmental bodies and districts to initiate change in instructional practices to improve student achievement must address teacher agency and teacher beliefs about teaching and learning when considering adoption of professional development programs.

Four years after Pennell and Firestone's (1996) research on the California initiative, Cohen and Hill (2000) researched the effectiveness of the professional development program. Cohen and Hill (2000) conducted larger-scale research on this reform effort to improve student math achievement through the statewide implementation of professional development. During the policy implementation, they examined the relationships among instructional policy, teacher performance, reform efforts, and student achievement. They addressed such questions as, "What opportunities did the teachers have to learn? ... What content Were they taught and did teachers who reported these opportunities report a different kind of practice?" (Cohen & Hill, 2000, p. 299). Cohen and Hill queried the teachers on their opportunities to learn in the following ways:

exposure to reform ideas, knowledge of the “instruments” of the improved math curriculum, understanding of student assessments, and amount of exposure to the reform ideas and materials over time. Cohen and Hill (2000) learned that “few teachers managed to connect themselves to relatively rich learning opportunities, and most encountered the reforms in conventional settings, as day-long or less, one-shot introductions” (p. 306).

As the vital link between the policy and implementation of the policy, the teachers in this study made decisions about the implementation of the professional development program. Cohen and Hills’ (2000) qualitative data revealed that teachers do not abandon their prior teaching strategies or curriculum. Instead, teachers integrate new learning and slowly phase out their familiar teaching methods and curriculum. In light of teachers’ resistance to adopt reform practices, Cohen and Hill (2000) argued that professional development needs to be more effective at helping teachers change their beliefs about math. These researchers challenge policy makers and practitioners to ground professional development in academic content, to align professional development with reform initiatives, and to coordinate state, local, and private organizations’ efforts. In this way, districts will provide teachers with coherent professional development programs that support curriculum initiatives and assessments.

Teacher disenchantment with professional development often stems from a lack of coherence and connection to what they perceive as the curriculum. The results of the preceding study support this observation. The downfall of behaviorist-oriented professional development is that teachers were viewed as robots in the professional development process. In the previous studies, the problem is that expert knowledge was thrust upon the teachers with the assumption that they will uncritically adopt the new

ideas. There was little interplay between the teacher's knowledge and practices and new theories, and little reflection on how teacher beliefs connect to change initiatives. These studies reveal that even when expert-based reforms allow teachers' choices in training and implementation decisions, student achievement results were not significant. Therefore, further examination and refinement of what meaningful professional development is required.

Implications of these studies on promising professional development practices.

Some common implications for promising professional development practices were revealed in the discussed studies. First, none of the studies proscribed teacher-proof curricula or mechanistic methods of instruction typical of the expert model's early days. In the case of Carpenter, et al. (1989), teachers learned from experts about theories and then were free to apply their new knowledge as they deemed appropriate. While the direct positive effects on student achievement in this study were minimal, the researchers documented a change in teaching practices that reinforced higher level thinking skills and individualized instruction.

Implications from Cohen and Hill (2000) and Pennell and Firestone (1996) are that the teacher's exposure to professional development needs to be longer than the one-time sessions and needs be aligned to curriculum and assessments. In addition, these researchers indicated that teacher beliefs about student learning and content should be addressed in the professional development program, because teachers' background knowledge affects their implementation of the new learning. Policy makers, professional development designers, and others using expert knowledge should not assume teachers will abandon prior practices and supplant them with new ways.

In keeping with the notion that the teachers are not empty vessels and teacher agency is a vital component to the success of professional development learning, Langer (2000) demonstrated that the teaching setting is another important factor. Her research, conducted in the most diverse settings of any of the research discussed so far, indicates that schools where professional development was successful in producing satisfactory student achievement gains and satisfied teachers featured strong teacher collaboration, caring attitudes, administrative support of professional development, and coordinated reform efforts focused on student achievement gains.

Elaborations on the Expert Model: Interactive and Reflective Professional Development

Professional developers have learned to elaborate on the initially restrictive view of the expert model, which was teacher-proof, and incorporate teacher interactive and reflective practices. The interactive professional development approach is based on the premise that what is good for student learners is also good for the adult learners. What this means is that in order to change cognitive structures and promote more complex cognitions, there needs to be active participation of the learner (Anderson, 1990, Piaget, 1972, and Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the interactive professional development variation is designed to promote active learning through collaborative and non-hierarchical relationships between experts, such as university professors, and teachers. Sparks (1995) has called this a paradigm shift from the view that the teacher is a passive recipient of professional development learning to the view that the teacher is an active participant in the learning process. Sparks (1995) has stated that this shift is based on three ideas: results driven education, systems thinking, and constructivism.

Results driven education, systems thinking, and constructivism reflect the increase in the public aspects of teaching. Results driven education is a response to lagging student achievement and international competitiveness. Test scores, graduation, and success rates in post secondary school are made public in small and large-scale ways. Systems thinking is the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (Sparks, 1995). It is the recognition of the interdependence of all the aspects of the teaching process: teachers, the school, the families, the district, and the changes in education. Finally, professional developers are called upon to create programs that embrace the notion that the teacher constructs their knowledge structures based on their experiences and the new learning. This is called interactive professional development because teachers activate their prior learning and experience and integrates their new learning with their prior experiences. Thus, the interactions help them to create new cognitive structures about teaching and learning and these interactions prompt them to discard old teaching habits that do not work.

In addition to asking teachers to construct their knowledge of the teaching and learning process through collaborative interaction with experts, colleagues, and their students, teachers need to reflect on this process. Therefore, reflective practices follow logically from interactive practices in new learning. The reflective practice movement currently taking hold in professional development programs owes its beginnings, said Sprinthall et al. (1996), to Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983).

Dewey (1933) articulated a distinction between routine action and reflective action. Routine action is taken for granted action performed within a known cultural framework. Reflective action is activity in which as one engages in the action s\he also

reflects on the theoretical framework from which the action springs. She also considers the future ramifications that result from the theory in action. Sprinthall, et al. (1996) note that this view draws upon architecture, music, and counseling by engaging students in a dialogue about their work. The purpose is to encourage teachers to be reflective about how they implement instructional practices informed by theory.

The interactive and reflective models utilize experts and expert knowledge, but in a very different way than the previously discussed behaviorist professional development design. Improvement in education is still dependent on the teachers' implementation of new learning, but the teachers' engagement process is different. These professional development models encourage self-reflection, collaboration, critique, revision, and artful implementation of professional development ideas.

Research in Interactive and Reflective Professional Development

I chose the following interactive and reflective professional development programs that have been documented to be successful. This discussion begins with a simple professional development design focused on one content area. The conversation continues with professional development programs that used expert-driven school change initiatives. I then discuss professional development that was federally funded, and conducted on a nationwide scale. Finally, I conclude with professional development programs conducted in international school settings that encompass characteristics of quality interactive and reflective practices.

The Second Chance Reading program is a professional development program that uses interactive and reflective models. Designed to address the needs of low achieving readers in the secondary grades, the Second Chance Reading program incorporates

scientifically research-based theories and best practices in reading and professional development. The teachers attend professional development workshops and meetings that offer theory and practice as well as peer coaching and reflection. The Foundation for California Early Literacy Learning (FCELL) (Swartz, Shook, & Klein, 2001) report explains that the program focuses on a desire for strong and sustained professional development for teachers. Schools that embraced the Second Chance Reading program hired a literacy coordinator to model and coach implementation of research-based reading strategies. These schools committed to five years of professional development implementation in order to ensure that all the elements of interaction, reflection and improvement could take hold and result in higher student achievement in reading. Swartz, Shook and Klein (2001) reported achievement gains in California schools that fully implemented the professional development program proscribed by Second Chance Reading.

There are positive professional development components to the Second Chance Reading programs that should be considered in any professional development programs. One is that the schools and districts committed to the program for five years. This is important to maintaining teacher commitment and implementation of the interactive and reflective practices. In addition, the districts employed a coach to assist the teachers in their understanding of the program; so again this is not a one shot or limited exposure program. The coach provides ongoing assistance to the teachers thereby ensuring effective and meaningful implementation.

Districts are adopting professional development programs to address minority student achievement gaps. The Second Chance reading program is one program among

many being adopted. The Schools Restructuring Study of the Center on Organization and Restructuring (CORS) from 1991 and 1994 gathered data on schools and districts that used expert-based interactive and reflective professional development programs to restructure their schools.

Apart from isolated professional development programs, such as Second Chance reading, these restructuring initiatives were studied to learn about the characteristics of positive professional development communities. This research is important to this discussion on professional development models and programs, because as has been discussed with the Second Chance Reading professional development program, long term results stem from sustained commitment to professional growth. In order to have a sustained commitment to professional growth, it is important to understand the characteristics of a professional development community.

Louis, Marks, and Kruse (1996) used the CORS data to choose eight elementary, middle and high schools that claimed to have made significant progress in organizational restructuring. After choosing the schools and surveying the teachers, the researchers conducted on-site visits and interviews with administrators, school stakeholders, and teachers. This mixed method study found the strongest statistical relationship between the existence of a professional community and teachers taking responsibility for student learning. The researchers established structural, human, and social resource variables to ascertain their affect on a professional school community. Structural conditions were size, staffing complexity, and scheduled planning time. Human and social conditions include feedback on instructional performance. Louis, et al. (1996) defined schools as

professional communities when they featured the following five elements: shared values, focus on student learning, collaboration, deprivatized practice, and reflective dialogue.

The schools that received the highest professional community score based on the researchers definition had the following characteristics in common. After examining data on longevity, gender, levels of schooling and teaching grades, the researchers found that elementary teachers approach inquiry and change in teaching practices in ways that more closely resemble professionalism than do middle and high school teachers. Louis, et al. (1996) also found that lower staffing complexity and common planning time serve as structural supports for the existence of a professional community. Lastly, the schools that had a high professional community score had teachers and administrators who implemented professional development to re-create their school.

This last point was derived from the researchers' report on a high school that received the highest professional community rating. Cibola High School is one of the most radically restructured schools in the study. Contributions to the school's high rating include the following: teachers and students choose to be there, the curriculum is interdisciplinary, student and teacher goals are developed collaboratively, and a common language is reinforced. All of these aspects of this school's restructuring are expert-based ideas and derived from professional development experiences. However, in this school there is a high level of collaboration and teacher control in implementation and in reflection on the effectiveness of the professional development programs.

The promotion of cutting-edge professional development in math and science for the purpose of successful implementation in math and science classrooms was the focus of the resource-rich Eisenhower Professional Development Program. This federally

funded program represents the U.S. government's largest expenditure on the development of knowledge and skills in teaching math and science across the country. The Eisenhower professional development program exemplifies the interactive and reflective expert models. The professional development program mandates the following elements: curriculum alignment to federal and state standards, peer coaching and reflection on practice, continuous improvement efforts that include conducting teacher needs assessments, establishing indicators, and performing evaluations. Guskey (2006) has concurred that structured evaluations of programs generate continuous improvement because they are reflective.

Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet and Yoon (2002) researched the implementation and management of this professional development in districts nationwide. The researchers surveyed Eisenhower coordinators in 400 districts, receiving responses back from 88% of the participants. In a statistical analysis of the data, Desimone et al. (2002) examined patterns related to poverty level and district size. They used measures of management and implementation to assess alignment of the professional development to district and state standards, coordination of funding, continuous improvement, district level planning, and teacher involvement in planning. Their findings suggest that high quality professional development includes many of the characteristics mandated in this professional development program. These are alignment of the professional development to district and state standards, coordination of funding, continuous improvement, teacher needs assessment, and involvement in planning and reflective evaluation. They have suggested that policies developed on the state and local levels might support these

elements in professional development programs to ensure effective management and implementation of the professional development program.

In the previous discussion, I described professional development programs conducted in the United States and outline promising practices gleaned from research on these professional development programs. Next, I look to professional development programs of promise in Holland, China, Japan, and Malta.

The example from Holland is an innovative way to combine pre-service and professional development education. The Amsterdam Model, a program at the University of Amsterdam Graduate School of Teaching and Learning, examined issues of collaboration and reflection. Since 1988, the university and secondary schools have shared courses and supervision of teacher education. In an analysis of this program, the university faculty had several concerns, including the prevalence of the expert model in the schools and the lack of time for dialogue and reflection. To remedy this situation and to meet the professional development needs of the secondary school teachers, the University of Amsterdam decided to transfer the teacher education program to the public schools.

School officials from one secondary school, the Amstellyceum, with a high percentage of minority students (90%), were looking for new teaching approaches for their veteran educators. An education-training-development group known as the O3, which included graduate students, teacher mentors, university tutors and the deputy principal, met once every four weeks. The Amstellyceum staff invited the graduate students to act like teachers, and to reflect on activities and experiences as they put innovative plans into practice.

This professional development and pre-service program was the subject of Ten Dam and Blom's (2006) research. Ten Dam and Blom (2006) hypothesized that a collaborative school-based teacher education program would foster a sense of professionalism and voice in prospective teachers, and would provide more meaningful professional development for veteran teachers. Researchers' data collection methods included reports by the students, semi-structured questionnaires, and group interviews.

Results from Ten Dam and Blom's (2006) study demonstrated that while the graduate students reported that they did gain experience linking theory to practice and felt a part of the school, they observed limited success in getting veteran teachers involved in professional development. Moreover, graduate students said that they felt responsible for their classes and their students, but did not necessarily feel responsible for improvement of the school. Thus, Ten dam and Blom (2006) reported that the student respondents did not become members of the community as envisioned by school officials, nor did they inspire significant changes in veteran teachers' teaching practices.

This study examined efforts to inculcate reflection and collaboration between the veteran teacher and the novice. While the program was set up to diminish the differences between expert and novice roles, one reason why the results were limited may be due to the inherent hierarchical relationship between graduate students and the school staff. This factor may have hampered the development of dialogue and reflection both between the veteran and the novice and the university professors and the teachers. The University of Amsterdam's program to develop reflective teachers who buy into the culture of improvement and to develop veteran teaches who will seize this type of learning

opportunity to change practices may have been undermined by what Hargreaves (1992) has described as “contrived collegiality” versus “collaborative culture.”

This point is addressed in Hu’s (2005) discussion of the professional development of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in China. Hu (2005) has stated that due to the importance of modernization in China, English language learning has gained prominence. Hu (2005) has described current teaching practices in China as evolving from a didactic to a more constructivist approach. As this happens, Hu (2005) has stated, teachers need to move beyond harmonious relations, central to the Chinese culture, and add constructively critical relations to their job-embedded professional development. Chinese culture’s norm of valuing group needs over individual needs (Sun Yat-sen, 1953) situates this point in that culture. However, the point that constructively critical relations are important to continuous improvement is crucial to education reform in United States. Constructively critical relations among teachers are very important, as policy makers, school officials and educators examine the success of education reforms and implementation of professional learning.

The next professional development program I discuss integrates constructively critical relations among teachers. It is called Japanese lesson study. This program exemplifies a culture of support whereby teachers meet on a weekly basis to collaboratively plan, implement, evaluate, and revise lessons. It is an ongoing professional development model that continues throughout the teachers’ entire careers, integrating classroom experiences and observations with theoretical and reform efforts (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002). Teachers also frequently utilize university professors to assist, integrating experts and expert knowledge with authentic practice and

reflection. Hiebert, et al. (2002) have said that each year Japanese teachers choose a few lessons to perfect. The lesson study group then observes each other, evaluating how the teacher's lesson development meets the goals and objectives the teacher has set for him or herself

Japanese lesson study exemplifies what Elliot Eisner calls, the "Connoisseur Model." This theory and model, developed by Eisner (1979), speaks to the issue of constructively critical relations. As mentioned above, Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983) were the precursors to the reflective movement in education. Dewey's ideas permeate Eisner's work and form the framework for the connoisseur model (Eisner, 1979). Theorists who promoted the reflective movement in education drew from the arts and counseling on how to create reflective practices. Eisner, a highly regarded artist and art educator, has formulated a sophisticated view of how connoisseurship and criticism work together to inform refined evaluation in education.

Effective criticism, within the arts or in education, is not an act independent from the powers of perception. The ability to see, to perceive what is subtle, complex, and important, is its first necessary condition. The act of knowledgeable perception is, in the arts, referred to as connoisseurship. (Eisner, 1979, p. 193)

The connoisseur model has not taken hold in the U.S. due to the persistence of behaviorism in professional development programs. Because of this, there are doubts as to the Japanese lesson study's feasibility in U.S. professional development.

The feasibility of Japanese lesson study professional development program in the United States was researched by Fernandez (2002). Fernandez (2002) examined the implementation of Japanese lesson study with five teachers in the New York City public

schools. Fernandez (2002) and Chokshi and Fernandez (2004) reported on the challenges to implementing lesson study in U.S. schools. These challenges included lack of proof that this form of professional development improves student achievement, lack of deep levels of content knowledge understanding among teachers in the U. S., self-consciousness among teachers because U.S. teachers are not used to being observed by peers, and resistance from teachers, most of whom feel they all teach differently and have different philosophical beliefs.

Despite these very real barriers, Matoba and Arani (2005) presented information at a conference on comparative education in teacher training whereby they identified 70 groups in the United States engaging in lesson study as a form of professional development. They state that preliminary research demonstrates the effectiveness of lesson study. Currently, according to information supplied on the Columbia University Teacher's College website dedicated to lesson study, 27 researchers are studying lesson study in school districts across the country.

Chokshi and Fernandez (2004) have addressed remedies to the barriers they found and outline how the Japanese lesson study model embraces many of the aspects of effective professional development discussed in this review. These aspects are sustained commitment, collaboration, coherence to curriculum, focus on practice, constructive critical collegiality, research-based strategies, reflective practices, and evaluation. In short, effective lesson study exemplifies all these components because teachers are working together to synthesize theory and practice and to reflect on the implementation of their ideas in an effort to teach students.

The next two professional development research studies focus on the importance of teacher agency and reflection in education reforms. While Japanese lesson study exemplifies quality professional development characteristics, in Japan, as in the United States, government mandates can disrupt teacher agency and therefore teacher implementation of reforms. To a degree, NCLB dictates the curriculum, and therefore, professional development. In 2002 the Japanese government adopted new reforms in education (Fujita, 2000). These new reforms are ironically very similar to previous reforms in the United States. First they implemented decentralized school management; in the United States we call this site-based management (Fujita, 2000). Next they mandated a new child-centered curriculum to encourage a “zest for living.” Finally they required integrated units as a subject in the curriculum. What the Japanese government failed to do, says Mitsumo (2007), was to consider teacher experience in the implementation of these reforms. This criticism resonates throughout the professional development literature presented so far, and is at the heart of the problem with reform movements.

In an effort to ferret out the factors that contribute to teacher change, Mitsumo (2007) attended monthly meetings of the national Japanese teacher association and read teacher blogs. The teacher association, begun in the 1970s, is waning in popularity while teacher blogs have emerged as a widely used venue for the expression of teacher experience (Mitsumo, 2007). In conclusion, Mitsumo (2007) found several pertinent insights to teacher adoption of change. First, the teacher association speaks for the collective and the blog is for the individual. This is significant because any real change must be internal if it is to be authentic and self-sustaining. Second, teachers need an

anonymous space to work through their frustrations with mandated reforms. For example, the following is an excerpt from a teacher blog where the speaker is identified only as an elementary school teacher.

My school set a precise teaching plan of Integrated Study. However, this plan is different from my opinion. I shouldn't say this, but the plan is obsolete. Integrated study has been *criticised* for contributing to the academic decline because the subject just lets the students play and not study. This plan will go in this direction. It would be just play for the children. But I behave like an adult. An adult teacher follows the teaching plan. (Mitsumo, 2007, p. 103)

In later blog entries the elementary teacher has stated that s/he will do what s/he wants to do if it leads to a “zest for living” in the students. The teacher's reflections indicate his\her struggle to integrate the reforms within his\her own experiences and beliefs. The blogger's expressions, says Mitsumo (2007), represent the social interaction between the blogger and the reader, which could be anyone, including other teachers and students. This allows the blogger to benefit from a level of intimacy in communication, while at the same time, due to the blogger's anonymity, maintaining distance. The blogosphere also allows for rejection of the mandated ideas, and promotes an active processing of the changes. Mitsumo (2007) has concluded that if Japan wants an educational structure that centers the curriculum on the subjective experiences of the student, then the system must address teacher experience and actions in re-making the curriculum.

Another study on reflective practice comes from Malta. Attard (2007) has conducted an autoethnographic research of his learning as a novice teacher. For 30

months Attard recorded his reflections on his everyday life as a teacher. He discovered several germane points to the discussion of teacher change and growth. One important discovery he made is that he developed “a *comfort zone* comprising habitual routines where I did not have to think about my practice” (Attard, p. 150). While habitual routines can be a matter of survival for a teacher, especially a novice teacher, Attard (2007) has asserted that “tacit knowledge and routine action lead us away from the need to improve” (p.150). His observation supports other researchers’ (Sparks, 2002 and Coburn, 2003) beliefs that assumptions predict practice and a change in assumptions can lead to a change in practice.

Another significant insight Attard (2007) made has to do with the role the teacher needs to play in professional development for the learning to take place.

Learning should be directly relevant to teachers’ needs if it is to promote change to professional practice. ...However, when learning does not appear to be immediately relevant, is highly abstract, or is perceived as being far away from the realities I face as a teacher, it is either ignored or just accommodated within my comfort zone and it rarely challenges habitual routines. (Attard, 2007, p. 154)

This sentiment is echoed by teachers from different cultures and experiences. This insight, coupled with the conclusion that Attard (2007) has made that self-reflection corrects habits developed as over-learning, supports my findings discussed in the next chapter.

Implications of these Studies on Promising Professional Development Practice

Judging from the research, interactive and reflective models of professional development meet teacher needs more effectively, as teachers are reluctant to embrace professional development programs that do not allow for teacher participation in the process, that do not focus on teaching and learning, and that do not encourage social interaction during implementation. Therefore, behaviorist professional development will not realize its potential because teachers are real decision-makers and not mindless robots to be programmed. States, districts, principals and other administrators can choose a program, but they risk wasting time and money if they do not allow for teacher involvement and if they adopt perceived “teacher-proof” programs.

Section Summary

I began this review with a professional development anecdote of teacher disenchantment and a question: what does meaningful professional development look like? A startling finding from Rosenblatt’s (2004) large-scale international study on teacher’s attitudes toward change initiatives was that American teachers indicated a significant negative relationship between skill flexibility and professional development. Rosenblatt (2004) defined skill flexibility as “the educator’s ability to acquire and use skills that are relevant to changing pedagogical and administrative demands, generated by technological developments, and the implementation of social reforms” (p. 2). This finding supports Attard (2007) and means that, while teachers may sit through professional development programs like polite, passive vessels, they do not adopt the learning unless it speaks to their needs, experiences, and cognitive structures. This message is embedded in the lack of success of behaviorist expert models and in the

motivation to promote interactive and reflective qualities in professional development programs.

The studies discussed in this literature review demonstrate the need for policy makers and administrators to place the teacher at the center of any professional development effort. Instead of taking the teacher out of the equation, as the behaviorist-inspired expert model programs did, professional development initiatives must acknowledge teachers as the essential decision-makers in the change process.

Professional development efforts are much more likely to make a difference when teacher agency is high, structural concerns, such as teacher load and common planning time are attended to, when professional development is connected to curriculum and assessment, and when there is a culture of support.

Chapter Summary

The professional development topic, cultural competency, is significant because it addresses an important district, state, and federal problems: the minority achievement gap and the demographic imperative. The two literature reviews presented here are central to understanding the significance of the respondents' data about RCSD's cultural competency professional development program designed to address these problems. All RCSD middle and high school teachers were required to participate in this professional development program in order to better understand how cultural competency is defined, and how to improve their culturally responsive teaching. Yet, the problems outlined in these two areas of inquiry, multicultural education and professional development, provide reasons for the failure of this program to affect change in teaching practices or teacher attitudes.

Key concepts in multicultural education and professional development literature are change, community, transformation, passivity and agency. In both areas of inquiry scholars discuss the need for change agents who question the status quo in race relations and in institutionalized education structures. I quoted Nieto (1999) who said that deep transformation is needed on the individual, collective, and institutional levels for student learning to improve. This multicultural view is supported in the professional development literature I presented on Langer's (2000) and others works on the importance of a culture of support to teaching learning and enhanced student achievement. As the reader will learn, a cultural of support--which includes the individual, collective, and institutional--for intellectual activity, emerged from the data as an important theme. The failure of this professional development program for these respondents was due, in part, to the lack of a supportive culture, in the expanded sense, and a lack of teacher agency.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Methods

How they frame diversity and inequality results from their own experiences within particular racial, gender and class locations.

Christine E. Sleeter, *Resisting Racial Awareness: How Teachers Understand the Social Order from their Racial, Gender, and Social Class Locations*, p.260

Qualitative methodology has its beginnings in anthropology and sociology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Methodology differs from methods in that methodology is the framework for interpreting events based on ideas, experiences, and social reality. Methodology is the global perspective the researcher takes in observing and interpreting data; methods are procedural. Researchers such as Burawoy (1991) and others define methods as a "link between technique and theory" (p. 271).

I divided this chapter into two sections: methodology and methods. In the methodology section I will discuss the methodological framework informing my research. In the methods section I explain the methods of data collection and procedures for gathering four kinds of data: observation data, individual and group interview data, and document data. I divided the methods section into four subsections: participant selection, background respondent and researcher respondent relationships, classroom observation, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, document data, and data analysis.

Methodology

Ethnography and participant research informs this qualitative methodological framework. Participant research is an important aspect of my methodology because I am

investigating a cultural competency professional development program in which I was a contributor as well as a participant. My research process was to collaborate with my respondents in the inquiry process to improve the RCSD professional development process (Miller and Crabtree, 2005).

I chose ethnography because “ethnography must present a sociocultural interpretation of the data” (Merriam, 2002, p. 9). Districts and schools are places of converging cultures. They require research that uncovers the existing social systems that advance growth and/or create problems. Critics of social science research, such as ethnographies, argue that qualitative researchers cannot package narratives into neat formulas, theories, and generalizations (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Yet, when the narrative is “thick and hard to summarize,” the researcher may have uncovered a “rich problematic” says Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 84). Thick, rich descriptions are the substance of qualitative research. As a participant researcher, I provided a sociocultural analysis of the data that demonstrates the multiple factors complicating teacher growth. I also took a reflexive stance (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) toward interpretations. As I argue for sociocultural interpretations of the respondents’ data, I will provide personal contexts informing the analysis.

My role as participant researcher influenced the methodology in several ways. Since I was a participant in the development, delivery, and experience of the professional development program, I was able to provide thick and rich descriptions of the professional development process. Being a participant researcher also afforded me a focused view on the phenomena, defined as the teachers’ engagement with the cultural competency professional development program. Flyvberg (2001) has said

the minutiae, practices, and concrete cases, which lie at the heart of research are seen in their proper contexts; both the small, the local context, which gives phenomena their immediate meaning and the larger, international and global context in which phenomena can be appreciated for their general and conceptual significance. (p139)

He calls this a new kind of sociology, where the researcher stays close to the phenomena to develop seeing and knowing based on multiple perspectives (Flyvberg, 2001).

The rationale for drawing from a sociocultural methodology, grounded in participant research methods, stemmed from the type of analysis I wanted to conduct. In order to understand how multiple perspectives affect teachers and their work with students, I immersed myself in the cultural competency professional development program. I developed an understanding of how the individual respondents' cultures as well as the district and schools' cultures affect teachers' professional growth. One perspective I wanted to explore was how the urgency of reducing the achievement gap fuels district and teacher stress and influences how the teachers receive the professional development program. Troman (2000), an investigator of teacher stress in a low trust society, has supported using ethnographic methodology. He says

Ethnography is a key research strategy in such historic times of change. It provides a window into the practical realities of peoples' work and lives. It shows the constraints and contradictions that they face and reveals the way they respond to large-scale social changes....It confirms again, that great reform, dynamics and people's responses to them must be analyzed contextually to show the localized effects of specific histories, institutional

practices and cultures. (p. 333)

Feminist methodology also informed my methodology for understanding the meaning and influence of the cultural competency professional development program within the multiple contexts of the teachers' lives. Bloom (1998) has explained the interpersonal and reciprocal qualities of the participant-researcher relationship in feminist methodology. Feminist methodology breaks down the one-way hierarchical framework of traditional interviewing techniques. In the interviews, both the researcher and the respondent reveal themselves and reflect on their disclosures.

In this qualitative study, I interviewed five teachers who completed the cultural competency professional development program in the spring of 2006. As a participant researcher, I tried to maintain a non-hierarchical stance toward the respondents during our interviews. As part of our dialogue, I shared my thoughts and feelings about the cultural competency professional development program, district professional development programs in general, and the cultures of the RCSD district and FDR middle school.

As I have presented in this discussion, qualitative research and ethnographic methodology focuses on multiple perspectives (Atkinson, 1990). In the data analysis process, developing an integrated understanding of the whole, or the global significance of the data, requires the researcher to make comparisons of different participants, comparisons of the same event by different people, and comparisons among the different data gathering methods (Vogt, 2002). These comparisons facilitate analysis of contradictions and varying perspectives. I agree with Vogt (2002) that "comparison of multiple perspectives and data derived from different methods are likely to reveal

contradictions and make multiple interpretations possible” (p.40). Vogt (2002) goes on to say comparison is a standard part of ethnographic methodology in data analysis. In this study, I chose teachers of different subjects, years of teaching experience, ages, and levels of education. Comparisons between and among the respondents and to my experiences allowed me to develop an array of interpretations on the ways the cultural competency professional development program affected the teachers.

Methods

In this section I describe the research methods I used to investigate the topic of cultural competency. The research question this qualitative study explored is how teachers made meaning of a cultural competency professional development program one year after the implementation of the program. I used four methods of data collection: first, one observation of each teacher’s classroom; second, one individual interview with each respondent; third one focus group interview with all the respondents; and fourth, website document data.

During the data collection, I used a recursive process as defined by Siedel (1998). He has said that during the process of noticing things, collecting things, and thinking about things one part can point the researcher back to another part. He also has quoted Agar (1991) who said “that critical way of seeing, in my experience at least, comes out of numerous cycles through a little bit of data, massive amounts of thinking about the data and slippery things like intuition and serendipity” (p.193). In the following discussion, I explain the procedures used to collect the observation, interview, and document data. The subsections are in the following order: participant selection, background respondent

and researcher respondent relationships, classroom observation, in-depth interviews, focus group interview, document data, and data analysis.

Participant Selection

The participant selection process began in December of 2006 with my proposal to the district to conduct research and my communication with various district administrators regarding the scope of the project. Before embarking on the respondent selection process, I obtained permission from the RCSD Assessment Department to conduct research; this occurred in the winter of 2006. Then I met with the principals at the two middle schools where my respondents were teaching to obtain permission to observe and interview my respondents in their schools. I told district officials that the state, the city, the district, and all the respondents would be assigned a pseudonym.

My next step was to ask for five teacher volunteers; I sent an e-mail to the principals asking for volunteers and they forwarded the e-mail to the staff. I sought respondents who were white, middle class, and female in order to address the “demographic imperative.” Researchers, (Ladson-Billings, 1999a, Hodgkinson, 2002), have defined the “demographic imperative” as the variance between a growing minority student population and a predominantly white, female, and middle class teaching force.

My research desire for uniformity in race and class notwithstanding, I sought respondents with diverse teaching experiences. I asked for novice and veteran teacher volunteers from two middle schools in the district, who completed the cultural competency professional development program, and who used the website as part of the professional development process. I selected teachers from the core disciplines of reading, math, and science, because implications for the way these teachers understood

the professional development program might shed light on ways to reduce the achievement gap in these high stakes content areas. This last desire echoes what Carlise et al. (2006) have said is necessary in promoting social justice in the schools. They concluded that social justice programs must make overt connections to minority student achievement in reading, math, and science to maintain administrator and teacher acceptance of social justice professional development programs and curricular initiatives.

As I have explained, I deliberately chose a group of five white female middle school teachers with diverse teaching backgrounds, because this would provide for rich comparisons and thick descriptions of the data on the cultural competency professional development program. Again, due to the growing dichotomy between the race and class of the teachers and the race and class of the students currently in these middle schools and in schools in the future, I wanted to examine the impact of this professional development program with the population of teachers most likely to be targeted for this type of professional development. The RCSD teaching force is over 90% white, middle class and female. According to district demographic reports published on October 1, 2007, 40% of the RCSD PK – 12 student body are minorities. This statistic supports Hodgkinson's (2002) claim that by 2020 95% of classroom teachers will be white, middle class, and female and over 50% of the public school student body will differ from the teaching staff in social class, race, ethnicity, and religion.

I chose respondents from two different middle schools. FDR middle school serves ethnically diverse students the majority of whom come from low-socioeconomic households. Proctor middle school serves a predominantly homogenous population of students with a much smaller percentage of low socioeconomic households. The fact that

the respondents were from two different middle schools allowed me to compare and contrast the implementation of the cultural competency professional development program in each school. I also compared and contrasted respondent perspectives on professional development, their students, and the achievement gap based on the context of the middle school where they worked.

Having these criteria and being a participant researcher presented problems with regard to the participant selection. Many of the teachers in the two schools I chose did not complete all parts of the training, so this limited the number of potential volunteers. A couple teachers from both schools, whom I knew, volunteered. To gain the diverse teacher experiences desired, I asked those volunteers to find teachers in the other subject areas and with varying degrees of experience. At Proctor middle school, Esther, the sixth grade science teacher, recruited two other teachers from her team.

Backgrounds of Respondents and Researcher Respondent Relationships

In this section I describe respondents' backgrounds and my relationships with these five respondents. Some of them I knew well and others not all: my disclosures provide a context for the interviews and subsequent data analysis. The following table illustrates what schools the respondents work at, what subject they teach, and how long they have been teaching. I included myself in the table as researcher, but also as a teacher who participated in the cultural competency professional development program along with the other teachers at FDR middle school.

Table 1

The respondents and researcher

FDR Middle School	Proctor Middle School
Mary, first year 7 th grade science teacher	Christine, first year 6 th grade math teacher
Grace, veteran 8 th grade math teacher	Babs, fifth year 6 th grade language arts teacher
Judy, (researcher) veteran 8 th grade reading teacher	Esther, veteran 6 th grade science teacher

I have served as a Title I reading teacher at FDR middle school since 2005. As a member of the eighth grade team, I co-taught reading language arts. Grace was the team leader and FDR union representative. While we did not socialize outside of work, we developed a close relationship due to the toxic conditions in the building when I began in 2005. Because of the dysfunctional district and building leadership, I clashed with the principal and sought Grace's advice on issues and her presence in meetings with the administrative team. Mary, the novice science teacher, also started teaching at FDR in 2005. She experienced troubles in her first year and I served as her informal mentor. I appreciated Mary because she was very honest and open about her teaching efforts and her ideas. There was also a kinship between us because she is a feminist and was able to understand some of the anti-feminist practices in the RCSD. I respected her journey from poverty to teaching science at FDR. I also developed great respect for Grace because she has had significant person life challenges and has remained a vital and committed teacher

and mother. Her leadership style is different than mine, but we worked collaboratively to solve some of the problems in our building.

In my interviews with Grace and Mary, there was a relaxed familiarity in the context of the interview. Mary had resigned from the school district and was moving the Russia to teach in an American school there. What I like about Mary was that she is not afraid to express her feelings honestly, and this characteristic was present in our interview. Grace and I interviewed at a restaurant at the end of a relatively positive school year. Since we have had conversations about poverty and cultural conflicts in the building, I believe there was communication shorthand. Grace referred to herself as not a word person and tended not to go into great detail regarding circumstances. I think that this meant that I did not probe her as rigorously. This might also be due to the fact that many of the circumstances we discussed we participated in together.

Unlike my relationships with Grace and Mary, my associations with the respondents from Proctor middle school were minimal. After gaining the principal's permission to seek respondents at that location, I had difficulty. So, I asked an acquaintance to assist me: Esther lives in the town where I live and our sons were friends in elementary school. At the time of this investigation, our sons were in high school and had grown apart. I have always liked Esther because she is a humble person and committed to diversity. She adopted two children from Thailand. I supported her during a difficult time several years before this study took place.

After contacting Esther through the district e-mail, she agreed to assist me in getting two more respondents from Proctor. Prior to this study I had no exposure to or personal knowledge of Babs or Christine. Christine was a first year math teacher at

Proctor. While Babs was a language arts teacher with five years of experience in the RCSD and may have been at meetings where I was also present, the RCSD department reading/language arts meetings were large and teachers sat by schools. Christine was my first interviewee and I think both she and I were nervous. Generally due to my many experiences being in professional situations where I am meeting new people, I do not get nervous. My nervousness in this instance was due to being a new researcher. I believe she was nervous about meeting me, about the process, and about the fact that she had not completed aspects of the training that I thought she had finished. My interview with Babs was my second interview. After the initial stiffness of first meeting, we both were sharing personal and professional stories in relaxed conversation. Hers was the longest interview I conducted. Babs seemed to be a serious and confident teacher and was a teacher leader in her building.

Classroom Observation

Many teachers take great pride in the instructional spaces that they create for their students. Their classrooms can reveal evidence of their new learning, as well as instructional decision-making in the forms of posters, vocabulary lists, desk arrangements, and other visual details. The purpose of conducting one classroom observation of each teacher was to provide a snapshot of the teachers' implementation of professional development learning, philosophies of teaching, and other visual evidence pertaining to issues of diversity. Erickson (1984) said that "as an ethnographer I have an obligation to have *been there*" (p. 61). This means immersing oneself in the total environment in order to develop a rich understanding of the context. Brown (2005) concurred that school ethnography must involve a rich description of the setting.

This observation took place before the in-depth interview, but did not take place during teaching times. Since this was an interview study, not a long term ethnographic investigation, my goal for the observation was to document the physical context of the five respondents' work environments. I chose not to conduct the observation during teaching times because I believed that I would have posed an intrusive element in the class, which would have led to less authentic observations of the physical environment. From my personal experience teaching, I know that teachers tend to perform when observations are planned. It would have been distracting to me, the students, and the teacher, to be investigating the physical environment during teaching time. During the observation, I looked for evidence of the incorporation of diversity in the room organization, in the display of visual materials, and in the instructional materials available to the students.

In-Depth Interviews

I conducted one semi-structured, in-depth interview with each of the five teachers. In-depth interviews are defined by Taylor and Bogdan (1998) as “face to face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations expressed in their own words” (p.88). The selection of the in-depth interview as a method for this study allowed me to learn, in the respondents’ own words, how they understood the cultural competency professional development program content and activities. They described their utilization of new learning. The research questions (listed in Appendix A) served to initiate my conversations with the respondents.

I conducted the interviews in the Proctor teachers' classrooms. I conducted Mary and Grace's interviews off campus. After each interview, I first listened to the audiotape of the interview, and developed ways to improve the interview process and to refine the content of the questions. Refining the questions for future interviews helped me more accurately investigate the cultural competency professional development program, and its affect on the teachers' lives. Second, after reviewing each interview I began to develop a set of questions used in the focus group interview discussed next in this chapter. Third, I transcribed all the interviews verbatim.

Focus Group Interview

The unstructured focus group interview took place on the last day of the 2006 – 2007 school year and after all the individual, in-depth interviews, and classroom observations. For the focus group interview, I developed questions (see Appendix B) based on an analysis of the classroom observations and individual interviews. Because I wanted to emphasize my role as a colleague, rather than researcher during the focus group interview, I began the conversation by posing questions and then allowed the respondents to lead the discussion. As the dialogue continued, I asked other questions when appropriate to clarify an issue.

Unstructured interviews are the most like a conversation and occur most often in participant observation where the researcher is in the field (Esterberg, 2002).

Spontaneous in nature, unstructured interview data arise out of the work and experiences of the researcher and the respondents. I videotaped this interview and refrained from taking notes during this interview. The video camera was on a tripod about six feet from the respondents. I was partially visible and the five respondents were fully visible.

Again, the purposes in videotaping this interview were to provide audio and visual data for transcribing later and to reinforce my role as participant rather than “the researcher.”

Document Data

The use of personal documents has a storied history in social science research. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) recount the importance of this method stemming back to the prolific days of the Chicago school. I collected document data electronically by gathering the teachers’ reflections that they submitted to the website, multicultural.riverdale.org. This website, discussed earlier, complemented the goals and perspectives of the cultural competency training. Participation in the website activities was voluntary. Teachers commented on their immigrant roots, their cultural values, their hidden biases, immigration today, the role of poverty, and teaching and achievement. These personal expressions are valuable, because they are evidence of the respondents’ feelings on the issues of cultural competency and involvement with the content of the professional development program. I used the document data in conjunction with the observation and interview data sets to provide for data triangulation.

Data Analysis

Patton’s (2002) view “Concrete types like to get a physical feel for the data,” applies to me. Marshall and Rossman (2006) have discussed the efficacy of color coding qualitative research data. I used color-coding as the main procedure in data analysis.

After collecting the four data sets from each of the five respondents, I arranged the data by individual. I analyzed each respondent’s data from the four sets to gain a clearer picture of the individual teacher. I highlighted the themes and issues that emerged from each teacher’s perceptions of the cultural competency professional development

program. For example the theme of accountability permeated Mary, Christine, and Babs' data. Within that theme, there were subthemes related to a lack of accountability by the principal and the overuse of paper-pushing accountability measures by the other principal. Next, I re-read the respondents interviews, and made a list of the themes and subthemes among all of them. Some of the examples of these issues were accountability, lack of agency in the decision-making process, personal events inhibiting the ability to meet the program's expectations. After analyzing these subthemes, I grouped them into the larger themes such as personal stories, multicultural education, and professional development. These larger themes were chosen because they emerged from all the data. I coded each comment with a dot: yellow for personal stories, green for multicultural education, and red for professional development. After coding them with a dot to the side of the text, I then wrote the subtheme on the dot. I created a colored text of each of the respondent's data and went through each respondent's data sets and cut and pasted their data into a new document entitled by the theme. So for professional development, I had quotations from each respondent indicated by their color and organized by subtheme. An example of the merged data in response to my question, "Describe the implementation of the cultural competency professional development program?" is in Appendix C.

This process allowed me to analyze and refine further the sub-themes in each of the main categories: professional development, multicultural understanding, and personal stories. Multicultural understanding has the sub-categories of whiteness, race and poverty, and poverty. Professional development has four sub categories: process, motivation, adopters/non-adopters, and accountability. The third theme is personal stories, which encompasses educational experiences, personal life issues, and reflections

on teaching. Again, these themes and subthemes emerged from the respondents' discussions in the interviews and from their responses to my questions about how and if they made meaning of this professional development program.

Chapter Summary

These data collection methods and procedures facilitated a collection of teacher voices on these topics, which provided ample evidence to analyze the sociocultural aspects of the cultural competency professional development program. The conceptual frameworks outlined in the literature review served to frame my process of data analysis. I analyzed issues of power and denial of alternative truths, which are central to the understanding of how the institutions of school, such as professional development programs, influence teachers.

The methodology and methods employed in this investigation speak to the emerging issues in multicultural education and professional development. As I have learned, engaging in relational ways about race requires us to focus on individual teachers and students. Professional development programs designed to promote deeper understanding of diverse cultures with the hopes of improving achievement cannot take a deficit approach to teachers and students. Teachers are more likely to develop deep understanding and commitment to change agendas, if their prior experiences, professional needs, and personal agency are considered.

CHAPTER 4

“Science is one of those fields that is very colorblind”: Middle Class Musings on Race, and Poverty

Specifically, culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These cultural referents are not merely vehicles for bridging or explaining the dominant culture; they are aspects of the curriculum in their own right.

Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers*, p76.

In the previous chapter I explained some of the central debates occurring in multicultural education and professional development. The issues in these debates, such as tolerance versus transformation in multicultural education and teacher agency and change in professional development, generated the respondents’ resistance to and rejection of this professional development program.

In this chapter I will discuss how five middle school teachers understood the mandated cultural competency professional development program they attended, and how they viewed issues of diversity in their own lives and in the schools where they teach. The district professional developers wanted to increase teachers' cultural competency, a deeply experiential topic, in RCSD middle and high school teachers. The professional developers' rationale for this professional development program on cultural competency was derived from their distress with minority students’ low achievement scores and the placement of all the RCSD middle and high schools on the United States Department Education’s SINA list. I argue that emancipatory notions of teacher as a learner are at odds with the way this Midwestern urban district chose to implement the cultural competency professional development program. The problems with the way the

respondents made, or did not make meaning from this professional development program emanated from their personal background and attitudes. Additionally, their personal backgrounds deeply influenced their levels of resistance and rejection of the program.

In this chapter, I present three themes that emerged from the respondent data. The first theme focuses on their personal beliefs about and experiences with multicultural education. I analyze how the respondents' previous training in multicultural education and their personal backgrounds influenced their understanding of the cultural competency professional development program. The second theme that emerged from the data was the respondents' views on race and poverty. In this section, I will examine the teachers' levels of understanding about how these two issues are intertwined. The final theme is that emerged was the respondents' feelings about the role poverty plays in the lives of their students. This final theme dominated the respondent data.

This chapter addresses the respondents' personal stories that emerged during the interviews, which influenced the respondents' receptivity to the content of this professional development program. I divide this chapter into three sections. The first section, *The Respondents' Personal Stories and Previous Training in Multicultural Education*, explores how the respondents' personal lives influenced their willingness and abilities to make meaning of this professional development program. The next section, *Race and Poverty: Varying Degrees of Respondent Myopia and Whiteness Theory*, interrogates the teachers' levels of understanding about these difficult issues and offers interpretations within the context of the literature on race and poverty in education. In the final section, *Pervasiveness of Poverty and the Problem of Ruby Payne*, I analyze the respondents' data on the topic of poverty and the problems with the districts' use of Ruby

Payne's approach to professional development programs on the topic of poverty. In this section I will explore the respondents' representations of this problem in education, and their understanding of how their personal views of poverty affect the way they teach. I will also analyze the lessons of Ruby Payne because she is the most widely known thinker on this topic.

The Respondent's Personal Stories and Previous Training in Multicultural Education

As I have previously noted, multicultural education had not been a central component in the respondents' teacher education programs. I begin this discussion with Grace, the veteran FDR middle school math teacher. During her years at the state university known for its teacher education program Grace stated that she did not have undergraduate training in multicultural education. Yet she did study multicultural education at a state education agency after graduating from university in the late 1980s.

[I took a] class through the district where one that I am thinking in particular was about the Hispanic community. [Hispanics believe] family comes first. If the family needs the kid to be at home to be an interpreter or a sitter, that comes before school. [We learned] about how priorities that we have as white middle class educators differ from what the kids might be coming from because that is what the family prioritizes. I would not think of keeping my child home from school for something I needed to do. I would schedule it outside of school time, or I would figure out a way to do it without involving them.

The dilemma she describes and her solution versus the Hispanic parent's solution is one that the families at FDR face. As Grace's colleague, I know she is responsive to these situations in her classes. However, while Grace understands and has had previous training

in cultural competency issues, I have witnessed her reluctance to engage members of the grade level team--she served as team leader--to understand cultural differences in problem-solving and culturally responsive teacher practices.

For example, another eighth grade teacher on the team will not allow make-up work for unexcused absences. In addition, students who stay home to interpret or to take care of younger siblings often end up on the social worker's caseload for unexcused absences. If there are too many absences, then the family must go to truancy court. This experience can be very intimidating for Hispanic families who have family members who may not be legal. Undocumented status and language barriers create significant problems for these students and their families, yet schools do not consider changing institutional practices that put a wedge between the school and minority student. As a union representative and team leader, Grace, using her understanding of Hispanic families, could garner support for changes in district and school policies, but institutionalized practices inhibit her leadership and circumscribe her leadership capacity.

There is another factor inhibiting Grace's leadership abilities. It is personal. In her adult life, Grace has experienced the stress and injustice that living in poverty can inflict. In the 1990s, her husband was accused and convicted of five counts of sexual abuse of a minor. Both she and he claim that he was and is innocent. However, for five years, while he was in jail (his sentenced was reduced by five years for good behavior), she was a single mother. During this time, she and her husband experienced the ugly side of the criminal justice system firsthand, which punishes convicts by impeding opportunities for their children to interact with their fathers. In addition, due to her husband's unwillingness to admit guilt, her family has been, and continues to be punished

emotionally and financially. He cannot work due to the rigid limitations that come from being on the sex offender registry. Companies have hired him, but then fire him when they learn, through state reporting mechanisms, that he is on the sex offender registry. As a result, Grace is the sole breadwinner in the family and so cannot take risks that might harm her earning potential. Weighing in on issues of race, poverty, social justice, and change in teaching practices and district policies is very risky in the bureaucratic, high stakes environment of public education in an urban district.

Mary, Grace's novice colleague, graduated with a Master's degree in Education in 2004. What is curious about Mary is that as a college-educated science teacher with a Master's degree from a private, local university, she was unfamiliar with the transformative and social justice views in education. She said she took one course on multicultural education in graduate school. Her description of the course suggests it was a heroes and holidays--tolerance oriented class. When I asked her about her undergraduate work, she replied,

If anything it wasn't apparent necessarily, but my university is pretty white.

Science is one of those fields that is very colorblind. It [the discipline of science] doesn't care what culture you came from. It doesn't need your cultural background to be good at science. We had the Asian students, the African students because the university does pull in some foreign exchange students.

In this discussion about multicultural education in her undergraduate program, Mary provided a superficial observation of diversity: the presence or absence of minorities.

Mary expresses confusion in her statement regarding science being colorblind. She seems to operate from the assumption that science is objective. While debating the

objective nature of science is not in the scope of this paper, Kuhn (1970) published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* that began a serious debate on this issue. Mary states that people from any cultures can “do” science, because it is objective and unlike the arts and humanities, the discipline of science has no canon debates. Her view about the objectivity of science is a problem because one aspect of transformative multiculturalism is validating the contributions of minority cultures in academic disciplines, which certainly applies to the efforts in science.

What transformative multicultural theories promote is the analysis of how minority voices have been silenced from the dialogues within the disciplines in all intellectual human history. The task of professors and teachers is to teach contributions from minority cultures. These contributions must be an integral part of any academic curriculum and must be used as an opportunity to cast a critical eye on the dominant intellectual paradigms that are perpetuated by the majority cultures. Mary’s comments reveal that she lacks knowledge about how no academic discipline is “color blind.” After six years of post secondary education, the institution of higher education she attended did not prepare her to understand and to reflect on a myriad of multicultural issues such as power, race, and injustice as part of the science curriculum.

While Mary reported that she took one class, Christine, the other novice teacher respondent, reported that she did not have coursework in multicultural education. She graduated in 2005 from the premier public university in this Midwestern state. She said that the only coursework remotely multicultural in her teacher education program was a class on special education issues. One of her responses from the website underscores how the lack of multicultural preparation in her teacher education program has made it

difficult for her to teach at Proctor middle school. Below are her website responses to questions after taking the Project Implicit tests on race.

I know that I do have biases. Growing up in a small rural town kept me sheltered from a lot of diversity. Teaching in a large city school has been a struggle, but I agree that everyone deserves a chance.

These comments demonstrate a minimal level of awareness of and reflection on multicultural issues, and are a challenge to teacher preparation institutions to take cultural competency training much more seriously. If we want to help middle class, white teachers to be successful with the increasing population of minority students, we cannot neglect this kind of training in teacher preparation.

Babs taught with Christine and Esther on the sixth grade team at Proctor middle school, and was a teacher with five years experience. Like Mary and Christine, Babs did not recall any significant training in multicultural education in her teacher education program. She said,

I haven't had it, and even in college I did not have major diversity training whatsoever.

This data, from novice and veteran teachers, indicates the lack of these respondents' teacher education programs to take this kind of training seriously. My hypothesis for the respondents' lack of memory regarding multicultural education coursework is due to universities' failures to address current and future demographic realities in meaningful ways. Also, the prevalence of the heroes and holidays approach throughout all levels of education has diminished the interest in multicultural education. Many consider the heroes and holidays approach fluff, and in the serious achievement discussions taking

place in schools of education, there is no time for fluff. However, teacher preparation programs and districts do not seem to value transformative multicultural education scholarship and pedagogy to the detriment of the minority cultures and their achievements. If teacher preparation programs and school districts are serious about reducing the achievement gaps, then they must promote transformative multicultural pedagogy and cultural competency.

All the respondents attended public or private universities in this Midwestern state that since the 1970s has had multicultural gender fair educational program goals in the PK – 12 grade state administrative code. Public school districts must integrate multicultural and gender fair approaches in the various academic subjects across the curriculum. In my professional experience working at the state department of education conducting PK – 12 grade public school district accreditation visits, it was my job to ascertain whether the school district was complying with this part of the administrative code. I found districts' commitments to this educational goal to be minimal and their efforts predominantly represented the tolerance paradigm.

The state code governing teacher preparation programs also has a requirement that teacher education programs must include a class that fosters positive interpersonal and intergroup relations among the diverse groups found in our pluralistic society. This has been a state requirement since 1990. However, the institutions that my respondents attended outsourced this class to the state education agency. The academic programs at the universities attended by these respondents are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCAS). In a review of the NCAS accreditation process there are no specific multicultural standards. What this means is that while the

state requires multicultural gender fair approaches be integrated into the PK – 12 grade curriculum, colleges and universities only require their students to take one class that addresses the values, beliefs and lifestyles of the diverse groups found in the United States. Again, this statute represents the tolerance view. Neither state code governing pk-12 grades nor post secondary teacher preparation programs addressed the other multicultural perspectives such as transformation and cultural competency in the curriculum. These perspectives, including critical race theory and whiteness studies, are needed to assist prospective and current teachers in attaining cultural competency.

What all these data regarding the respondents' inexperience with multicultural education content and theory indicate is that these institutions are not teaching undergraduates how to integrate the multicultural education standards into the other teacher education content standards. Several researchers, Ladson-Billings (1995), Gollnick (1992), Kailin (1999) and Varvus (2002a) explained that multicultural education programs are nonexistent, optional, or minimally implemented. The data from this investigation supports their claims. This point is one of the significant points of this investigation. Here we have five teachers educated in the best public and private post secondary institutions in this Midwestern state and who graduated in the 1990s and 2000s. Yet, they are by their own account unschooled in these issues. Given the changing demographics yielding "the demographic imperative" it seems to me this is an area that teacher education programs should be seriously addressing. In light of the demographic imperative, I suggest that pre-service programs deliberately and systematically develop cultural competency components to each course required for a teaching degree.

The problem with multicultural education components to teacher education is that often, to ensure that important content is addressed, educational institutions develop a specific course requirement on the topic. This is the state requirement and is the practice in the universities my respondents attended. This is what NCATE required prior to 1989. As my data demonstrates, one course requirement tends to marginalize the topic and promote the heroes and holidays approach. However, transformational multicultural theory needs to be infused in all the disciplines. In 1989 NCATE changed their standards to require that multicultural and diversity standards be infused across the teacher education curriculum. The problem with this infused requirement is that professors must know and understand how to do this and do it well. To be effective and meaningful this requirement also presupposes that teacher education programs work closely with other academic departments such as math and science. As Mary's data indicates, unless prospective teachers are schooled in the broader discipline debates, then you have teachers thinking academic disciplines are colorblind. This suggestion points to a significant outcome of my investigation. Teacher education programs need to be reformed to address transformative multicultural pedagogy in the form of increased academic rigor.

I end this discussion with a comment Esther made regarding previous personal experiences with anti-racist training. As the most senior teacher, she was educated in the 1970s before multicultural education was defined as a curriculum. Of her prior experiences she said,

There was no battle at the time, but when I look back, I was supposed to be the officer making decisions for these people, and I didn't know how to clean my

rifle. I did go for 12 weeks of training. They [the military] have some very gifted speakers. They had a speaker that to this day [his message] sticks with me, because of the way he presented the racism that officers would easily come across. He made it so real to me that I harbor prejudices. I would not have accused myself of prejudice. His lecture was wonderful, and it still stays with me almost 30 years later. I don't think that the new teachers we put through that book will remember in the same powerful way that I do. At West Point, I was in class with some of the first [women] to graduate.

This last sentence might be evidence of the reason why Esther remembers the whole experience so vividly. Certainly, as a woman in the 1970s, Esther displayed an adventurous spirit by joining the army and taking classes with West Point students. The experiences she had at that historic moment in time, molded who she is now, a successful teacher of science at Proctor middle school. Throughout her interview, Esther demonstrated the personal and professional experiences that allowed her to be reflective about the RCSD's cultural competency training.

These respondents represent the continuum of multicultural understanding and cultural competency. As I have presented Esther and Grace, the veteran teachers, possess a higher level of awareness of transformative multicultural notions. Mary represents the opposite end of the continuum with her "colorblind" views. Babs and Christine indicated in their responses that they did not understand many of the fundamental issues in multicultural education. However, both these respondents demonstrated their self-reflection on biases and other characteristics that may inhibit their interactions with minority students.

Given their locations on the cultural competency continuum there should have been more teacher engagement with this program. The respondents' personal stories and descriptions of the lack of previous academic experiences, coupled with the realities in their schools, should have stimulated the respondents' interests in the cultural competency professional program. As Christine explained, she found working in a diverse urban district difficult. Certainly the other respondents encountered challenges to relating to their minority students. So, why was there minimal engagement in this professional development program? Why did they not realize that their lack of background in multicultural education could be overcome? One reason might be due to their personal views as middle class white women about race and poverty.

Race, Respondent Myopia, and Whiteness Theory

In this section I will first discuss the respondents' data concerning their backgrounds and their website activities. Second, I will describe the respondents' data that demonstrates their level of knowledge regarding the connections between race and poverty. Finally, I will discuss the relevant Whiteness theorists in education to examine more fully the race and poverty data.

Esther and Graces' responses confirmed that they are committed to accepting diversity and to being sensitive to multicultural issues. As I have suggested in the introduction to this chapter, the respondents' personal lives affected their feelings about cultural competency. Their statements about their lives provided insights into how and if any of the cultural competency professional development program content made a personal or professional difference.

Race.

I begin this discussion with Esther because she has dealt with race issues personally and professionally and expressed the most significant points on this issue. Esther adopted two Thai children; one of her boys is cognitively impaired. I provide the reader with this familial detail, because it demonstrates that she lives with the issues of race. In the following passage Esther reveals her long term predispositions to identifying, yet tolerating racism.

Judy: I think they [Robins et al. 2006] tried to make it more down to earth with the fictitious school, but what do you think about that? Was it successful, was it not successful? Do you think people recognized themselves in the stories as all?

Esther: Again, the really racist people don't understand, it goes right over their heads. I have a cousin who is in education, and she says the most racist things, not about African-American's, but about Hispanics, because she lives in Monroeville [a town that employs many Hispanics in the meat packing industry]. I keep thinking, doesn't she get it? She's gotten a job at [a Native American reservation], and she's gotten a head start job, but she left both of those jobs. I think it's because she doesn't understand how racist she is. If she had come to me and wanted advice, I would tell her. We went to college together, and we both dated African American guys. You know it was college, and I remember that she said that she couldn't do that [marry an African American] because she would feel like everyone is looking at her. I wanted to say to her, 'that's what Johnny goes through every time he walks down the street in lily-white Monroeville.' It hadn't occurred to my cousin. It occurred to her that people would notice she was

with an African-American, but she could not wrap her head around [the idea] that this was his [Johnny's] reality. She's just got that kind of personality; she's sweet and she's kind, but she just doesn't get it. It would take a lot of work for her to break that shell, just like it would have taken a lot of work for me to take on that colleague who was retiring, but she wasn't nearly as bad as my cousin.

The significance of this passage for developing an understanding of Esther's position related to race is that she can identify racist practices even in her own family. She also can see hypocrisy in behavior, which I believe is important to understanding the complexities in the dominant culture's behavior when dealing with minority issues.

Racism exists on a continuum, and if we can help each other see contradictions in what we do and say with regard to minority issues, and help each other examine biases then we have a better chance of improving our capacity to understand the problems and diminish our biases (Bloom & Kilgore, 2003).

How does Esther's personal story apply to her professional behavior? There is symmetry as we shall see from the next narrative from her interview.

That obnoxious teacher [from the book] who didn't want to do anything special, sort of reminded me of that one colleague who was here last year. I don't mean to be judgmental, because that teacher I was speaking of had many good features. I just know that when it came to sorting out the nuances of minority cultures or those kinds of things [cultural competency issues] they went right by her. Again, the racist people do not understand, it goes right over their heads. When I deal with my colleagues, if they just don't get it I'm not going to beat a dead horse. I'll work around them and move on. Certainly, I have never had it, but if I had

evidence that a teacher was being a blatant racist, I would have to address that. I would have to take it to the administration.

Esther's reflection above reveals ideas pertinent to how she responded to the cultural competency professional development program. In this passage about her colleague responding to one of the examples from the text used in this professional development program, Esther demonstrated her lack of engagement. She recognized cultural incompetence in her colleague, like she does in her cousin, but decided to tolerate the racism rather than engage in a discussion. The text provided strategies for discussion between colleagues about these issues, but Esther did not mention them. Instead she decided in the case of her cousin and her colleague that she is not "going to beat a dead horse." Perhaps Esther practices the tolerance view because women eschew conflict in the workplace (Pearson, West, & Turner, 1995; Turner & Shuter, 2004; Litwin & Hallstein, 2007).

However, as Esther said, she has not witnessed overtly racist practices, even with the teacher whom she views as racist. This comment echoes another researcher's assertion (Kailin, 1999) that in the educational work setting we would not see overtly racist practices. While they may exist, teachers know that they would be ostracized by their colleagues, if these practices were revealed in the workplace. For example, Esther reflected on her results from the website's Project Implicit activity.

I learned that I don't like taking these tests. In an occupation where being biased is grounds for dismissal, it feels very uncomfortable to find statistical data that shows you are guilty of having the wrong attitudes. I learned I have a preference for light skin. If the point is to prove that, we all have biases, I will admit that,

but still it makes me very uncomfortable to have ‘data’ that documents that. Even if the tests are anonymous, even if my data shows only a slight preference for light skin, I am offended at the results. I pride myself on my empathy and on being accepting of all my students. It is quite disappointing to have evidence to the contrary.

This quotation, expressed honestly, is one variable that hampered the success of the professional development program, and teacher leadership in the facilitation of conversations and actions centered on growth in cultural competency. It is not necessarily personally or professionally safe to reveal prejudice or ignorance on these issues.

What would it take to make the work environment safe for this type of dialogue and work to happen? Public schools in this NCLB era, especially urban schools, are besieged with public scrutiny, pressures to perform in sub-standard settings, transient staff and students, and inadequate leadership and support. Maintaining the status quo by quelling potentially important conflicts, such as those that might arise in conversations about race, and efforts toward excellence is a widely practiced survival strategy by administrators and teachers.

To illustrate these claims, I will describe the culture at FDR middle school in the 2005-2006 academic year and an incident in which I was involved. In the semester prior to the implementation of the cultural competency professional development program, the school was in turmoil, because there were contrasting cultures of teachers and a lack of administrative vision; this led to chaos among the students and staff. During the semester that FDR teacher leaders implemented the cultural competency professional development program, there were gang fights at the school, teacher sanctions for communicating about

problems, and cowardly administrator responses to positive initiatives. In the spring of 2006, student council students wanted to beautify the school, and to create a diversity mural. The supervising teachers, of which I was one, decided to initiate a diversity mural project. We contacted the local art center, and building and art supply stores, and were able to get all the materials and art expertise donated. A visiting artist working at the local art center photographed our students who represent the many ethnic groups in the United States: Asian, Latino, African, African American, Caucasian, and Native American. He developed a composition that represented students holding a banner that said, "Raise your respect and uplift diversity."

The mural was located on the auditorium stage, so the artist and students' creation process was visible to the staff. One morning when I was supervising students in the auditorium near the stage, I noticed the vice principal bringing African American staff in to look at the mural. Later I learned that the custodial staff objected to the mural due to the extra effort required to keep the auditorium locked and cleaned. Teachers were complaining because they did not like the abstract nature of the composition. Actually the style was photorealist piece abstracted enough so that it was not an exact portrait of individual students. An African American custodian objected to the depiction of the African American students; they looked too black. My theory was that all these objections represented fear and jealousy about new ideas and new teachers taking leadership and inspiring the students to become leaders. I also witnessed that due to the gang activity and behavior problems at the school, some of the teachers and staff who had been working at FDR for many years, expressed embarrassment about the diversity. They argued that it represented a decline in the school: gang activity, poor grades, and poverty.

They harkened back to a time when FDR middle school was predominantly white, working class, and proud.

Because of the complaints from these groups, the principal summoned me and told me to stop the project. I objected because we had approval for the design, materials donated, and significant time spent by the artist and the students creating the mural. In addition, I did not feel that the staff objections were warranted; rather they represented the toxicity in the building. The principal's unwillingness to address these conflicts and allow the staff to process them positively, portended further building unrest. While I was new to FDR middle school, I was the veteran teacher working on this project, so I could risk challenging authority. My challenges to authority and complaints to the next level up in administration earned me the wrath of the principal. In the end, however, we achieved the goal of having the 12' by 8' diversity mural hung in the school lobby.

The lesson was that the mural slogan "Raise your respect and uplift diversity" takes tremendous work and honest communications that are not safe in a toxic adult work environment. Like Esther, after this mural debacle, I retreated into my classroom with my students settling to make a difference, in any modest way, with the young people. Why should we beat a dead horse, or be beaten by dead horses? It is not safe to challenge deeper discussions among our colleagues on issues of diversity and social justice in a low trust environment.

Previous research by Weiss and Centrie (2002) and Kailin (1999) indicated that "even white teachers who did not engage in racist practices themselves did nothing to change such behavior among their colleagues" (Weiss & Centrie, 2002, p.9). In a low trust environment, it is easier to retreat to taking care of the students and closing the

classroom door, but this will not advance transformation in educating all students to their highest potential. Esther, in her preceding quotations, explained that she was not going to try to change colleagues who harbor culturally insensitive views or practices. She will only intervene when there is blatant racism. This fact and the fact that she would go to the administration rather than the person, is understandable, but problematic.

Putting the students' needs first means that we must work together to create an environment where all the students can achieve to their potential. The minority achievement gap persists, in part, because tolerance of culturally insensitive practices persists. This cultural competency professional development program did nothing to change this fact. Teachers are afraid to have constructively critical relationships on this topic. The power structure that protects the status quo, punishes teachers who speak up, and allows for racist practices for the sake of smooth and efficient employee relations. In the RCSD district, and in public schools across the country, the institutional nature of public education promotes accepted avenues of communication and work relationships and prohibits the development of teacher leaders in cultural competency.

Another reason for the silence of white teachers in the face of racism has to do with who is perceived to be best able to address the behavior. Esther expressed the idea in her quotations, echoed by the others, that generally, whites are either racist or not racist and only minorities can point out culturally insensitive practices. Mary supported Esther's observation. She said,

It is hard to get people to understand the continuum that the book had. It is not you're a racist or your not, it is that there are levels. I think it I very hard to admit or understand that they have a biased or racist leanings.

Mary points out a problem. There are many ways in which racist tendencies are submerged in a teacher's consciousness and surface in tacit ways. Esther tells of a time when she went to the vice principal, an African American, about concerns she had about a student.

Well his parents were both born in Africa and he had mental health problems. So I was in a hurry trying to talk about it [and described him as a black boy], but still she [the African American vice principal] was right that I should not use skin color as a delineator. Although I thought at the time as one professional to another, it's not like I'm a racist.

While Esther believes that she is not a racist and is culturally proficient, and reflective on these matters, she did not perceive her tacit actions.

In this section, I discussed the teachers' thoughts and perceptions about diversity issues based on their personal backgrounds and previous training in multicultural education. What I argue here, due to the data, is that minority lack of achievement has more to do with "the institutional choreography that renders whiteness meritocratic and the other colors deficient" (Fine, 1997, p. 65). These data show that the respondents are either uninformed or unwilling to address the transformational notion that the "institutional choreography" is deeply problematic. These data also show that these respondents gained little from this professional development program.

Varying degrees of respondent myopia.

As I have already stated the respondents either did not read the main text or skimmed the text required in the cultural competency professional development program. What their limited engagement in the book topics and the website did do was uncover

examples of cultural proficiency on the continuum offered by Robins et al. (2006). As I have said, Mary viewed her subject area, science, as “colorblind” and outside the realm of cultural experiences. On the first website page, the respondents were asked to define multicultural education. Mary stated

Multicultural education in schools with large minority populations too often becomes skewed to minority plights. True cultural pluralism will celebrate and advocate for every culture- including the native one. In Iowa, we miss the chance to teach about the prairie and agricultural culture. Also, in the face of minority plights we often forget or diminish the necessity of gender equality. If using a racial term is a hate crime, so is the word “bitch.” I think cultural education is one curriculum that should start out a mile wide and an inch deep.

In her responses, Mary seemed not to understand transformational multicultural education; this was evident in her view that cultural education is an inch deep and a mile wide, in her claims that science is colorblind. One year after the cultural competency professional development program she continued to demonstrate her lack of understanding. Her comment reveals race issues, which she and the other respondents did explore on the website. I gathered the respondent data on race through their website activities. These activities were designed to extend the topics in the book, and to allow teachers to have an independent opportunity to reflect on race issues. These data yielded some interesting material.

My website work is grounded in theories developed by leaders in the field of multicultural education. I culled resources to assist teachers in reflecting on the difficulties their minority and immigrant students and families confront by providing

opportunities to investigate their own immigrant backgrounds. Robins et al. (2006) believe that “cultural proficiency is an inside-out approach, which focuses on those insiders to the school or organization, encouraging them to reflect on their own individual understandings and values” (p. 5). The goal, states Robins et al. (2006) of learning to be culturally proficient is to integrate organization or individual values and practices in such a way as to be able to “interact effectively in culturally diverse settings” (p.11). They argued that multicultural transformation could occur when the teacher understands his/her own culture, reflects on aspects of his\her entitlement, and then sees his\herself as adaptors to diversity.

Three researchers, Nieto, (1999) and Zeichener and Hoefft (1996) described teachers in America as predominantly middle class, white, and frequently negative about diversity. While assuming the teachers in RCSD are negative about diversity would be unproductive and inappropriate, the majority of the RCSD teachers are middle class and white. Nieto (1999) asked teachers to “call on their own experiences of marginalization” (p.132); this idea was supported by Derman-Sparks (2002), Gorski (2005 b), Nieto (1999), and Banks (1991). Gorski (2005b) pointed out that in multicultural educational research there is less of a focus on the personal transformation of the teacher, and more of a focus on multicultural curriculum and pedagogy.

Having all teachers, Caucasian and those of diverse ethnicities, examine their attitudes and values is important because as Gay (1993) and Neito (1999) both stated, teachers of color do not automatically know what is best for students of color. Nieto (1999) provided an example of a Mexican American teacher who she states may not be a good teacher of Vietnamese children or “even necessarily a better teacher of Mexican

American students if her own personal experience and background differ markedly from those of her students” (p.132). Again, this statement underscores the need for *all* teachers, regardless of ethnicity, to engage in multicultural education that is transformative.

Therefore, in designing the website, I wanted to help teachers call up their own cultural backgrounds and revisit times when they or their ancestors were marginalized. As a result, I developed the immigrant roots page.

The immigrant roots page featured the immigrants to the USA from Europe, Africa, Mexico, Cuba, Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and India because these groups represent the ancestry of the RCSD teaching staff and student body as evidenced by RCSD website reports. After their research on their ancestry the respondents answered questions. Here is Babs’ response.

I chose to compare my Irish heritage to that of my students' Latina heritage. The Irish and Latino immigration stories are similar in the fact that both groups of people looked to America for opportunity and success. Both groups were forced to work in jobs that most Americans despised. In addition, both groups settled in specific areas and sought out people/groups of their same backgrounds. One of the differences I noticed while comparing the two stories was that many Latina immigrants from Mexico kept ties to their homeland, and often went back to visit. This is not true for many immigrants who braved the deadly trip across the ocean. I think many people in both groups value their background and heritage, but the proximity of America does play a role in visitation and access to family.

Grace wrote

I looked at both the African and Mexican sites. I found the Mexican site to be very interesting because I was not aware that there were so many that immigrated in the early 1900s to Nebraska. Although I had not read anything as direct about the new African Americans, I was aware that not all blacks consider themselves to be together. They have their own cultural backgrounds that cause differences. Much like descendants of European immigrants would identify with the country their families came from--white does not mean same culture--neither does black.

Mary said

Many of my students identify themselves as Latino. I read about their immigration history at the link provided. In the early 1900's many Latinos immigrated to America to find work and provide for families. The necessities that drove both Irish and Latino people to emigrate seem similar: famine, change or destruction of homeland. The differences lie in how each got to America and the feelings of "Americans" to the immigrants. It is difficult to compare the immigration of two very separate groups to America at two very different times in American History. One could argue America was a different nation with different needs when Irish immigrants came in the mid and late 1800's and the early 1900's, than for Latino immigrants [who came later]. With this in mind, the information in these links could be used to help point out similarities in all cultures and build bridges among our diverse population. When cultures begin to get into a pissing match about who had past worse [sic] no one wins, but if we spend time assessing our likenesses in heritage we can begin to learn what it mean to be Latino or Irish today.

Christine commented

Both the Germans and the Irish left their native land for various reasons. The Germans immigrated to America to escape extreme violence. The Irish immigrated because of politics as well as the Great Famine. After immigrating to the US the Germans found jobs as butchers, bakers, and the women rarely worked. The Irish, however, struggled finding jobs and often had to do work that was deemed too dangerous for the African American slaves. Looking at the background of my ancestors' as well as the background of another ethnic group has helped me realize the struggles and hardships they went through. Even though I'm not considered a minority now, and I am not discriminated [against], at one point, people of my ethnic background were treated unfairly. This has helped me understand where I came from, and where the world is going.

In trying to understand what, if any impact, the website activities had on the respondents, I turn to Apple (1997) who asked “why should we assume that the personal is any less difficult to understand than the external world” (p. 127). What Apple (1997) advocates for is analysis and understanding of how power relations, while complex and ever changing, still perpetuate capitalism, which in turn influences the nature of schooling. He cautions white educators that while personal investigations are useful, in authentically addressing issues of race and class, we must resist disclosures that permit self-display and perpetuate white privilege. This investigation and the cultural competency professional development falls into the category of work that hooks (2003), Landsman (2001) and others support, autobiographical investigation and disclosure. In trying to analyze the respondent's statements, I consider Apple's (1997) cautions.

The respondents' preceding statements show a similarity in understanding the politically correct view of the benefits of comparing and contrasting different cultures, but I do not glean any real disclosure regarding current privilege or ancestral marginality. I do not think they addressed the purpose for this investigation, which was to help the respondent connect to instances of marginalization in their own past and use this as a starting point to transform their perspectives and teaching practices.

Mary's comment that minority groups should not engage in a "pissing match" over who had it worse denies the validity of the goal. Mary's view that minorities should not engage in investigating who had it the worst, speaks to the tendency of the dominant group to dismiss the injustices of race. This view assumes symmetry in the way injustices are inflicted upon different racial groups. The fact that she experienced the injustices of poverty and overcame them blinds her to the structures of power embedded in race issues in a capitalist society. Her comments indicate that she does not understand the connection between race and poverty.

The other novice respondent, Christine, mentions discrimination. She said that in her investigation she learned Americans discriminated against her Irish ancestors. Today, she says she has not experienced discrimination. While gender issues were outside the scope of the cultural competency professional development program, the topic arose during the interviews. Mary left the district due partly to sexist practices. Christine does not sense these practices in RCSD, which indicates a lack of awareness on this issue. Coming from a small, rural town it may be that the lack of exposure to diversity has hindered her growth in seeing the subtle ways privilege works in the world. However, she attended a well-regarded Midwestern university. The fact that she seems naive to issues

of discrimination indicates to me her undergraduate education in elementary education neglected to engage her in critical thinking on the gender issue.

I designed the call of the tasks on the immigrant roots page to elicit a response in the tasks on the immigration today webpage. The thrust of the cultural competency professional development program was to connect multicultural theories with personal narrative and professional change in the way teachers works with minority students. There is a significant immigrant population in the RCSD district. The two respondents that chose to complete the questions on this webpage were Babs and Mary.

Babs said.

I have always felt that the best way to handle the differences between generations/decades is to address the differences. If I choose to ignore my students' views and pretend that what they are exposed to daily does not affect my classroom, I am devaluing my students and the learning environment. If we take the time in the classroom to address issues and differences we can work toward an understanding and mutual respect, which are life-long skills students need.

Mary said.

One of the challenges to establishing relationships with students and their families from very different cultures is that I never want to judge or insult another culture. The interview with Duwayne pointed out the many different laws, foods, and cultures that exist in Jamaica. Without knowing about these differences it could be very easy to pass judgment on different marriage laws, different eating habits ect. I think many immigrants are shy to tell about their native country, and may feel embarrassed by some of these cultural differences. I think I would be if I was

trying to live and raise a family in a different country. But without this knowledge my ignorance portrays itself as bias. I wish we had more time to get to know each culture represented in our classrooms to make each of our students and their families feel safe and welcome.

Mary and Babs' responses echo the overall message from all of the respondents' data. Babs stressed the need to consider the personal life of the child so that the classroom can be a safe place to learn. Mary emphasized the importance of careful communication throughout her responses. Here Mary stressed the importance of knowing the child's culture, but acknowledged the reluctance some families feel about this type of communication. As Bloom and Kilgore (2003) discovered, people of privilege, such as community volunteers, or in this case teachers, need to build trust with the minority populations they serve.

Mary also made a significant point regarding relations of trust and understanding. She described the feeling that I have had; cultural ignorance can equal bias in the eyes of minorities. Just because we do not consider ourselves racist it does not follow that we do not possess racist dispositions based on ignorance. As Ladson-Billings (1997) stated, white teachers "do not consciously deprive or punish African American children on the basis of their race, but at the same time they are not conscious of the ways in which some children are privileged and others are disadvantaged" (p. 32).

These respondents were not blinded to the imbalance of privilege in their classrooms, their schools, and the district. However, as illustrated by their responses about race, while these respondents can see the details in front of them, they cannot discern the bigger context that created the imbalance. The respondents' varying degrees

of myopia regarding race were not corrected by this professional development cultural competency program, because the program did not effectively address these larger issues.

Whiteness theory.

Critical race theorists assert that race is the basis of inequity in America. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have claimed that race is more significant than class and gender in explaining the achievement gap and unequal school experiences, although not all multiculturalists would agree with this claim, arguing instead that all forms of oppressions are linked in a "matrix" (Collins, 1998). However, according to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), race has been historically enmeshed in property, which advanced unequal resources to minorities. In 1990, Peggy McIntosh (1990), who also places race at the forefront of oppressions, developed a set of circumstances for white people to consider, which reinforced the concept that whiteness particularly engenders privileges in American society. These privileges do not extend to people of color, thus unequal circumstances have resulted in institutional practices that perpetuate the status quo regarding the races.

These scholars' assertions resonate with the reality of the demographics from the two RCSD middle schools where my respondents teach. At FDR middle school 90% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch, and 58% of the student body are minorities: either African American or Hispanic. At Proctor 25% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch and 23% of the student body are minorities. FDR middle school has been on the SINA list for three years, while Proctor was on the list for one year due to their participation rate, not achievement problems. In public education today,

NCLB has intensified what Fine (1997) describes as “the cultural gaze of surveillance” on students of color by focusing attention on the minority achievement gap.

So far in this chapter I have discussed the teachers’ thoughts about racism based on their personal backgrounds and previous training in multicultural education. I have asserted that personal experience affects reflective practice on cultural competency issues. This is an obvious point; however, districts take an institutional approach to solving the problems of the achievement gap by assuming all white teachers are in need of this type of training in the same fashion because they are empty vessels. The bigger point here, however, is that the RCSD district, like many other urban districts, has pinpointed the teachers as being problematic, when it is the institutional bureaucracy that has inflicted the most harm on minority children who have not made achievement gains. The institutional bureaucracy perpetuates white privilege. However, the cultural competency professional development program did not help teachers understand the connections among white privilege, race and poverty.

Pervasiveness of Poverty and the Problem of Ruby Payne

What the professional development program content did was to engender conversations about poverty. Knowing about poverty does not mean, said Books (2004) that teachers will necessarily understand the issues but it is a place to start. All of the respondents agreed that poverty is the main challenge to minority student achievement. I divided this section into two parts: the pervasiveness of poverty and the problem of Ruby Payne: website data on Payne, Kozol and Gorski.

Pervasiveness of poverty.

Proctor middle school has a wide range of socio-economic levels represented in the student body with 25% free and reduced lunch, as opposed to FDR middle school with a 90% free and reduced rate. This means that 90% of the families at FDR middle school live below 100% and 200% of the rate required to sustain an average family. Despite these circumstances, in 2007 FDR middle school moved off the SINA list and into safe harbor, because the Latino and African American populations improved in reading and math. Unfortunately, Caucasian students living in poverty did not make achievement gains. Babs, Christine, Esther and Mary discussed the differences between white, middle class teachers and their Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian and African American students living in poverty. I begin with Babs' reflection.

We talk about the whole other aspect of low socioeconomic and how that is a different culture. I think the one [culture] that has hit me most being a teacher [in an urban district] for the last five years is probably the low socioeconomic. I was not part of that culture growing up. I was not in a school system growing up where that culture could be seen or felt. Growing up outside of Chicago, we definitely were not a rich town, but I mean I would not have been able to pick out the kids who came from a poor family necessarily.

Babs, like me, perceived her community as "poverty-free." Our paths in the community did not bring us to interactions with peers and families living in poverty, and therefore they were "invisible" to us. Books (2004) reminded us that poverty is not a black, immigrant or unwed mother problem, and that indeed many of the poor in America are Caucasian and most work. What this means is that while Babs, me, and other white

middle class teachers might view people in poverty as “the other,” they exist in all communities, although they are often invisible. While “poor whites” often live in rural areas, cities like the Midwestern city where the RCSD is located currently have a high percentage of people of all races living in poverty.

What does this mean for the white, middle class teacher? Culturally proficient practices are, as Ladson Billings (1995), Delpit (1995), and Fine (1997) said, responsive and respectful of the child’s inherent potential and educationally rigorous. Babs illustrated the issues regarding responsiveness.

I think of what I do with kids everyday, and what I ask of them. If I do not think about where they come from in the morning [then there is a problem]. Like I don’t just get to say well I have them at 7:45, and that is all I have to worry about. I do need to think about whether they were up all night, or if anyone was home to make sure they had dinner, or if dinner was available. I believe those things affect kids. Then you talk about differentiating, or being fair. I have never had a problem saying to my class-- you know a lot of people say well if I accept it late from one person that I need to accept it late from everyone-- no one never has to know that you make exceptions for kids who do not have the same support systems in place for them to be successful.

Babs demonstrated her responsiveness regarding her students’ life circumstances. She does not see herself as technocrat who enforces policies. Rather, she represented her flexibility in working with students. Later she discussed that she tries to come early and stay after school to be available for all her students, but in particular the ones who may not have safe places to go to or may not have an adult home to help them after school.

In the passage above, Babs articulated one of the concerns that caused controversy during one of the 8th grade team meetings at FDR when we discussed poverty issues during our cultural competency book talks. The following passage is my description of the conversation at the team meeting. I used this as an example during my interview with Christine.

I know in our group, for example, around the issue of poverty, some people on my team were from poor backgrounds, but you know it is different for our students than it was back then. I mean they had what they would call good values; parents worked hard. It was just difficult. They did not have a lot of money, but they didn't necessarily see themselves as really poor. Whereas the students we teach, many are from generational poverty. You know people were commenting about like, how could they spend their money on really expensive shoes, when they are on food stamps? And, the cell phones the kids own, why do they spend their money on entertainment?

This discussion sparked disagreements mainly due to political differences; political discussions among me and the other team members occurred frequently on the eighth grade team at FDR middle school; we knew and regularly challenged each other on political issues. In the book discussions the Republican-leaning eighth grade teachers who described their parents as “pulling themselves up” from poverty held less generous views of our students currently living in poverty. Those teachers viewed themselves as the “good poor” and categorized our students and their families as the “undeserving poor” (Katz, 1989). The Democratic-leaning staff argued that the world has changed and poverty is a symptom of deeper social and economic injustices. I swayed some of my

conservative colleagues by reminding them of all the corporate bailouts that equate to huge entitlements for the upper classes. I believe the team cares about the students, but holds radically different views about how to address cultural differences and achievement issues. What this means is we must address stereotypes and analyze power issues. We also must address pedagogy.

The teachers who do not believe that they should have different policies for different students are steeped in the technocrat (Ladson-Billings, 1997) paradigm. These teachers advocate for assimilation into the existing culture. Ladson-Billings (1997) and Eisner, (2002) present an alternative view: the teacher as artist. If teachers are to be professionals and engaged public intellectuals, then they would view each student as a potential flower, needing unique, but also general care to flourish. Technocrats want their students to flourish as well, but are caught in the institutional structure that de-skills and infantilizes teachers and perpetuates standardization in pedagogy.

Addressing stereotypes and cultural bias, as I have established is needed to promote cultural competency. In my conversation with Christine, she provided an example.

Sometimes when you find out a student is from Parkridge [subsidized housing] it's just kind of hard not to assume that they are going to be a struggling student. They are going to have homework completion problems. They are going to act badly, and just all the stuff that goes with it [being a child from a family living off entitlements]. So, I have found that that is something I just catch myself doing. I just assume [that the kids from Parkridge will be a problem]. Whereas if you hear a kid is from Jackson [an affluent elementary school in the same district], you just

assume they have great family life. [The Parkridge and Jackson elementary students both attend Proctor middle school.] You assume that their parents are supportive. I find myself double-checking.

Christine, the novice teacher who said that she struggled her first year teaching in the RCSD, because she felt ill-prepared to meet the challenges of teaching a diverse student body, demonstrated her personal growth in addressing stereotypes. As I have stated, Christine did not read the cultural competency text, the required for the class and responded minimally to the website materials. She illustrates what Brantlinger (2003) found in her investigation of teachers' views on poverty. Brantlinger (2003) said, "This study indicates that personal contact with low-income students seems to result in teachers having more realistic and less-biased views of poor children's intellect, work ethic, and intellectual aspirations" (p.98). Christine's disclosure of bias and her acknowledgement of the need to constantly "double-check" demonstrate an "inside-out" cultural transformation and less biased views of the Parkridge students.

In our monthly cultural competency book meetings, my colleagues and I began to talk more frequently about the issue of poverty in our students' lives. As I have said, many of my colleagues reported that they and their parents came from poverty. At times, they used this background experience to judge the way our students' parents conduct their lives. In this case, the teachers' personal experiences stymied growth and reflection on the current issues of poverty.

This made me question how serious are we about meeting the needs of our students living in poverty. At times frustration overtook me and in my less generous moments, I categorized my colleagues as lacking of empathy and being rigid. Later, I

reflected that my standing is from a higher plane of privilege, and my colleagues and I are entangled in the larger institutional structure that pits middle class against poor, and places most of the burden of fixing the problem on educators, who have little power to change the corrupt structures that created poverty and other societal inequities.

Mary challenged some of her veteran colleagues at FDR; in return, they branded her a “bitch.” They called Mary a “bitch,” because she dared to speak up about cultural competency issues related to poverty and sexism. As Mary’s colleague, and informal mentor, I often listened to her frustrations dealing with veteran staff.

Mary had an ongoing conflict with the counselor because she was a child of poverty, and the counselor did not want to hold students academically and behaviorally accountable. Mary demanded equal treatment and accountability for the FDR students living in poverty. Mary frequently clashed with the FDR counselor. The counselor pathologized the poor by, from Mary’s perspective, constantly making excuses for their bad behavior and refusing to hold them, in her terms, accountable for behavior and achievement due to their “sick” circumstances. While, perhaps both professionals possessed problematic views, the counselor behaved in a deficit-oriented way categorized by Payne (2003). The counselor echoed Payne (2003) by stating that “our kids” are not like the middle class kids and they do not live in middle class family environment--you have to understand and excuse.

To Mary this was not an adequate way to address the problem. While the counselor viewed herself as an advocate for these children, she was essentially blaming the victim. Haberman (2005), Gorski (2006), Kozol, (2005) and others comment on the pervasiveness of professionals in urban educational settings blaming the poor. Mary, the

fledgling teacher, falls in line with Delpit (1999) and Haberman (2005) among others who do not believe that students who come from poverty should be treated any differently. Haberman (2005) debunks the idea that Payne's emphasis on the student teacher relationship is vital to getting students in poverty to learn. He claims that star teachers do not have to "love" their students and vice versa. Haberman (2005) asserts that star teachers are guided by what is best for the student, not by their own emotional needs. These teachers are not derailed by the fact that not all students are good kids. They have standards and build trust and a sense of community.

What disturbed me about Mary's experiences with the counselor was that it occurred during the cultural competency professional development training and illustrated the counselor's and Mary's alienation from the content of the professional development program. One explanation as Osei-Kofi (2005) and Biddle (2001) point out Americans resist engaging in concerns of poverty and class.

In my conversations with Mary, she often expressed frustration with entitlements and explained how she "pulled herself up." She blamed parents for not taking care of their kids. I interpret these feelings to stem from the pain she still feels at not having been cared for by her own parents. She said,

I didn't have a home, I wasn't fed, and I came to school. I don't want the school to fix it. That's letting a lot of parents off the hook, and that's not good for society. I want some sort of home person to hold the parents accountable, especially before the age of six when they haven't even gone to school, but it's tough and it's challenging.

Again, she stresses accountability for parents. She lives in the middle class world, where we see poverty as a problem, and may be embarrassed by her own upbringing, which translates into advocating for accountability. Grace echoes these sentiments. She has expressed frustration that she has to purchase sneakers at Payless for her son, while many of our students at FDR on free and reduced lunch and other entitlements buy Nikes for their children. Mary and Grace do not know where the families purchased the Nikes or the nice clothes. The teachers' perspectives exemplify what Katz (1989) described as negative attitudes toward the undeserving poor and what Books (2004, p. 105) describes as the overall “inequities in family wealth creating inequities in schooling.” Neither teacher sees herself as a change agent. Neither talked about transformative and justice oriented views used to subvert the dominant societal paradigm that perpetuates the need for Nikes as a means for children to fit in within a context of the increasingly disparate levels of living in our culture.

The problem of Ruby Payne: website data on Payne, Kozol, and Gorski.

My purpose in developing the understanding poverty page for teachers to use on the website was to promote reflection on the issue of poverty. There is a debate between the multicultural theorists who embrace transformation and critical theory and those who embrace Ruby Payne’s approach to understanding students who live in poverty. Many RCSD teachers and administrators read Payne’s book (2003), *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. This book appeals to practitioners because of the simplistic way it handles this complex subject. Historically, and as I have already shown, programs that promise a quick fix and de-skill the teacher have populated the field of professional development. Payne (2003) provides “practical” material on working with students in

poverty, which has resulted in her professional development programs being widely adopted by district administrators nationwide. Her materials and workshops are used nationwide resulting in a multi-million dollar industry.

On the understanding poverty webpage, I included an interview by Payne and articles by Gorski and Kozol. Teachers were asked to read and respond to the materials. Mary and Esther were the only two respondents who commented.

Payne's (2003) main thesis was that middle class white teachers take for granted the rules of the school game to the detriment of their lower class students. She said that this presents problems when working with economically disadvantaged students, because they do not know the middle class rules of school. Mary discussed Payne's website interview, which advanced these ideas and ways to work with the poor.

After only reading a couple of the answers in the Payne interview, I am disheartened. Payne acts as if all poverty students are the same, and if we read her book we do not have to get to know our own community. Whereas Gorski and Kozol call for discussing the elephant in the room, Payne acts as if she has had it for you [discussed the elephant in the room and come up with a solution], and all you need to do is believe. I think that the students in my classroom can not be put in a box. My middle school is diverse and so is the one I went to growing up, but the attitude about race and poverty for that matter is very different. I cannot assume all minorities or poor student and their families have the same problems. Here Mary supports what Books (2004) said regarding the negative tendency for middle class white people to stereotype what being in poverty looks like. Mary goes on to say

Payne is correct that students will learn better if they like or have a relationship with a teacher. I think we, as educators, need to talk about this and maybe try to change it. I would like to have the discussion with students about high school, college graduation, and that even if they do not like a teacher very much they should work and do well for their [the student's] own benefit. Payne's theory is that we just need to have every student like us. That is never going to work, nor should it. If we worry only about relationships to get students to succeed, we are not setting that student up for success in the workplace or college. I think we should take into account relationships as we talk about intrinsic motivation and wanting the best for our community and ourselves.

Mary points out the desire we all have as committed teachers: to have positive relationships with our students and their families. However, as Mary aptly states, this is not a requirement for instructing students who come from poor backgrounds; it applies to all students. To say otherwise is to pathologize the poor (Osei-Kofi, 2005).

In her essay about Payne's book, Osei-Kofi (2005) claimed that the work does "great violence to any ideas of education as a positive force in creating a socially responsible and economically just society" (p. 368). Osei-Kofi (2005) took umbrage with aspects of Payne's work. She thinks Payne inaccurately characterizes the academic abilities of children in poverty, inaccurately depicts family life in poverty, and inaccurately portrays the hidden rules of class. First, Osei-Kofi stated that Payne believes that poor people cannot think abstractly. Therefore, they need instruction that assists them in moving from the concrete to the abstract (don't all learners?). Second, Osei-Kofi describes Payne's vignettes of family life in poverty as being on a continuum of the

deserving to the undeserving poor. For example, Osei-Kofi noted the contrasts between Payne's examples of the deserving black religious family and the undeserving black welfare queen. Third, Osei-Kofi criticized Payne's delineations among the low, middle, and upper classes as well as Payne's lack of scholarship in her descriptions of each class. Osei-Kofi situates her arguments in historical, economic, and political milieus that justify her claim that Payne's work perpetuates violence against the poor.

Payne (2006) called herself an economic pragmatist who is trying to give poor students the skills to be successful in a middle class world. Like Mary, I think that Payne's work is too simplistic. Payne is powerful because NCLB has shone the light on the practical problem of poverty in education. Administrators are desperate to find easy, pre-packaged plans that teachers will consider. Their motivations echo administrators and policy-makers' past motivations, such as in the post-Sputnik era, to demonstrate superior student achievement. The expansive educational reforms of the 1950s and 1960s were designed to promote international superiority. This is because the problems, then like now, were framed on economic rather than democratic purposes for education. Economic purposes for education promote institutionalized responses to problems that result in teacher de-skilling and alienation. This is due to the lack of teacher engagement in transformative and reflective processes in decision-making.

There is pervasive anti-intellectualism among teachers, so pre-packaged programs tend to be more easily digestible than more complex or seemingly ambiguous theory. I present an example of this anti-intellectualism from my respondents. Esther commented about Robins et al.'s (2006) text in the cultural competency professional development program. She said,

Again, it's not that I don't think cultural competency is important. I just also think that maybe because of the nature of the topic, reading about it in a book-- that's still on an esoteric plane. It's not down to earth.

Based on her accomplishments, Esther's anti-intellectual stance surprised me. However, in my more than twenty years in public education, working in nine different schools on the elementary, middle, and high school levels, what Esther expressed is the norm. The teachers are not to blame. This personal statistic indicates the pervasive de-skilling that has occurred over decades of misguided professional development initiatives and weak teacher preparation programs that emphasize methods over mind.

Until there is a national will to address the problems of poverty, race, and minority student underachievement from multiple perspectives, then individual teachers like Esther will continue to do their best for students. However, the achievement gap is likely to persist. Esther expressed this when she said.

What Payne wants is for us to be able to understand our students better so we can be effective educators. I am guilty in my classroom of middle class expectations. I do have the bias that individuals will do better following middle class norms than the norms of poverty. I do not think I will change those biases. I do think it is good to be reminded of the toll that two generations of poverty takes on students. I do think I strive to form those strong relationships with all my students and to never disparage their home life or their poverty.

While teachers like Esther and the other respondents are doing their best, they are operating in a society that is not doing its best to solve the problem of poverty. Esther does not embrace transformative notions about class and embraces Payne's central

premise that children of poverty will do better in school when they learn middle class norms.

I included Kozol's work on the website for teachers to consider, because he has the strongest voice in the poverty debate. Kozol (1992, 1995) forthrightly tells the stories of real people living in poverty. He immersed himself in their lives, and learned firsthand how institutional and societal inequities perpetuate poverty. Kozol (2005) and Gorski (2006) argued that our nation must address these inequities in the public and political arenas. Mary recorded her thoughts on the understanding poverty webpage. Here is what she wrote.

Whether the issue is race or poverty, we are dealing with students and families that are falling behind in public schools. My school [FDR middle school] has this issue. We are often so afraid of bringing up the elephant in the room. We use our students' hardships as excuses for them not performing without ever having that conversation with the child or family. How do we know poverty or race is affecting our children, when we do not ask or involve ourselves in that conversation? I think more families and students would be open to talking about their real problems, and how these relate to our classrooms. We are not helping students succeed in our schools when we dismiss their underperformance on race or societal problems- we propagate the problem.

Mary is correct to talk about the need for better and more compassionate communication, but that takes time, assumes a level of trust, and encompasses risks. The pressures on teachers to motivate students to succeed and meet the challenges of the day, the week and

the year make it difficult to make phone calls and family visits. More important than time, the issue of trust must be developed.

Families in poverty comment on the difficulties schools and other public institutions create in their lives. These difficulties play out in the lives of their children in school, because basic needs such as food, shelter, and health are less stable. The school is an agent of help, but also an avenue of punishment (Katz, 1989; Polakow, 2000, Kozol, 2005) in the forms of truancy court, special education laws, health and human services guidelines. When teachers and administrators do not develop positive trusting relationships with parents, communications between teachers and students and their families can be hostile (Bloom, 2001).

Chapter Summary

In summary, the respondents did not have extensive undergraduate training in the content of this professional development program. Their personal backgrounds yielded the most salient information on the issues of race and poverty. This finding supports the autobiographical approach to investigating these issues. However, the respondents' data did not support the notion that the cultural competency professional development program motivated them to become more culturally competent.

However, Apple (1997) cautions that the personal narrative strategy can reinforce notions of privilege in its method. This occurs when there is a lack of reflection on how personal disclosures connect to the "institutional choreography" to protect dominant power interests in public education. These data demonstrate the respondents' limited views on how their personal stories connected to the dominant power structure. They

embraced the status quo that exists in their schools and the district because they do not perceive that they have the power to change much.

I close with an example taken from Apple (1997). He describes an exchange between himself and a driver as they passed by a field in an Asian country. The driver states that there are no schools in his city because “so many folks like cheap fries” (Apple, 1997, p. 123). The point is that public education is inextricably linked to the needs of the dominant group, and this includes pedagogy and professional development. When teachers are viewed as mere workers implementing the goals of the dominant class and disconnected from the control and content of their own intellectual development, then there is resistance and rejection.

CHAPTER 5

Resistance and Rejection in Professional Development

Art when really understood is the province of every human being. It is simply a question of doing things, anything, well. When the artist is alive in any person, whatever his kind of work may be, he becomes an inventive, searching, daring, self-expressing creature. He disturbs, upsets, enlightens, and opens ways for a better understanding. Where those who are not artists are trying to close the book, he opens it, shows there are more pages possible.

Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit*, p. 28.

In the previous chapter I discussed the respondents' scant training in multicultural education, their shallow interactions with the content of the cultural competency professional development program, and their concerns about the impact of poverty on their students. In this chapter I discuss the factors that created teacher resistance and rejection.

The mandated cultural competency professional development program was resisted and rejected program by the five respondents. As this chapter showed the teachers resisted and rejected the program, because they felt a sense of alienation from the program in a variety of ways. In the narrative data, three reasons for resistance and rejection emerged. The three reasons are the teachers' existing attitudes toward educational initiatives and pedagogical change, the teachers' feelings that they had no agency in the program content, planning, and implementation and therefore felt alienated from the program, and the teachers' current understandings of and experiences with the achievement gap and cultural competency theory and practice.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, Riverdale Community School District Milieu, I provide the reader with the background context

regarding the way the district made decisions about the content, planning, and implementation of this cultural competency professional development program. This background context is the starting point that produced the teachers' resistance and rejection to this program. In this first section, I briefly discuss the lack of adult education pedagogy, which also contributed to the resistance and rejection. In addition, I briefly define concepts such as agency, alienation, and resistance.

In the second section, *The Reasons for Resistance and Rejection*, I explore the three central themes that emerged from the data. The first theme focuses on the teachers' existing attitudes toward educational initiatives and pedagogical change. I analyze how the teachers' existing attitudes on pedagogical initiatives influenced their acceptance or rejection of the program. The second theme that emerged was the teachers' concerns about the lack of agency in the program content, planning, and implementation. This second theme dominates the respondent data, and provides the most profound explanation for the teachers' resistance to and rejection of the program. The final theme to be discussed in this second section is the teachers' current understandings of and experiences with the achievement gap and cultural competency theory and practice. In this second section I will discuss the teachers' varying degrees of familiarity with these concepts, and how their experiences affected their responses to the professional development program.

In sections three and four I provide the reader with the respondents' data that demonstrate how the lack of teacher agency in professional development has produced standardization that perpetuates continued alienation, resistance and rejection. The third section is entitled *Future Possibilities in Professional Development*. In this

section, I present the data on the teachers' visions for professional development. What emerged from their statements is that they, for the most part, do not present transformational ideas about professional development and their own learning. The fourth and final section, Trickle Down Alienation, follows with a summary of how the resistance and rejection of this professional development program points to the larger issues of alienation in public education.

Riverdale Community School District Professional Development Milieu

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandates that states close their minority achievement gaps in all their districts by 2013. Each state had to choose their state test to measure proficiency. In the Midwestern state where this study took place, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED), published by Riverside Publishing, are used.

In an effort to pressure districts to meet this goal, the United States Department of Education (USDE) requires layers of annual reporting on academic achievement. Public school districts must monitor the pk – 12th grade schools and annually report on the academic achievement of students in 4th, 8th and 11th grades to their public. School districts must also report to state departments of education that in turn must report annually to the USDE. In 2005 the National Education Association (NEA) filed a lawsuit against the federal government claiming that NCLB was an unfunded mandate and in 2008 the courts agreed (Dillon, 2008) that this legislation contains unfunded mandates. However, professional development is one area that did received funding to achieve the goal of 100% student proficiency in reading, math, and science. For example, FDR middle school where Grace, Mary, and I work received just fewer than 300,000 federal

dollars over three years due to the school's SINA status; most of this money had to be used for professional development. The significance of the funding of professional development instead of other areas of concern such as equity in technology, facilities, and services demonstrates the blaming of the teacher.

NCLB (2001) requires states to provide "the availability of 'high-quality' professional development for all teachers" (Borko, 2004, p.3). However, NCLB (2001) does not specifically define the elements of high quality professional development. This leaves large urban districts, like the RCSD, with federal funding, all the bureaucracy federal grants entail, deadlines for implementation and reporting, but without meaningful professional development technical assistance or guidance. In the face of deadlines, reporting, and a lack of technical support or direction, district administrators sought expert driven ideas and adapted these ideas to district constraints.

Background Context of Riverdale Community School District Professional Development

In the summer of 2005, all of the RCSD middle and high schools were placed on the School In Need of Assistance (SINA) list due to low academic achievement of minorities on the state test, or due to a low student participation rate on the state test. This resulted in RCSD requirements to develop specific plans, including teacher professional development, to address the district actions to improve minority achievement.

Administrators applied for a federal grant to fund a professional development program on cultural competency. They argued that the teachers needed this professional development program to address the district's minority achievement gap. From the Director of Intercultural Programs to the novice teachers, all the respondents concurred that top-down, expert-driven solutions were the norm in the RCSD.

The RCSD professional developers took a deficit-oriented view of teachers, which motivated their expert-driven program content choices and delivery methods. As I have stated the NCLB reporting pressures, which in the RCSD's case include having minority gap data published by school in a nationally known paper with statewide distribution, engenders public outrage. RCSD administrators are keenly aware of the he public relations problems of low minority achievement. These pressures motivate the district professional developers' deficit-approached mandates. Due to low reading scores and high minority suspension rates in the middle schools, Babs commented.

We're now going to have to do reading strategies. We're going to have to do differentiation. We're going to have PBS [positive behavior supports] again, and that team passion is going to be the thing that gets wiped out.

Mandating professional development represents a deficit approach to categorizing teachers, because it is based on the assumption that the teachers are doing something wrong and therefore, as Babs indicates, need more fix-it programs. Taking a deficit approach to teachers and minority students is not unique to the RCSD; it is pervasive in public education (Apple, 1981; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Due to the high stakes achievement environment in public education today, districts must demonstrate efforts leading to results in closing the achievement gap between the majority culture and the minority cultures.

The Director of Intercultural Affairs was charged with the planning, Implementing, and reporting results on the cultural competency professional development program. She is an African American who cares deeply about the RCSD cultural and achievement gaps, but had minimal control over the processes she was assigned to

supervise. When I asked her about content and delivery decisions, she replied, “I do what I am told.” As her statement suggests her superiors, (the associate superintendents) decided content and methods of delivery. In fact the district decision makers out-sourced the task to an expert professional development consultant working at a state intermediary education agency.

The cultural competency professional development program took place during the 2005 -2006 academic year. It consisted of two all school sessions designed to heighten the teachers’ awareness of cultural differences between themselves and their students. All the teachers received a textbook used in embedded training sessions. Embedded training sessions occurred during the school day. District administrators and a professional development consultant, drawing from Japanese lesson study, attempted to design a professional development approach that provided peer interaction around a set of issues. The decision to conduct professional development during teacher contact time addressed concerns by teachers and administrators that developing common understandings about ideas and initiatives is difficult when teachers can choose not to attend the professional development program. It is often the case that coaches do not partake in professional development, because programs are offered at the end of the school day and they have to leave for games and practices.

Agency and Alienation, and Resistance

Teacher agency is a crucial component to consider when planning and implementing professional development programs. What I mean by teacher agency is the teacher’s autonomy, obligation, and authority (Archer, 1984) to engage in reflective practice within the educational work environment. This is essential because as Vongalis-

Macrow (2005) said, “In educational transformation, teachers are one kind of agency whose actions and behaviours have the capacity to reinforce and sustain change” (p.2). Attard (2007), a teacher and researcher, has also claimed that for any learning to take place the professional developers must consider teachers’ needs. His insights echo what Langer (2000) and Lieberman and Miller (1990) discovered, which was that teachers who improve student achievement choose a variety of professional development opportunities directed by their reflections on professional development needs.

When there is no teacher agency, meaning the teachers’ needs are not assessed and the teachers’ are not involved in constructing the plan for learning, alienation occurs.

Alienation is a central idea in Marxist philosophy. Fromm (1956) defined alienation as

a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien
...estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his
world, as the creator of his own acts. (p.120)

Fromm drew his central ideas about the “commoditization of contemporary life” from Marx (Brookfield, 2002). Brookfield said about Fromm,

Drawing particularly on the early Marx of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Fromm conducted a radical, yet highly accessible, analysis of adult life and learning. He argued that learning to penetrate ideological obfuscation, and thereby overcome the alienation this obfuscation induced, was the learning task of adulthood. (Brookfield, 2002, p. 96)

This statement is significant to my analysis of why the cultural competency professional development program failed. Alienation in professional development occurs when the adult learner is not at the center of his or her world.

In order for the teacher to “become an adult” they have to reject the ideological dispositions of the decision makers, who desire them to conform to institutional norms rather than become emancipated learners. One example of the ideological influences on this professional development program are that teachers are considered technicians, not what Giroux (1998) called engaged public intellectuals. Another operating ideology is that teachers do not know how to teach minority students as evidence by the students’ poor performance on standardized tests; this ideology is based on the assumption that standardized tests are objective and culturally neutral. These assumptions are deeply problematic and reflect significant alienation between the student and their learning.

The conditions of the cultural competency professional development program fostered alienation among the teachers, the administrators, and the purpose and content of teacher professional development. The decision-makers delivered the curriculum content in a standardized way that diminished the role of the learner--the teacher. The cultural competency professional development curriculum content was disconnected from the transformative notion that “they have to be connected to a notion of justice; one that is capable of articulating how certain unjust social structures can be identified and replaced” (Giroux, 1988). The content of this professional development program had the potential to elicit discussions on unjust social structures. However, the district administration was unable to consider the powerful aspects of this content in light of the district’s problems. Rather they chose standardized content and delivery methods.

As a result of being alienated to the learning, teachers and students respond to alienation by resisting and rejecting the content they are to be learning. There is a long history of teacher resistance to reforms in education that stem from concerns about time

and authority. The first wave of school change attempted to address teacher resistance, said Gitlin and Margonis (1995) by providing teachers with the additional support, in the form of outside experts that they needed to implement change initiatives. The problem with this approach was that it did not address teacher agency. Fullan (1993), Hargreaves (1992), Rosenholtz (1989) and Sarason (1990), were the next group of educational change scholars that addressed teacher resistance. Their main concern was that the learning culture did not support change. Fullan (1993) explains the connection between teacher agency and change. He said “educational change is a process of coming to grips with the multiple realities of people who are the main participants in implementing change” (p. 95).

Coming to grips with the multiple realities of the implementers of change (teachers) means digging deeper into learner’s identities. This suggests implications for changes in the professional development program design. What Wojecki (2007) discovered resonates with my investigation of professional development. He stated that adult educator responsiveness in noticing and attending to learners’ identities as a way of re-engaging adult learners...that adult educators might find successful teaching strategies that enable adult learners to have opportunities in which to re-author their identities to learning. (Wojecki, 2007, p. 170)

This point about noticing, attending to, and constructing successful strategies to empower the adult learner to “re-author” (Wojecki, 2007) their identities and re-engage in the learning process connects to the success or failure of a professional development program. Sfard and Prusak (2005) said

It is not unreasonable to conjecture that identities are crucial to learning...

identities are likely to play a critical role in determining whether the process of learning will end with what counts as success or with what is regarded as failure. (p. 19)

These arguments are important to my contention that the cultural competency professional development program was unsuccessful. The lack of teacher agency in program content and implementation and the lack of a culture of support in the district were the two main contributing factors to this program's lack of success. As I have established, the program designers consulted experts and took a deficit-approach to constructing the professional development program. The purpose of this discussion about agency and alienation is to reveal the profound lack of agency that repeatedly emerged during data analysis.

The Reasons for Resistance and Rejection

In this section I present the respondents' data that indicates the reasons why they resisted and rejected the cultural competency professional development program. The three reasons for resistance and rejection are attitudes toward change, lack of teacher agency and alienation to the content of the professional development program, and lack of background knowledge about the professional development content. These topics will be explained in the subsections below.

Teachers Concepts of and Experiences with New Educational Initiatives

Before I analyze these respondents' data on the effects of this professional development program, it is important to gain insight on the teachers' levels of openness to change. Detractors to my main arguments about the lack of success of this program for these respondents due to standardized content and delivery methods might try to counter

that teachers are fundamentally opposed to change. This stance denies several contextual influences. In determining these respondents' levels of receptivity to professional development ideas, I culled responses from the data demonstrating the varied respondents' views of change. After I identified the respondents' comments on change I grouped them into three categories: "open to change," "contradictory to change," and "resistant to change."

Open to change.

First I will discuss the respondents who were "open to change." These teachers consider themselves as learners and are open-minded when presented with new professional development material. They also pursue their own learning and experiment with new ideas in their classrooms. Here Esther comments on change in her teaching practices, which demonstrates her openness to change and her beliefs in teachers as continuous learners.

My friend across the hall says nice things to me, like 'you should stay and teach.' At 30 years I guess I could retire, although for other reasons, I don't really think about it. But as a veteran teacher she'll say to me 'that's really good because you tried something new, or you'll try something different.' I like to think that even though I'm a veteran teacher, I'm not wedded to something just because I have always done it that way. I think that it's better to be a veteran teacher who's open to ideas. I really think that when teachers quit being open to ideas, whether they're veterans or second year teachers that it doesn't matter what [professional development] course you give them.

Esther asserted two notions about change. The first notion was that as a veteran teacher she believes it is important not to adhere to routine practices just because she has always taught that way. The second thought she expressed is that the success of any professional development program hinges on the teacher's (whether a veteran or novice teacher) attitude toward change. Going in to the cultural competency training, she possessed the attitude of a learner, and does not want to be seen as someone not open to learning.

While it is not in the scope of this discussion to investigate the implementation of her core values in the classroom and over time, her statements indicated that she did not fall into the category of teachers who resist change due to alienation. She expressed pride in her colleague's perceptions that she is willing to try new strategies, and expressed her belief that being open to ideas as a personal characteristic is more important than any professional development program.

Esther is a veteran teacher who embraces change and her colleague, Christine, a first year math teacher, also embraces change. Here Christine articulated her incorporation of differentiation ideas into change practices in her classroom.

We do some re-teaching or she [the co-teacher] will re-teach in the resource class just to catch them [the students] up to speed. We modify their assignments some, and we try to teach different strategies. We will teach the same concepts. I will teach one way, and she might teach it a different way to get their attention. Then we can connect [with the students] easier [by saying] 'Oh do you remember the way Ms.V taught you?' [The student says] 'oh yeah, I liked that way. It is a lot easier than the way you taught me.'

Christine's passage has the quality of describing authentic classroom activity. One aspect of this is that Christine did not use the term differentiation; rather she described modifying assignments and using different strategies to teach the same concepts. In addition, she articulated the students' responses to the variety of teaching strategies.

Christine demonstrated her openness to change in two ways. First she expressed the different ways she and her co-teacher teach the same material; this is a characteristic of differentiation. However, not only did she say that she used different strategies, she also engaged the students in reflection on the efficacy of the strategy. Asking for student feedback is a quality of a learner open to refinement of their teaching and change of practices to better meet student needs.

Contradictory to change.

Second, I will discuss the respondents who were "contradictory to change." These teachers tend to say they are learners and present evidence to that effect; however they also articulate problems with new learning. This means that they may or may not be implementers of new ideas.

Grace and Mary, two FDR teachers, fall into the category of expressing contradictory sentiments about change. On the one hand they seem to embrace change, yet on the other hand they articulate barriers that overwhelm their efforts at implementation. For example Grace stated,

Here is a disclaimer. I love my co-teacher and I love working with my co-teacher, but she is more for the direct instruction. So, that makes it difficult sometimes for me to try to push in other ways of doing things [such as cooperative learning]. I think if we do more of the cooperative learning and some of the investigations I

would like to do, they [the students] would buy in to it more, because they see that they are learning.

In this passage, we learn that Grace is inclined to experiment with new ideas, but has to negotiate the teaching environment with her co-teacher. The teaching relationship usurps her desire and ability to implement new learning. She said,

Yes right, my personality doesn't push for what I want. I want to try to compromise and make it easy for both of us to try to find an easy solution.

Grace, the veteran math teacher at FDR talks about her notions of change in practice. Her desire to implement changes is mitigated by her need to maintain harmonious relations in her classroom. Again, this notion of ease and efficiency, as mentioned by Grace stunts growth. She also talks about the lack of administrator evaluation and feedback as a barrier to change.

And I don't think we get enough feedback on, 'This is what you want your teaching to look like, and this is what it looks like.' There needs to be a little more [from the administrators] of, 'What am I doing? Are there any suggestions on what I need to change?' I don't get any of that.

To promote change is to address teacher agency by gathering the teachers' thoughts on ways they want to improve and by connecting that to teachers' notions of the work environment and the goals of the school and the district.

Mary from FDR also expressed contradictory ideas about change in her responses to my questions. When I asked her if she thought there were differences between the implementation of new learning by novice and veteran teachers, she replied,

Sometimes I think it is not necessarily easier for the novice, but as a new teacher you have to build the curriculum anyway. If I know that the school or the district wants to do cooperative learning, and I have to build a lesson, it is easier for me to build a cooperative learning lesson, if I were a veteran teacher and I taught the same thing for ten years, I would have to change that lesson. I am [as the new teacher] writing a new lesson anyway. On the other hand, veteran teachers have much better classroom management, and can implement any type of cooperative learning.

At first reading, I thought that Mary was making a general observation that veteran teachers do not change their curriculum. However, the thrust of her comment is about the ease or difficulty with which teachers can change their curriculum. Mary's comment suggests a "cover story" for resistance. Ease and efficiency permeate the institutionalization of teaching, and teachers use this argument to justify not making changes in the classroom. Mary spoke of change in her case as being easier because of her overall newness to the teaching profession. This reason is related to years of experience, not that change is a sign of continuous growth and learning in the classroom and the profession.

Mary's statement about how behavior management abilities can affect the teacher's ability to consider change also indicates contradictions. She said that problems with behavior management can impede the implementation of new teaching strategies. Behavior management concerns can also be used as a "cover story" to not implement change. In her passage, Mary attributes this excuse to the novice teacher, but this "cover story" is used by both the novice and the veteran.

Another contradiction in Mary's receptivity toward change is her emphasis on the need for accountability. At FDR the teachers learned about cooperative learning after the cultural competency training. Mary expressed her lack of desire to implement cooperative learning due to accountability, colleague dissonance, and student behavior.

Judy: Where do you see it [RCSD professional development] going?

Mary: Test scores

Judy: Okay you think that the bottom line for professional development is how do we improve test scores?

Mary: Maybe I don't even know what the definition of professional development is. Because we aren't even held accountable for doing any of it, whether it be the cultural competency, or the cooperative learning.

Judy: What do you think about that?

Mary: No one has ever held anyone accountable.

Judy: So what does that mean to you?

Mary: It [the professional development program] doesn't matter. It makes some of it [the professional development] a little bit of a waste of time. I mean you can say cooperative learning is research driven, and it is great and I love it. I wish our kids got good at it, but the minute I say our kids need extra [help or effort because they are from minority backgrounds] our teachers say these kids are just like the other kids. I go, oh well, these kids are not being held accountable for being appropriate. They are mean, and in a cooperative group you need to stop meanness--that needs to be part of the grade and that needs to be part of the discussion and the lesson.

To Mary the lack of leadership involvement in accountability measures such as requiring lesson plans, implementing new ideas, and analyzing changes in student learning meant that the professional development program did not matter. Her need for the leadership to require accountability measures for her to take the program seriously indicates a lack of positive learner dispositions. A true learner is motivated by the intrinsic qualities of the learning process. Mary's comments on accountability support what Ha et al. (2008) found that the role administrators' play in promoting change and growth in novice teachers is important. Novice teachers have not developed their professional identities and are more attuned to the leader's actions because of their newness to the profession (Ha et al. 2008).

As Mary's colleague at FDR, I noticed she used the term meanness when referring to the students' aggressive behavior. Mary often used student meanness, the lack of teacher accountability for implementing new ideas, and lack of implementation with program fidelity as reasons to disengage from a new initiative. She viewed cooperative learning implementation as binary; either a teacher implements it true to the "research based" principles she learned in college or the teacher should not implement cooperative learning. Mary struggled with student behavior and advocated for grading student behavior. She demonstrates confusion in this passage. Meanness, as she described it, does need to be part of the discussion with students when creating a positive classroom community, whether one is doing cooperative learning or not. Grading student behavior is a way to punish additionally those who have had difficulties in life. While on the one hand she tried to sway her colleagues by stating the seventh grade students might "need

extra,” her solution to grade behavior is a punitive answer to the complex set of problems that arise in a racially and socio-economically diverse classroom.

Mary and Grace were placed in the “contradictory to change” category, because they responded to the programs in ways that indicated some barriers to change. However, as their colleague, I know that they implement new ideas in their classrooms. The classroom observation data I collected demonstrated this. Mary displayed posters of thinking strategies indicating her implementation of professional development learning about English Language Learners. Grace had a stack of art books that show the use of pattern in art-making traditions from different cultures: African Kente cloth, Southern Folk art quilts, and Islamic architecture.

Resistant to change.

Finally, I will discuss the respondent “resistant to change.” Teachers who are “resistant to change” tend to be negative to new learning. They do not implement new ideas or if they do, it is done in a perfunctory manner. In the fall of 2006, after the cultural competency professional development program took place, all the middle school teachers had to participate in professional development programs on differentiation. The rationale for following the cultural competency training with differentiation was that after the RCSD teachers examined their biases and developed cultural sensitivity they would need instruction on culturally competent teaching strategies: how to individualize student learning to better meet minority student needs. In our conversation about differentiation, Babs voiced indicated resistance. She said,

We had lots of good laughs, though, with differentiation. When things go really wrong, things go really wrong. We tried different things, and we

would talk about it, and to me that was worthwhile. Thinking about having a better understanding [of differentiation], I do differentiate even though it is not on a grand scale. I mean that is the thing about differentiation once you really start looking [at your teaching] you do learn that you do a lot of those things.

Babs' comments can be interpreted in different ways. She said she and her teammates would try different things, would talk about it, and perceived the process as "worthwhile." However, she viewed the learning and implementation as a one shot instance. She and her teammates performed the duties of polite professionals by "doing differentiation." The evidence for resistance comes in her next sentence. When teachers say that the professional development program content is not new, but rather old ideas re-presented, they are demonstrating resistance. Like Grace, Babs' personal life may also have influenced her resistance to these professional development programs. She was in her fifth year of teaching, was pregnant, and was unsure whether she would return to the classroom. During the interview, she stated that she was considering going back to school to become a guidance counselor.

After completing my analysis of my respondent data, I sent the relevant sections that included my analysis to each of my respondents. Babs replied to my material regarding my analysis that she was resistant to change motivated by professional development programs. Babs wrote,

Reading your dissertation gave me the opportunity to reevaluate the way I speak about professional development. My fundamental belief is that professional development (whether it's cultural competency, differentiation, PBS or teaming) is too important to be delivered and implemented with mediocrity and needs

improvement. However, I failed miserably at expressing that view while speaking with you. I just wanted you to know it really made me evaluate myself (which I believe is a vital procedure in all professions).

Part of her need to respond to me indicates her discomfort at being categorized as resistant to change. While I do not intend to label my respondents, Babs did demonstrate her reluctance to make lasting changes in her teaching practices. Here she provides a reason why; she thought the programs were delivered in a mediocre way. Also, she stated in her interview that the teachers had too many initiatives to consider. This fact promotes perfunctory engagement because the teachers get overwhelmed.

“It was [just] on our agenda:” agency and alienation

The RCSD professional developers did not consider teacher agency in the cultural competency professional development program for middle and high school teachers. What is the basis for my claim? My experience as a participant researcher and the respondents’ data demonstrate that the district did not design this program by putting the teacher at the center of the needs assessment process. During my involvement in the development, implementation, and participation in this mandated professional development program, I observed that the teachers’ voices were not part of the decisions regarding content or program delivery. In my analysis of the narratives there was overwhelming evidence that they felt no sense of agency. This came through in their comments about having their time encroached upon, being held accountable, and having little voice in the content and delivery. In fact, the data collected in this interview study indicates that the teachers did not change their thinking or practices because of this professional development experience.

This state professional development model requires needs assessment. If asked, I am sure the professional developers would say they used needs assessment data to determine the need for the cultural competency professional development program. As I have stated before, the large minority achievement gap demonstrated a problem between teaching and learning in middle and high school classrooms. If the developers had considered teacher agency, then they would have begun by gathering teacher needs assessment. For example, they could have asked the teachers to reflect on culturally insensitive practices and achievement gap data for their own content area, classes, and school. Babs supported my assertion that administrators did not use a variety of data to ascertain the need for this program. She stated that the principal presented the training as,

It was just on our agenda, there was no tie. They [the administration] didn't say well we've been looking at our office referrals, and it looks like out of our 20 African Americans that we have, they've been referred five times each to the office. But, it was just in the middle of everything we were doing.

This quotation illustrates the lack of the administration's commitment to the cultural competency professional development program and the lack of district best practice in deciding how to conduct professional development programs. Babs served as the union representative for her school. In the capacity of the union representative, she participated in state-sponsored events to inform the union leaders about new legislative developments in professional development. Her critique of the way the school administrators handled the cultural competency professional development program demonstrates her knowledge of best practice in professional development. First, she mentioned the lack of the use of data to support making the case for this program: my

interpretation of her response is that she was frustrated by the lack of teacher agency in the lack of needs assessment and in the choice of timing. She also mentioned that the program was conducted in the middle of all the other responsibilities and initiatives occurring in her school during the spring of 2006. Mary complained about this too. She said

For me it's just that I'm not given the time to get good at any of it [professional development programs]. If I'm going to be given the time to do differentiation and cooperative learning I'm going to have three years of training and the reflective piece that it takes to get good at, then rock-on. Bring it on! But if it's one more thing on a "to do list" of twelve that no one's checking on, and I've got everything else to do then it's going to get swept under the carpet.

Both Babs and Mary understand that it is not best practice to have too many initiatives taking place at the same time. As a new teacher Mary highlights the problems with having too many professional development programs and trying to keep up with all the other responsibilities of teachers.

Babs' teammate, Esther, the science teacher, echoes her dissatisfaction with the program, both in the timing and the lack of agency in deciding how this learning would best take place. Esther said

I definitely thought that since they didn't pay us to do it, and they took away our planning time to do it; it was one more responsibility, one more hoop that we had to jump through. I think the real issue was that we were told we had to do it during our planning time together. So, since we are all very busy people [we asked ourselves] how's the most efficient way we can get through this, not how

can we most expand our cultural competency. We came from the idea of here's a hoop, we will jump through the hoop and here's our stuff.

In her comments, Esther demonstrates the pervasive lack of teacher agency. The professional development decision makers did not consider teacher needs regarding when they would like to learn the new information, so the program was viewed as "one more responsibility." She and her colleagues' attitudes that it was just another hoop engendered the efficiency response endemic in education. She says it above; they wanted to get through the program efficiently rather than to learn and increase their understanding of cultural competency.

While novice teacher Christine was unlikely to say she was a hoop jumper she spoke in ways that represented her lack of a sense of agency regarding the professional development program. I asked my first question, "Describe the cultural competency professional development program?" Christine responded.

We split up the chapters [rather than reading all the chapters]. In our group, we read the chapters, and we discussed that we had to document questions with each chapter. I think that we did that as a group. We had to compile [our responses], just to document that we doing it.

Compliance is the main theme in her statement. Christine continued by describing her frustration with requirement inequities in her building.

I did math plus last year [the year the culturally competency program was implemented]. I was with the sixth, seventh, and eight grade students. I did not have a team, so I went with the fine and applied arts team. It was kind of a little unfair because we did not have a team plan [all other teams have team planning

to meet], so we had to meet after school. It was just kind of frustrating. Like after 2:30, and sometimes later.

She also expressed the lack of teacher agency in the topics for professional development and the pressure to prove that her team was doing the training.

I felt like it was just something that we got pushed to do it [the cultural competency program]. Just like this year, we were doing differentiation and we got pushed into this. It is just harder to [get everything done]. There is always so much that goes with it. It is just not the discussion and the trying it out, it's this is what you need to get done, and this is how you need to show it is getting done. This leaves less time for everything else.

As a new teacher it makes sense that Christine expressed concerns about time issues and the time it takes to demonstrate accountability. One question I had after hearing her; did she feel that as a new, well-educated teacher that these programs were redundant because she had training in college? The answer was no. As Christine's responses illustrate these Proctor teachers were not inspired, unsettled, or pensive about the content of this professional development program. They were annoyed and responded to the tasks in a perfunctory manner. Their efforts were a matter of documentation not engagement.

While at Proctor, the teachers were pushed to demonstrate that they did what was required; at FDR middle school the principal took a *laisse faire* approach to the requirements. The principal announced that the social studies teacher would be leading the cultural competency professional development program during two in-service dates, and each team leader needed to have her grade level teachers read and answer questions

Grace at FDR concurred with the teachers at Proctor. She commented on the standard approach that the district used to determine professional development classes.

This [cultural competency program] was a blanket approach. It [cooperative learning] was a staff development program where the whole building had to choose. It was expected that the whole building would do that. If it isn't the building saying this is what we want for the staff development part, [then it is less likely to work]. [It is less effective] if the [whole] building has to buy in to it [because we do not all have the same professional needs and desires]. So yeah, we got to choose between three different things, but it [cooperative learning] still wasn't you know, this is what we are looking at doing in our building. It was [the district administrators saying] this is what we need. I think that kind of staff development is different [the district officials are saying] here is what we are offering you, pick one. I do not think there is a buy-in to cooperative learning, and I did not see the connection to cultural competency.

She reiterates that the lack of teacher agency resulted in a lack of interest in and personalization of the professional development programs offered during the spring and fall of 2006.

The district's method, as explained by Grace, was dictated to the teachers. The administrators possessed a grand vision for how cultural competency related to cooperative learning and differentiation of instruction. The administrators gave their charges, the teachers, a choice between the two researched based programs. The administrators believed that buy-in would result because the teachers had a choice. Yet, they all had to choose same thing. As Grace said, there was a lack of understanding and

little buy-in because the building still had to come to consensus and choose one program. The teachers are not like the children who sit in classrooms; they are professionals. They did not buy-in to the professional development programs on cultural competency and the follow-up programs designed to assist them in implementing more culturally responsive strategies in the classroom because there was no real agency in the process and because of the standardization of the choices. Grace's reasons for not appreciating the choices in content foreshadow large learner implications that connect teacher alienation to student alienation, which will be discussed later.

The preceding comments explain how lack of teacher agency in the decision-making process resulted in little to no teacher buy-in to the professional development program. A skeptic to the teachers' assertions might say that they just do not value this topic. In the following paragraphs I demonstrate this was not the case.

Administrators purchased the text *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People who Teach* for every middle and high school teacher in this large urban district. All the respondents had their own copy of the text, yet they did not read the book. Again, because the decision-makers did not solicit teachers' needs or ideas on the topic, or options for what and how they could study this topic, alienation resulted. Babs expressed this.

You know cultural competency is probably an important thing. Being a Riverdale public school teacher, we should not only have training in this, but we should embrace this because it is important for the students we teach, and it is important for the staff we work with. But it is just one of the things though [one more

professional development program], it just feels like it is being crammed down your throat, read this book. Do this now.

As is evidence from this piece of data and throughout my interview with Babs, I sensed her commitment to this topic. However, I wondered why she and Esther did not involve themselves with the material. Of the program Esther said, “After I got done with the cultural competency, it was like I didn’t even open up the box [the book] they offered me.” The teachers’ lack of agency in content and strategies for learning the content resulted in a lack of engagement with the text and the topic of the professional development program.

Of the text, Babs stated,

I thought that overall it wasn’t a horrible text, I was not at all offended, it made me question myself when I read through it, so that did not bother me. I don’t necessarily like, although I could be wrong in my opinion, I don’t like when they give us a text that has fill in the blanks about your opinions or respond in these blanks. And they really want us to do that. I feel as a professional, I feel that I can read something and talk about it with my peers. I do not necessarily have to record my thoughts; professionally I don’t think that is very respectful.

Babs objected to the strategy of the program that required her to record her thoughts. The process of having to record her thoughts made her feel disrespected and caused alienation to the topic. Here she is talking about her strategy preferences for learning the material.

This comment occurred early in the interview and initially concerned me that this respondent seemed to be complaining about trivialities. I felt this because I thought some of the reflection pieces in the text were good, and this strategy modeled best practice. As

the researcher, however, I felt that I needed to suppress my judgmental feelings. As the interview progressed I came to understand that this was a safe way for her to begin the discussion of her overwhelming frustration with the accountability issue.

Here Babs' colleague Esther concurred that she values the topic, but objected to the timing of the professional development program.

Anytime they take my planning, time away they better be doing something really important. Again, it's an important topic [cultural competency], but why not do it in the summer or something?

Esther uses her planning time to prepare for hands-on science opportunities and grading, and resented being told she had to attend a class during this time, even though she thinks the topic is important.

Mary, a novice teacher at FDR, also expressed concern about the training occurring during her team planning time.

We did our team stuff first. This [cultural competency] came second and that definitely trumped some of what should have been talked about. Also, ours [team planning] was in the middle of the day and I think that might have made a difference.

She explained that the desire to attend to personal and student needs between her last class and before the team planning diluted her motivation and attention during the team's cultural competency book discussions. Here Mary said that cultural competency should be talked about. One reason they resisted and or rejected the program was due to a lack of teacher agency in timing.

Planning time is a “sacred cow” in the minds of teachers. Yet, these teachers have two planning periods a day: a team plan period and a personal plan period. The cultural competency training took place during their team planning; therefore they still had personal time to plan. So, skeptics might ask, why are these teachers complaining about the program taking place during their planning? Again, this refrain is a safe way to express displeasure with the program; all administrators know that planning time is important to teachers, and this is an acceptable excuse for resistance and rejection of the program. The problem with this cycle of teacher “whining” about losing planning time and administrator frustration with teacher displeasure with professional development is that neither group understands the importance of teacher agency. If the teacher is professional and is presented with a problem with achievement, then they would want to use their time to learn and collaborate with colleagues to solve problems. If administrators perceived the teachers to be engaged public intellectuals, then they would honor teacher identified avenues of professional learning and trust that the teachers will engage in continuous learning to better meet the needs of their students.

The professional development dialect in RCSD is that the teachers want to be treated as professionals, but the administrators want the teachers to produce students who can achieve on a proficient level. Both constituencies are neglecting the learning process. Here is an example. The two novice teachers, Christine and Mary, did not read the book. This demonstrates rejection of the program. Mary openly admitted it, and Christine demonstrated it. I asked Christine to comment on the scenarios in the text. She replied.

Christine: Yeah, I remember them, I feel bad because I do not remember what we discussed.

Judy: That is okay if you do not remember.

Christine: I do remember reading them and talking about them, but I do not remember what exactly we got from them.

I interviewed Christine first and felt that she was uncomfortable during the interview. One interpretation of her ill ease was that she viewed me in a position of authority, as the veteran teacher and researcher, and did not want to present herself as deficient or in a negative light. On the other hand, after I asked her another question about Ruby Payne, she blushed. She stated she did not know who Ruby Payne was even though there was an interview of Payne on the website that was required reading. Her lack of memory about the book is evidence that she did not read it. She could not risk admitting her lack of engagement to me, the researcher who assured confidentiality, because, more importantly, I was a peer and a veteran RCSD district employee.

As we learned in chapter four, Christine felt unprepared to work with minority cultures in an urban setting and stated that she had a difficult year. This fact would seem to indicate that she would have had an inherent interest in this cultural competency professional development program. Yet, she did not engage with the material as is evident in the preceding passage.

Mary, from FDR, replied to my questions about the influence of text used in the cultural competency training on her thinking and teaching.

Judy: The cultural competency training involved learning some of those terms like transformative views, social justice views, what do they mean to you?

Mary: As terms, I do not know them.

Judy: Okay can you just say you do not know.

Mary: I didn't read the book

Judy: Ah, okay so you didn't read the book, because you.

Mary: I didn't need the credit.

Mary's comment shocked me. As a veteran teacher and a person who is open to ideas, I was disappointed that she had not read the book. Again, however, I suppressed my disappointment: a judgmental feeling. Mary was one of five new teachers to FDR middle school, and as I have presented earlier we worked in a very toxic building. Mary aligned herself with some of the younger teachers who portrayed a superior demeanor as a defense against pejorative attitudes displayed by the veteran staff. These younger teachers did not understand the need to participate in this program.

Her statement that she did not need the credit illustrates her rejection of her responsibility to participate in the program. All the teachers needed to read the book, as a mandated part of the program. The teachers desiring credit needed to complete ten additional hours of study using the website, watching a movie, etc. Mitsumo (2007) quoted a Japanese teacher blog where the teacher stated that s\he did not support the new reforms s\he was required to implement, but would behave like an adult. This teacher states that adults adhere to the teaching plan. I have asserted that the district administration infantilizes the teachers, but in Mary's case she did not behave like an adult. She did not fulfill the minimal requirement of the professional development program by reading the chapters for discussion in her team meetings.

Time issues can be used as a "cover story" for resistance and rejection. In further discussion with Mary, she said she did not want use her personal time to read the book. In

the institutionalized context of public schools, teachers resemble factory workers more than intellectuals, and time issues illustrate this point. Contracts dictate arrival and departure time, minutes for lunch, and planning time. Work outside the contract time is not required. These respondents' resistance and rejection of their professional duties indicate a larger problem in education, which is that institutionalized practices and mechanisms born in the industrial revolution undermine teacher agency (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). These hierarchical institutionalized structures diminish professionalism and produce alienation. Thus alienation occurred in this mandated professional development program because the teachers did not have any agency over the need for this content, the choice of reading material, and did not desire this type of professional development at this time.

Mary was a first year teacher when the professional development program was implemented. She has grown since I interviewed her. This is evident in her response to my request for feedback on my accuracy in quoting her and in interpreting her comments. She wrote.

I already know I have learned so much in my third year of teaching and these ideas have evolved. So it goes with maturity and reflection. Thanks for letting me be a part of this and furthering my understanding of my profession.

Grace and Esther were the veteran teacher-respondents. As we learned in the earlier chapter, Esther did read parts of the text and remembered the obnoxious teacher example. Yet, Esther did not like the fact that this professional development program content was delivered through a text. Grace, the other veteran, responded to my questions about the text as follows.

Grace: Honestly, I read very little of the book.

Judy: How many people do you think on the team read the book?

Grace: Um parts, I'd say maybe a third of the group read parts. I do not think very many people read the whole thing.

Unlike Esther, Grace's reasons for not reading the book were not due to not liking to read and discuss scholarly material. Her reasons were similar to Mary's; she did not want to use her personal time to read the assigned text. As we shall see, Grace is involved in a book study, in which she chose to participate, that required reading research in math education. As team leader she did nothing to motivate the other eighth grade teachers to read and take the cultural competency professional development program seriously.

While the administration used expert-driven ideas to design the professional development program, they adopted only some successful strategies. The idea of using book study seemed appropriate as a strategy for professional development to the administrators. However, because there was no input from the teachers regarding the timing of the book study, the topic of the book study, and the choice of book, this delivery structure did not support growth in cultural competency in the teachers. The teachers came to the book study with a lack of motivation, and therefore were not willing to make the embedded training meaningful. These respondents' reasons for their lack of engagement due to inattentiveness to the teachers' learning needs including strategies and timing reduce to a profound lack of teacher agency. Resistance and rejection result when professional development goals are unclear and teachers do not have control over the learning episode.

Another aspect to resistance and rejection that emerged from the respondents' data and relates to the data already presented about attitudes toward change and agency, is the subtheme of a culture of support. If we grant teacher agency in the professional development process, and have teachers who are open to change, this professional development program and others might still result in failure if there isn't a safe environment for learning. Babs said

I think it's a topic [cultural competency] that requires a very safe relationship; one that you're willing to expose yourself and your flaws, your strengths and your weaknesses and take feedback on those things [cultural insensitivity]. I don't think it is a topic that everyone is willing to say, 'Yes, please tell me that I don't like Arabs.' You have to get the data. I don't think people are always comfortable letting themselves be exposed. This is a topic that you have to allow yourself to be exposed on, if you want any growth. Because we don't always see the things we do in terms of culture.

We have seen this concern for being exposed to racist attitudes before in Esther's comments. As Babs points out, the content of this professional development program needs to be addressed in a learning context that is safe and provided with a safe environment perhaps she would work to develop culturally relevant teaching practices.

Mary also articulated the lack of a safe environment in which to learn about cultural competency. Here Mary characterizes the lack of trust and support at FDR middle school.

We didn't have a safe enough room for anyone to even hypothetically mention what would that [she is referring to the cultural competency continuum] mean and where would we go with that and what learning I would take from that.

My experience as a new, veteran teacher at FDR middle school echoed Mary's experience as a new, novice teacher at FDR, which was that the culture was toxic due to low trust among the old and new staff and the staff and the administration. Therefore, the school lacked caring attitudes toward colleagues, trust, and commitment to professional growth in this area. Mary pointed out how this negative culture prevented the book discussions from being meaningful to the teachers due to the lack of a supportive culture.

FDR middle school was led by a beleaguered principal who could not provide direction, vision, or calm to the toxic building. Due to the designation of FDR as a SINA school and in its first year of sanctions, the veteran teachers resented the influx of over 10 new staff hired to raise test scores. I relished the task of leading our team book talk on the chapter about conflict titled, *Managing the Dynamics of Difference*, because I believed many of the problems in the building stemmed from the shifting terrain of power. This was evident during my experience leading the book discussion when the principal sat in on the discussion about conflict. Terrified of conflict, the principal displayed uneasiness during my discussion, and after the session challenged me on several issues. She did not embrace the idea that co-workers could use strategies to address conflicts openly. Her approach to dealing with large and small conflicts in the building was to divide and silence people by punishing them, using veiled threats.

An example of her punitive style comes from my work with other FDR teachers who desired continuing education credit for their participation in the cultural competency

professional development program, and wanted to use the multicultural.riverdale.org website to earn continuing education credits. I e-mailed the staff explaining how I wanted them to create a respondent number to use on the website. Moments after, I was called to the principal's office and told that I was not to be using the district e-mail for this purpose, because it violated board policy. First, my use of the e-mail in support of the cultural competency professional development program was not a violation of board policy; the program threatened the principal's need for control. She had recently terminated a teacher for improperly using the e-mail, hence my interpretation of her statement as a veiled threat. Improper use of the e-mail and the Internet is a widely known method RCSD principals' use to terminate employees. As I have illustrated, the principal's inability to address staff concerns and changing cultures, and her strategies to stifle the teacher leaders who had new ideas resulted in a setting inhospitable to learning.

The issue of a culture of support at Proctor middle school was different from the issues at FDR. At Proctor, as we have seen, the emphasis on accountability suppressed feelings of support for learning. In addition, Esther discussed the concerns of new staff and veteran staff interacting in discussions about cultural proficiency. She said,

Perhaps it was because we had a pretty experienced team. We had one person who was retiring, me with almost 30 years experience, one teacher with 20 years experience, and then we had a brand-new-out-of-the-box teacher. I do think he felt free to talk. I also think as a brand-new-out-of-the-box teacher, if he had really wanted to call us on prejudice, I think it would have been hard for him to do.

This quotation underscores the need for teachers to have time to build trust. Attempting to move teachers, who based on Esther's reflections, needed to advance on the cultural competency continuum, requires time and trust. In addition, considerations about the varying characteristics of the teachers who have different experiences need to be considered when developing a culture of support in a learning process.

The Problem the Achievement gap, the Solution Professional Development?

Resistance results when teachers do not perceive a need for the knowledge. Creating coherency and a sense of urgency raises the level of attentiveness one gives to a particular problem (Attard, 2007). Loucks-Horsley, Love, Stiles, Mundy and Hewson (2003) emphasize the importance of articulating an ideal to strive for in the introduction of a professional development program. In this instance, professional developers did not articulate the vision that all students could achieve on a high level. Another reason for the lack of teacher involvement in the cultural competency professional development program might be due to the administrator's inability or lack of effort in educating his/her staff about the achievement gap.

In querying the respondents, I learned, and had my own observation confirmed, that in these two middle schools, data analysis and achievement gap discussions did not happen on a deep or regular basis. Therefore, the teachers did not possess a sense of urgency about raising minority student achievement, and did not understand how the cultural competency professional development program connected to reducing the gap. They also did not view themselves as culturally incompetent--actually quite the opposite. This perspective stems from the defensive stance teachers take due to the tacit implication that professional development is conducted from perceived teacher deficits.

For example, to my question about the perception of a need for this type of professional development Mary replied,

I think that most people who choose to work at FDR, and I think it is a choice, already think that they have it figured out. It is very hard to break that barrier to get them to learn something new. I mean, most of the white middle class teachers there are proud to work at an urban school, and to most people urban school means diverse.

This sentiment echoed what I perceived in the team meetings I participated in when we were discussing topics from the text. Mary observed that the veteran teachers who have taught for many years at FDR considered themselves committed to their racially and socio-economically diverse students. Just because the standards for success have changed, it does not necessarily follow that these teachers are racist or culturally incompetent. Again, the concern is in the institutionalized nature of public education situated in a capitalist society.

In her comment, Mary conflated cultural competence with resistance to change. The team members she described are resistant to change in teaching practices, because they are cynical about the need for change; they aren't necessarily resistant to cultural competency. These veteran teachers have seen administrators and programs come and go, while they have remained committed to their students at FDR middle school for whom society does not care for. Drawn from the work of Polakow (2000) that educational injustices are due to "what does predominate, however, is an 'at-risk' discourse that pathologizes poor children and their families, ignores vast economic inequities, and fails

to confront the cumulative impact of racial and economic discrimination on children.”(Polakow, 2000, p. 9)

On my team, my colleagues had difficulty seeing concerns related to race, and asserted that we have gotten beyond that issue. On the cultural competency continuum, according to Robins et al. (2006), this represents cultural blindness. They defined cultural blindness as treating everyone the same because the differences are not seen. As a new teacher to the building and the facilitator of the book discussions, I did not feel comfortable challenging the veteran teachers’ assertions in the context of these book talks. Therefore, discussions about classroom practices, school and district policies that may be culturally insensitive, particularly related to race, did not develop. I do not mean to represent my colleagues negatively; rather I am pointing out what Attard (2007) said, “tacit knowledge and routine action lead us away from the need to improve” (p.150). Mary and I are referring to colleagues that have taught at FDR for many years, and have developed routines to manage teaching in a high stress school that serves the poorest and most racially diverse sector of the city.

The year Mary and I joined the FDR middle school staff was FDR’s third year as a SINA school, and during that year, the staff did not address the achievement gaps that resulted in SINA sanctions. This surprised me. Clearly, the principal and the district-level administrators knew the stakes were high for changing the academic course of our school, but they were neither equipped nor interested in presenting the data as a way to motivate teachers to engage in the problem-solving process. For example, when I asked Grace, an 18-year veteran at FDR middle school, about the achievement gap, she replied

I am aware of the fact that African American males do not score very well. As far as the testing goes, they are also the hardest students for me to get motivated to do anything in my math class. I mean the Hispanic males are starting to be a close second.

In fact, during this time, the number of FDR middle school students who performed at a proficient level on the ITBS (proficient defined by the Department of Education as scoring at the 41st percentile or above) in reading was 43.10% as compared to 71.23% at Proctor middle school, and 58.23% across the district. This disparity increases slightly in the math achievement scores with 42.62% of the FDR students' proficient compared to 75.82% at Proctor middle school and 59.90% across the district. The minority cultures at both schools, which include students in low socioeconomic conditions, special education, Latino, and African Americans, did not reach 45% of the students attaining proficiency in reading or math on the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade levels.

During the focus group interview, the Proctor teachers expressed concern that their students on free and reduced lunch and the African American students were not achieving at the same rates as their non-minority peers. These teachers learned this on the last teacher day of the 2006 school year. On the last day of the 2007 school year--a year after the implementation of the cultural competency training; they learned that the gap had widened since the previous year. When asked about the level of understanding about the achievement gap at Proctor middle school, Babs stated,

There is very little understanding of the achievement gap. There is a one-shot presentation of the data.

She and her colleagues went on to say that at the beginning of the school year, they talk about the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), and at the end of the year, they discuss the achievement gaps. Babs, Esther, and Christine agreed that these “one-shot” exposures did not help them see the importance of this issue. At the beginning of the year, teachers are eager to get their rosters and rooms ready for the students; at the end of the year they are tired and busy with cleaning tasks and goodbyes. Planning data analysis activities and problem-solving important instructional issues on the first or last day of the school year did not lead to meaningful efforts and deep understanding. What is required is an ongoing dialogue. Esther, the veteran Proctor science teacher illustrated the point.

Judy: What about the achievement gap issues on the team?

Esther: One of the teachers was new to the building. She would repeatedly say, not just in those times that we’ve talked about that, but she would repeatedly call attention to the fact that we need to do better with these minority students because they’re [the district] keeping statistics. She was always disappointed because we didn’t reach them or we never really developed a strategy just to reach our minority population. So, I would say we were well aware of the problem, but that’s about where it ended.

The one teacher who was new to Esther’s school tried to push Esther and her colleagues to address the achievement gap, however her reasons indicated the reasons that promote resistance--district accountability. Esther reported that her colleague wanted them to do more because the district is keeping statistics on each school. While Esther reported that they were aware of the problem, they were not motivated to do anything about the problem. In the NCLB context, the teachers and administrators are alienated from the

model of the engaged public intellectual (Giroux, 1988) who would be connected to their students in ways that transcend conversations about minimal achievement.

The evidence presented so far suggests that the district and school leadership did not connect minority student achievement or the changing district demographics to the purpose and need for learning the content of the cultural competency training. Without connecting the achievement gap to the everyday classroom practices, creating classroom practices to be a catalyst for learning, and without allowing teachers to control aspects of the learning and change initiatives, the teachers resisted and rejected this cultural competency professional development program. Yet, passivity is embedded in my arguments based on the data. We teachers are not demanding agency for ourselves as publically engaged intellectuals. We know about the test scores and can see that our minority students are not achieving at the same level. Why don't we take action? From the respondents' data the reasons are alienation due to institutionalized practice, toxic work environments, top down decisions, and accountability.

As part of the lack of teacher agency, many of the respondents discussed accountability. The lack of accountability at FDR resulted in teachers not reading the book. At Proctor, the strong emphasis on accountability squelched the teachers' motivation to learn.

Babs, Christine, and Esther spoke forcefully about the deadening effect the accountability requirements had in their school. For example, to my question about accountability Esther replied.

We came from the idea of here's a hoop, we will jump through the hoop and here's our stuff. We did it. That was the main reason; I don't think it was as effective as it could be for the book.

Unlike the Proctor administrators, the administration at FDR was not actively engaged in the professional development program. They delegated all aspects of the program delivery to the teacher leaders. Mary speaks about her experience at FDR middle school.

Mary: Okay you think that the bottom line for professional development is how we improve test scores. Maybe I don't even know what the professional development is, because it seems like the professional development isn't even, we aren't even held accountable for doing any of it. I mean whether it be the cultural competency or the cooperative learning.

Judy: What do you think about that?

May: No one has ever held anyone accountable.

Judy: So what does that mean for you?

Mary: It doesn't matter.

To Mary the lack of leadership involvement in accountability measures such as requiring lesson plans, implementing new ideas, and analyzing changes in student learning meant that the professional development program did not matter. This sentiment demonstrates the important role administrators play in promoting change and growth in novice teachers (Ha, Wong, Sum, and Chan, 2008). While as a novice teacher, Mary wanted accountability. For some like me, Babs, Esther, and Grace, accountability represents a level of disrespect for the learner. These relations, of whom accountability measures are an example, are antithetical to a learning environment. Yet, some teachers like Mary

assert to the need for these measures, because as novice professionals they are more attuned to traditional power relations.

Teacher Visions of Professional Development--more of the same?

As I have established in this chapter, the respondents in varying degrees resisted and rejected this professional development program for a variety of reasons. The most significant reason explored in the preceding sections is lack of teacher agency. This lack of putting the teacher at the center of the learning process created alienation. The fact that they did not assert their needs or tackle the topic in their own way is a symptom of the alienation. So, in an effort to place them in the center of their own learning, I asked the teachers to state how they would create professional development programs. These data are discussed in this section and illustrate several contradictions.

Babs described the contrast between how the RCSD cultural competency professional development program was served up at Proctor and what she thinks would have been better.

I just want accountability to be something other than paperwork. Right now, I feel like administration and teachers think accountability is: fill out some form, show me in some form of writing that this is what you're doing. To me that is not even worthwhile. [Administration] stop by my room and watch me try to implement something, and say that was really cool or could you mention that at the staff meeting. To me that's a different level of accountability, that's much more worthwhile than let's make sure we get all of our logs done and we have our questions answered and that we've covered our rear-ends. I think that's the part that turns people off.

What is interesting about Babs' comment is that she does not debunk the notion of accountability; she just wants a different version. In the next passage on her vision, we see that she does not reject the notion of using experts.

One of the participants who has done some cultural proficiency stuff this year is Hillary Caulkins. She is our Spanish teacher and she is African American. She has done a lot of programs like white privilege in college. Now she has some associations with that, and she is really passionate about that. I think I would be a lot more geared up if Hillary was up there talking about all these things that she is really excited about, and she knows so much about. We would still get some kind of training in that, but there would be this ownership from that person [Hillary].

Babs, like the other respondents do not speak about transformation of practices in professional development. Rather, she is looking for a better, more inspiring expert to deliver the material to her. Babs seems to suggest that creating ownership is external to the teacher as learner. Later in the interview, Babs described another part of her vision for professional development.

Right. We got the theory, and now let's run with it. Let's take risks, let's fail and let's succeed and let's just try.

This vision suggests that she wants professional development programs to be based on theories and wants time to develop practices in a collegial setting. Analyzing all her statements we see that she adheres to the view that experts and theories should drive the focus and that there should be elements of inspiration and action. While I am chagrined to suggest this, my concern with her depiction of professional development borders on a desire to be entertained. Again, I wonder, what prohibited her from meeting the

challenges of the professional development programs she was asked to engage in? What internal struggles do these respondents have in their teaching and relating to the diversity they face in the classroom? One response to why they do not act, is that Babs and the others were not asked about their struggles or what they needed, they were told what their needs and paths to growth would be. Alienation occurs when the learner is not at the center of their world making decisions upon which to act, and results in passivity which is a form resistance and rejection. If these teachers were actively engaged in applying theory to practice and evaluating the impact of their efforts on student learning, they would not need accountability measures.

Another suggestion mentioned by all the teachers is that to empower and inspire adult learners professional development planners need to differentiate. Babs suggests, “Differentiate in terms of staff development because you want to give people choices.” Esther said.

They just about have to self-select. Anything that you tell me and anything that you’re going to make every professional staff person in a building do is just going to not fit a third or half of them. They’re going to resist and drag their feet. People are so different and are at so many different places.

Differentiation is not about merely giving choices; it is about developing an understanding of the learner, allowing the learner to design a variety of ways to learn the material, and constructing ways for the student to demonstrate their learning. Esther suggests this fact in her observation that teachers are going to resist a standardized approach to professional development. To achieve differentiation in the case of the adults what is needed is knowledge about adult learning pedagogy.

Specifically in his research on learner identities in the workplace, Wojecki (2007) makes a distinction between how adult learners represent themselves based on experiences in the formal learning setting, and other alternative aspects of their identities as learners that exist in the background due to “the flux of experience” (Frank, 1995, p. 22). Wojecki (2007) says, “this notion of agency is linked to learners’ identities and subjectivities” (p. 174). He is referring to what Billet and Pavlova (2005) call “agentic action,” which means the way adult learners develop learning goals in the workplace. To empower and inspire adult learners, professional developers must assist teachers, like teachers should assist their students, in determining problems to solve and methods and materials to provoke the learner to discover solutions to those problems.

Esther offered many ideas, including differentiation, to solve the problem of teacher disengagement in professional development. Esther explained,

Make it a definite emphasis, make it maybe paid. Another thing [she did not like] the least common denominator is a book. Everybody can read the book and everybody can write the questions out at the end, but there might be other things like a movie. Somewhere there is certainly a movie that deals with race issues that you could [use]. To me, that website you had was insightful and that might be a crack to get to people, because it does shake you up. But to read it in a book – it doesn’t get down to the heart of people who are lost. When you do that in high school, they say that you’re a crappy teacher. So, when you ask your professional college educated staff to read chapters and answer questions it doesn’t seem like the best practice.

One issue of concern in Esther's passage is that she is speaking about reading a book as a problem, when the problem might be the specific book, not any book on the topic. Her terminology indicates that she is talking about textbooks, and if so, she is correct. As a science teacher, she knows that hands-on learning and using a variety of non-fiction texts inspires students more than reading a textbook and answering questions.

How does she know that reading a book doesn't get to the people who are lost? Again, she could be making assumptions about the teacher who is already lost, as being unreflective and therefore not skilled enough to read and reflect on these issues in a book, even if the book was different than the text adopted for this professional development program. She spoke about the power of the website activities to unsettle stereotypical attitudes, and serve as a wedge into the teacher's consciousness on issues of race and class. The website activities did involve reading and interacting with what was read. From her perspective as a science teacher, it may be the case that this combination appeals to her and other learners like her.

Esther's suggestion that teachers need to be paid to participate in professional development is problematic. First, again, it represents alienation between the learner and the teacher because it is an institutional response and an extrinsic motivator for learning. Her suggestion is that the professional development program would be established and the teacher would be paid for seat time. In fact, as a result of being a SINA school, the teachers at FDR can receive payment for their professional development seat time. Based on my experiences with FDR colleagues in the classes where we received payment, there was no change in the relationship between the learner and the professional development program. In a profession where methods matter more than mind, as evidenced by the

curriculum in teacher education programs, anti-intellectualism is the result whether teachers are being paid or not. Engaged public intellectuals have developed their work habits and learner dispositions so that they do not need external motivators to involve themselves in learning.

We have seen Esther's preference for the practical when she complained the cultural competency professional development text was too esoteric. Again, Babs and Esther are envisioning their professional development program ideas within the institutional educational framework. Babs does not eschew the expert model, she just wants a better expert. While the respondents demonstrated their anger at the lack of teacher agency in this professional development program, they are blinded to what this might authentically look like.

Mary, the first year science teacher from FDR middle school articulated how she would change professional development, which is more of the same.

I would have clear and measureable objectives. Then I would hold teachers accountable for those clear and measureable objectives. Even if it is just every team do a cooperative learning lesson once a year. [This would provide] something to build upon, and then reflect on how did it go. Does this work for us? Where can we improve?

Mary's singular focus on accountability of the teacher is an indication of her anger at a system, public education that almost threw her aside. She referenced the objective scientific principles that she learned in college when trying to infuse structure into the chaotic life at FDR middle school. She views learning as an empirical process that can be

reduced to “clear measureable objectives.” Yet, the last three sentences of Mary’s statement, like Babs’ statement above, about the process of learning and implementing professional development initiatives does suggest that they understand the components of constructively critical relations in improving teaching.

Grace illustrated the most transformational professional development vision of putting the teacher at the creating meaningful and ongoing learning. She explained the importance of personal reflection and community in a professional development program that she has been involved in for two years.

The book talks that we had about the articles that we read [motivated us]. The interactions with the [other teachers], people [say] go and try something and videotape yourself. The other motivation was that they [the researchers] came in [and] they had us start off by writing out everything that we said were our priorities. They interviewed us and gave us post-its that showed us our interview answers [about] what we said our priorities [were]. They put those two together, and then they videotaped us teaching. You could see, you know, do you see your priorities in your teaching? One of my priorities was that math it is about thinking, not just getting right answers. When they videotaped me, I saw that I said, ‘Yep that is the right answer. That is the right answer. This is what you do to get the right answer.’ You know it was like, oh my God, I need to change what I am doing so I am not just focused on getting the right answer!

I end with this reflection by Grace, a veteran math teacher whose has spent her entire career at FDR middle school. This is an exemplar of how the teacher is developing her learner identity, her changing views, and her practices based on the observed difference

between her values and her practices. She chose this professional development program, which is supported by her administrator, and continues to evolve in her teaching practices. This example could be applied to cultural competency, and could be built upon by offering different avenues for teachers to “re-author” their learning on the topic. Based on the voices of these teachers, and myself, I believe having book discussions, viewing movies, and using online formats represent differentiation in attaining the goal of cultural proficiency. Nevertheless none of these strategies will lead to authentic learning until they are guided by authentic teacher needs assessment. Teachers need the time and space to self-reflect on their values and beliefs about teaching and about teaching minority students.

Trickle Down Alienation

What do these respondents’ professional development experiences indicate for future RCSD professional development in particular and the field of professional development in general? The most significant point that resonates with my work is the simple fact that differentiation is desired by the teachers. In articulating what they envision positive professional development to be, they demonstrated their understanding of the efficacy of differentiation as a theory of teaching and learning. Esther’s comment regarding how she would be negatively perceived if she gave her students a book and asked them to read and respond to questions, is ironic. We both know that teachers use this strategy everyday in our buildings and across the district. Our students reject and resist the deadening affects of standardized teaching practices. Our minority students, as evidenced by the achievement statistics presented, are not making achievement gains under these standardized strategies.

Grace's positive professional development experience demonstrates key issues in this professional development story. Grace is participating in an emancipatory professional development program that required her to dig deeper into the connections between her theories and her practices. However, this program is an aberration brought about outside the realm of RCSD professional development. Her professional development was created and led by a university researcher.

Two aspects of her example are pertinent to the future of professional development. One is that higher education needs to be more directly involved in the daily life of schools and teaching and learning. While they are experts, when brought in and given time to develop relationships and trust, professors, graduate and undergraduate students can serve as catalysts to engage teachers and administrators in rich learning experiences. The other aspect of Grace's example that needs to be considered in future professional development planning is the opportunity to articulate and reflect on teaching values, and then examine how these values are represented in teaching practices with students.

The challenge of creating a Grace-like opportunity for every teacher is great, and plagued by trickle down alienation. The teachers were alienated from the program, because they were not creating their own acts of learning based on their needs and the needs of their students. I have established that this is due, in part, to the mandated nature of the cultural competency professional development program. Yet, we cannot blame the administrators. As the data indicated, they too were alienated from working with their staff to foster individual and school-wide learning efforts.

NCLB has caused trickle down alienation. As one of the most intrusive federal legislative acts in the life of public schooling, this piece of legislation is built on mandates and accountability. The United States Department of Education mandates curriculum, assessment, and achievement criteria to the states. The state departments of education mandate curriculum, assessment, achievement, and professional development criteria to the local school districts. Local school district administrators mandate curriculum, assessment, achievement, and professional development criteria to the schools, principals, and teachers. And so it goes: alienation for all.

Educators involved on the state, local, and building levels have visions, passions, and needs as professionals and learners. Yet, because of these mandates they are alienated from being able to act on their skills, data collection, and needs to better the lives of the people whom they serve. So, for all the good that the creators of the No Child Left Behind Act wished for, they have engendered trickle down alienation that potentially guarantees public schools' failure to close the achievement gap by 2013.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

And yet words on a parchment would not be enough to deliver slaves from bondage, or provide men and women of every color and creed their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States. What would be needed were Americans in successive generations who were willing to do their part - through protests and struggle, on the streets and in the courts, through a civil war and civil disobedience and always at great risk - to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time.

Barack Obama, Speech on Race, 2008, ¶ 4

How, indeed, could the incalculable novelty of a truth; and the hole that it bores in established knowledges, be inscribed in a situation without encountering resolute opposition?

Alain Badiou, *Ethics an Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, p.32

I learned that the mandated RCSD's professional development in cultural competency implemented in the spring of 2006 engendered resistance and rejection in my five respondents. The reasons for these responses and the overall lack of engagement include a profound lack of teacher agency in the program topic, planning, and implementation. While the respondents stated they saw value in learning about cultural competency their deeply experiential stories revealed barriers to their changing views on the program content.

In this chapter I will summarize the main ideas from each chapter and connect my findings to larger questions. These questions include how do my findings add to current debates taking place in professional development and cultural competency? What implications for teacher education can be drawn from these respondent data? How has NCLB perpetuated the institutionalization of public education, and what does this mean for its main goal of reducing the achievement gap?

I divided this chapter into seven sections. In section one, *Old Problems in a New Era*, I address the rationale of this study in light of my findings. The central problems that framed this investigation were the demographic imperative, the achievement gap, and professional development. In section two, *Cultivating Caring and Competence: the Debates*, I situated these problems in the literature on multicultural education and professional development. The literature in both areas of inquiry provided me with the theoretical framework for understanding my data. In section three, *My Methodological Reflections*, address my role as an insider to this process. I also discuss the pros and cons of the insider versus outsider position. In section four, *Deeply Experiential: Data Collection on Race, Poverty and Professional Development*, I explain the methods I used to collect the respondents' data. I discuss some of the problems I encountered in the data collection and how these problems may have affected the data. Section five, *Curriculum in its Own Right: Implications of Race and Poverty*, provides the reader with a summary of the multicultural findings that emerged from the respondent data. In this section I argue for change in pre-service teacher education based on my results. In the section, *Teaching for Understanding: Disturb, Upset, Enlighten, and Envision*, I re-tell the story of resistance and rejection in professional development. I address the question whether it was the content or the delivery of the program, or both that produced these respondents' resistance and rejection of this professional development program. Finally in the last section titled, *Ideally, What can Professional Development look like?*, I offer suggestions for further research and practice in professional development.

Old Problems in a New Era

Since the standardization of education going back to Horace Mann, the public school teacher has been predominantly white and female. One could argue that the demographic imperative has existed since the early 1900s in large urban school districts that swelled due to the waves of immigrants. Yet, the adoption of NCLB in 2001 placed these facts in high contrast. While multicultural scholars who track the demographics and care about minority achievement identified this growing problem prior to 2001, it wasn't until the federal government attached sanctions for low minority student achievement that urban districts had to care on widespread and meaningful levels. The federal government and district responses to these problems were and are to provide for teacher professional development.

This old problem, the demographic imperative, has been recast as the leading act being addressed in urban districts across the country. RCSD hoped to “flip the script” of low minority student achievement by requiring teachers to engage in a cultural competency professional development program. As we have seen the program was implemented using some “best practice” ideas in professional development. These ideas are book study and reflection during the school day and opportunities for independent learning and practice using resources such as a website. However, the respondents articulated many problems with expert ideas being implemented without teacher agency.

Cultivating Caring and Competence: the Debates

The progression of multicultural educational practice supports the focus on the teacher. In demonstrating caring for minority cultures and honoring their contributions, early multicultural activists in education pushed for additional curriculum materials to

represent women, African Americans, the disabled, and other minority groups. This tolerance perspective raised the level of awareness for the contributions of women, African Americans, and the disabled. However, this knowledge was transmitted within the framework of the status quo. The achievements of minorities were selected to support the dominant paradigms within the various academic disciplines. Professional development for teachers centered on learning about heroes, holidays and food traditions. As a response critical theorists challenged the tolerance perspective and advocated for the transformation of curriculum content and delivery. They wanted transformation of the oppressive structures in society and in public institutions so that the harshness of Whiteness would be revealed and challenged. In this way the contributions of minorities would be integral to the discourse in academic disciplines rather than an addition that could be deleted.

Professional development for social justice or to encourage a transformation in the status quo, has had limited affect. There are many reasons for this, which include a lack of support due to entrenched power structures. Also, in the high stakes achievement gap educational environment, professional development programs that are not linked to reducing the achievement gap in reading, math and science do not receive administrator and staff support.

The preceding two multicultural perspectives advocated for changes in the curriculum and educational institutions; what followed next, the focused turned to the teachers. Cultural competency programs combine social justice goals with current professional development practices. Teachers are to engage in self-examination on issues of race and class. These interactive and reflective practices are to engage the teacher in

the process of self-transformation. This self transformation is to engender more culturally relevant and sensitive teaching practices.

The history of teacher professional development loosely mirrors the development in multicultural education. The first wave of reformers focused on developing “teacher proof” curricula. Teachers were viewed as technocrats delivering expertly developed programs. Next professional development scholars addressed the structural elements necessary to create meaningful professional development programs. The thinking in these reform models was that attending to issues of time, course loads, culture of support, and focused content would result in a higher degree of engagement and learning. Known as the interactive model, the research showed limited success in connecting professional development to positive gains in student achievement. So, another component was added to the expert professional development perspective: reflective practices. Japanese Lesson study is one of the most successful examples of the integration of reflection with the other essential components of professional development: needs assessment, theory, practice, peer coaching, reflection, and change. However there are cultural differences between Japan and the United States that make the practice of authentic lesson study unlikely. Second Chance Reading is one of the most successful professional development programs in the U.S. that incorporates elements of lesson study and addresses the components of quality professional development.

My Methodological Reflections

As an insider researcher as a RCSD teacher for five years, I offer some caveats to my interpretations and analysis of the data. The pros of my insider position include an unencumbered perception of this professional development program: I have no invested

interest in the success of this particular program. The cons of my insider position include a potential bias against deadening administrative practices and a potentially critical stance toward those who are skeptical of change because I typically challenge the status quo. As an insider teacher, even though I was a contributor to the professional development program, I typically do not merely embrace administrative professional development initiatives. Therefore I represent a skeptical standpoint toward pre-packaged professional development programs and teachers who uncritically embrace these programs. This skepticism, one may argue, represents a negative stance toward all efforts that I do not deem relevant to my perspectives. As a teacher for over 20 years, this is a rational interpretation because I have seen many mandated programs come and go without any real impact in the intellectual life of the teachers. In addition I have been highly motivated to pursue my own learning based on my own self-assessments of my deficits as an educator.

Another potential insider researcher bias has to do with my varying relationships with the respondents. I had more intimate personal and professional relationships with the teachers from FDR middle school. Grace and I weathered some very difficult times at FDR middle school that resulted in the principal losing her job. I developed a respect for Grace and Mary, both FDR middle school teachers, because they were not afraid to advocate for change and to speak their minds. My respect for and personal involvement with these respondents facilitated a very close up view of their data, because I had cultivated their trust overtime. This may represent an imbalance in my interpretation of my data from all the respondents. This may be most evident in my assessment of the respondents' attitudes toward change as a result of professional development initiatives.

The benefit of an insider perspective versus an outsider view includes many issues; the most important is an appeal to honest reflections. In my introduction to the interviewees, I called on my insider teacher standpoint to engender trust and facilitate respondent honesty in discussing the research questions about this professional development program. I believe the data collected demonstrates this respondent honesty.

The problems with outsider relationships to the research location and to the respondents are that assumptions may be made due to unreflective practices as a result of detached, more objective standpoints. In high-stakes public education research settings, I believe the insider standpoint relationship to the subjects results in more interpretive credibility than outsider views. This is because the insider can relate and articulate professional development experiences that were deadening and resulted in resistance and rejection that does not indicate negative teacher characteristics. Outsiders appealing to arguments of detached objectivity might not understand the overwhelming institutional nature of urban schools and might not be able to elicit honest responses. In high stress, high stakes environments, it is not always safe to honestly reveal concerns and criticisms about programs that are designed and funded by the teachers' employers or other institutions of authority.

Deeply Experiential: Data Collection on Race, Poverty and Professional Development

In this qualitative study the respondents' data was gathered in individual interviews, a focus group interview, website document data submitted online and one classroom observation. The interview data was transcribed verbatim. After collecting and transcribing all the data, I created data portraits of each respondent. From these portraits I attended to the individual issues and collective themes that emerged from the data.

In my process of choosing participants I encountered problems. Having teachers from the same work team and teachers who I knew well and less well hindered some of the dialogue. This became apparent in my interview with Christine, a second year math teacher working at Proctor middle school. Esther introduced me to Christine and as the interview began I immediately realized that she felt uncomfortable. After trying to put her at ease during the explanation of the study and of confidentiality assurances, when I asked the first question, she blushed. This interview was one of the shortest interviews and the interview where I felt like I talked too much.

On the car ride home, I tape recorded reflections. First, I examined my assumptions about the role of the participant researcher in the interview process. I believed that as a participant researcher, possessing a democratic personality and pursuing my inquiry in a community of practice for the purpose of improving the conditions of professional development for teachers (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), my assurances and explanations would be enough. In theory, I believed that the non-hierarchical relationship between participant researcher and respondent would be automatic since we were both teachers: it was not. My multiple roles as older teacher, researcher, and veteran district employee, amplified by the fact that we did not know each other personally prior to the interview, created anxiety in the respondent. It seemed that she viewed me as her superior. Our lack of personal familiarity and my experienced position as an educator may have obscured my ability to prompt more and more revealing responses.

The lack of familiarity I had with Christine from Proctor middle school was equal to my lack of personal knowledge my next interviewee from Proctor, Babs. Babs taught

sixth grade language arts at Proctor middle school, and she just finished her fifth year of teaching. Again, at the beginning of the interview, I sensed discomfort, but this quickly went away. Babs' interview was the longest of the five. What emerged as a problem during the interview with Babs was her uneasiness in describing situations that involved her sixth grade team members. I asked questions about differences between the novice and veteran teachers in implementation of the professional development program. Babs was reluctant to respond to these questions because she felt like she would be acting in a disloyal way toward her colleagues.

The two main problems with the participant selection were the issues of personal familiarity with the respondents' and team relationships in the work environment. These aspects affected the data collection and analysis processes. Primarily they potentially limited the depth of the respondents' thoughts on the issues that emerged in the interviews. This limitation then circumscribed the range of possible interpretations. Despite these problems and their affect on the data collection and analysis, they point to creative tensions inherent in the qualitative process and allow for global interpretations of teaching relationships as they pertain to professional growth.

The other problem I encountered concerned my observations of the teacher classrooms. The observation data set was scant; there were several reasons. These reasons do not necessarily point to a lack of implementation of the professional development program. My background as an art teacher may have caused me to feel disappointed and critical of the physical atmosphere in these teachers' classrooms.

Teacher affluence plays a role in how they implement new ideas in the classroom. Three of the five teachers were in their first five years of teaching. Teachers must

purchase resource materials such as posters, books, and other supplemental items. New teachers' salaries in the Riverdale district start at \$27,558. The Riverdale district provides teachers with approximately \$50.00 dollars for classroom supplies. This budgeted amount must cover all basic items such as pencils, tissues, staples, and art supplies for the entire school year. A teacher's personal affluence, resourcefulness, and creativity influence what visual and supplemental instructional materials are ultimately available to students.

Curriculum in its Own Right: Implications of Race and Poverty

Transformative multicultural theory promotes the concept that the experiences of minorities need to be an organic part of the curriculum growing out of the history of experience and discourse on race and the dominant culture. As I have stated, whiteness theorists aptly argue that race predicts poverty.

This professional development program offered a vehicle, the text, for reflection on the unequal power whites have in the United States. It also provided definitions and descriptions for the continuum of racist practices: more politely called "the cultural competency continuum." The text readings and reflective activities were designed to generate personal connections to marginalization in the reader and to enlighten the reader to change their thinking and practice towards minorities. However, the program and the material were resisted and rejected by the respondents.

Is it naive to think that one professional development program is going to transform respondents who call themselves colorblind and state that they will not change their middle class views? Yes. This topic is deeply experiential and attitudes about race and poverty are constructed in the lives and cultures unique to these teachers. This is what I learned: there are personal barriers to change in this area of scholarship. The

respondents revealed anger and apathy toward issues of race and poverty indicating that these marginalized groups have not earned their privilege. The respondents do not see that minorities have not been accorded their rights historically and presently as American citizens. As the current Democratic presidential race has exposed, we Americans have not seriously committed our efforts to confronting the gap between our Democratic ideal for *all* our citizens and the current reality that prejudice and oppression exists. If we are unwilling to engage as a nation in this discussion, how can we expect teachers to engage in these discussions and solve the achievement gap?

Not expecting teachers to address the achievement gap doesn't necessarily mean that teachers should not engage in self-reflection and growth on this issue. Again, I advocate for the cultivation of engaged public intellectuals who desire to grow, learn, and meet the unique challenges that their students present. For example, I often question my strategies for motivating some of my most difficult and apathetic students. They say they hate reading, they sleep on the desk, and they frequently skip school to smoke pot. I cajole, bribe, consequence, and collaborate with them to produce: many times to no avail. Some of my colleagues think I am idealistic and unrealistic, because I announce that all of our students can and should go to college: even the most alienated from the school setting. Maybe my status as a privileged white teacher communicates more at a visceral level, then my passionate appeals to my colleagues and reluctant students that further education opens doors and allows one to be a more fulfilled person able to act in the world: rather than reactive to bad circumstances.

Dewey (1916) statement guides my philosophy of education.

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child that must be what the

community wants for all its children. Any other ideal is narrow and unlovely; acted upon destroys our democracy. (Dewey, 1916, p.71)

It is not in the scope of this paper to address the pedagogical implications of Dewey's ideas expressed in this quotation. Rather his view is a guide for interacting with students, parents, and colleagues to create meaningful learning experiences for each student. In trying to live up to this ideal, however, I find myself at odds with students because they do not see the value of these dreams for them; it is hard to liberate the learner from years of societal disrespect and abuse. Yet, I am inspired by thinkers like Fine, Burns, Payne and Torre (2004) who stated, "counter to the stereotype, the poor and working class youth whom we interviewed want high quality, demanding teachers" (p. 678). Teaching is a challenge and teaching in a neglected urban school presents profound systemic challenges. However, the process of educating youth is an art that requires caring and competence nurtured by the will to continuously improve.

Thompson's (2004) ideas of thinking relationally about race issues present a path "to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time" (Obama, 2008, ¶ 4). She claims that the race debate is individual and static and seesaws between the colorblind theory and the "good whites," who are race traitors. My colleagues and I fit this description. I tend to fall into the category of the "good white" motivated by guilt. My more conservative colleagues claim the colorblind arguments. Adhering to Dewey's notion of the wise parent, and Ladson -Billings (1997), and Eisner's (1979) views of the teacher as artist represent ways to move beyond static, stereotypical race arguments. The respondent data supports scholars' assertions that teachers are reluctant to talk about race issues. This finding suggests that professional

developers and pre-service educators need to continue to find ways to help teachers look beyond stereotypes and address the individual needs of their students.

Teaching for Understanding: Disturb, Upset, Enlighten, and Envision

The main theme that arose during the in-depth interviews was the reported lack of relevancy the cultural competency professional development program had to these respondents. As I reflected both during and after the individual interviews, I interpreted this lack of relevance in two ways. First, this was a district mandated professional development program occurring during the school day; these teachers did not have an intrinsic connection to the material nor the sense of urgency to engage in the interactive and reflective aspects of the training. Secondly, the respondents admitted that they did not read the book, or if they did read the book, they only read parts. The teachers' lack of choice about the professional development content and their lack of effort to engage in the material greatly inhibited their ability and desire to derive meaning from the cultural competency professional development program.

Good teachers like good artists disturb, upset, enlighten, delight, and envision possibilities for their students. Adult learners like all learners, need to be viewed as individuals who possess varying learner attributes and strengths. Unfortunately much of the professional development that takes place in the RCSD has a deadening effect on teachers because it is conducted in a standardized way. In order to promote democracy teachers need to self-reflect and act on their reflections (Kuzmic, 2004). The data presented in this qualitative study supports my claim.

NCLB represents a retrograde philosophy in professional development. NCLB has perpetuated the expert model of professional development in its insistence on

research-based strategies that teachers must implement with fidelity. The NCLB mandates also stymie the notion of teachers as artists because of the standardization that is promoted in assessments and bottom-line achievement goals.

Ideally, What Can Professional Development Look Like?

The implications of this research on the RCSD cultural competency training and the larger implications for positive changes in the implementation of professional development include the following ideas.

- Transformation pre-service and in-service: teaching transformation , not tolerance, in multicultural education promotes a deep change in the relationships among majority and minority students, educational practices and policies, and teachers
- Understand the learner-adult and child: honoring student agency encourages an emancipatory learning relationship for teacher and the student and helps students grow to be self-motivated and self-actualized learners
- Thinking relationally about race: teaching transformational views on race relations promote nuanced views of race and poverty that considers individuals and particular communities rather than stereotypical notions of the student
- Teachers as artists: honoring and promoting the teacher as publically engaged intellectuals, rather than entities needing to be “wiped clean” and “loaded” with the newest professional development theory, avoids resistance and rejection in professional development and engenders meaningful change in practices and policies

- University school collaborations: collaborating with colleges and universities to assist teachers in examining their teaching values, teaching practices congruent with their values and their visions facilitate intellectual growth in teachers and greater potential for higher levels of student achievement
- Promote publically engaged intellectuals: assisting teachers in understanding emancipatory pedagogy, fosters a change oriented view of professional growth essential to meeting the needs of students (adult and child) in a dynamic and democratic society

Chapter Summary

My critics might chide me or call me audacious for taking a critical stance toward public education and this district's implementation of the professional development program. They might wonder at my assertions regarding the deadening effects of professional development conducted the way RCSD implemented the cultural competency training. How can she say these things with data from only five respondents? In two years since the cultural competency professional development program was mandated, RCSD still has a significant achievement gap in all their middle and high schools.

What these five respondents demonstrated was that pre-service multicultural education did not seem to have had an impact on these five middle class white teachers. Grace, Esther, Mary, Christine and Babs were all educated in the Midwestern state where they work. There are state statutes governing in pre-service and K-12 curricula that mandate this content be included in public education programs. In order for effective and meaningful change to occur education scholars, politicians, attorneys, teachers, and

parents are going to have to work together to transform the way public school is conducted. My role as an educator who has studied this topic is to be an example by referencing these debates in the multiple forums where I commerce.

Footnotes

¹As described in the National Center for Educational Evaluation Regional Assistance's 2003 publication *Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A friendly User Guide*. The call for randomized selection of participants put in experimental and non experimental groups.

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Appendix A

Interview questions

1. What does the term cultural competency (or multicultural education) mean to you?
2. Describe your culture meaning the cultural group you most identify with and describe a time when you felt critical of or at odds with the cultural group you identified in question
3. Have you participated in other cultural competency or multicultural education professional development programs either in college or as an in-service class? Please describe.
4. Name the other cultures you have a working knowledge of and is there a group(s) that you feel you have difficulty with.
5. How does culture affect teaching?
6. What did you think of the cultural competency training you participated in last year?
7. Describe the situations when you drew on the learning from last year.
8. What is your definition of cultural competency and has it changed at all?
9. What relationships do you think there are between cultural competency and teaching?
10. Was there anything that surprised you about the training?

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions

1. What do you think of job embedded training?
2. What do you think about paying teachers to attend professional development?
3. What are the characteristics of good professional development?
4. The issue of accountability is complicated and emerged from all your interviews: what ideas do you have regarding this issue?
5. What role does and should your professional life play in professional development?
6. What achievement gap evidence impacts you and your teaching practices?
7. What role does leadership play: district leaders, teacher leaders and administrative leaders?
8. What role does feedback play in professional development and what is the best method of getting feedback?

Appendix C

Raw Respondent Data

Professional Development Theme and Process subtheme

GI Honestly I read very little of the book you know and in terms of participating in the discussion on the topics just because of the nature of our group I was focused on, I do not think people totally got the gist that kids feel that we come from different backgrounds than they do and that this explains why they are the way they are versus “well I do not feel they should be that way a lot of the discussions we I do not care that they are from a different background this is the way it has to be”

BI It was just on our agenda, there was no tie. They didn't say “well we've been looking at our office referrals and it looks like out of our 20 African Americans that we have, they've been referred five times each to the office.” It was like to me, that you're taking some data and we have some cultural improficiency [sic] here because look at what's happening so let us tie it... But it was just in the middle of everything we were doing.

CI We met at Weeks for one of our professional development days, for that 8 hours or whatever and then otherwise it was team meetings. We had to show that we logged 8 hours we had to answer questions at the end of each chapter.