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“I’m going to have to be far more prepared": A critical discourse analysis of teacher candidate discussion and projected teaching of literature.

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“I’M GOING TO HAVE TO BE FAR MORE PREPARED”: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER CANDIDATE DISCUSSION AND PROJECTED TEACHING OF LITERATURE

by

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DEDICATION

For my grandma, Mary Luebke, our heart;

a linguist, activist, and storyteller;

who carved a path for our family in education;

who challenged me to be brave enough to fail at something new;

who, to her granddaughter, did everything right.

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It is what you read when you don't have to
that determines what you will be when you can't help it.
-Oscar Wilde

A story is never truly written alone. This dissertation is the culmination of support I received from so many fascinating and brilliant individuals. I have watched them closely, reading their narratives and drawing inspiration from their special minds. I have taken with me parts of each of them, as they have impacted me so deeply, both personally and professionally.

I am honored to know and to have worked alongside Dr. James Chisholm over the past four years and especially throughout this dissertation project. Beyond being a kind, decent human being, Dr. Chisholm is force in the English education academic community. I have benefitted from witnessing his unparalleled attention to detail, vast expertise, and genuine care for this profession and the students it serves. My doctoral experience was one of invaluable growth, and I believe it to have been so largely due to his guidance, time, and support.

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on the field of teacher preparation. Thank you.

Thank you to my family. Who has instilled in me a confidence to dream bigger and to aim with purpose. To my parents, who drowned me in books. To my dad, who never fails to remind me of his pride, but not his surprise, in my successes. To my mom, who has a heart for education and a mind hungry to learn; who carried the School of Medicine banner at her own graduate school commencement as an exemplary student but who, now, continues to bear torches for our family each day, illuminating the paths for our dreams and helping us believe we can see them. To my aunts, my twin pillars and favorite phone calls—one who would and has appeared by my side at a moment's notice; the other, who has read every word of every manuscript I have ever written–you are my biggest cheerleader. To my sisters and four bonus siblings, who keep me laughing in the face of what scares me: you are my sunshine. To my in-laws, who have shown me unmatched generosity at every turn; I don't know how I got so lucky as to have you in my life. To my friends—I love you to the mountains and back.

And finally, to my husband and partner, who unflinchingly accepts new adventures with me, unwavering in his support. Who sacrificed comfort and ease to hold space for my dreams, and who reminds me in moments of overwhelm that we can do anything, "one step, one punch, one round at a time." We have always been better together. And now, the mountains are calling, and we must go!

Decide what to be, and go be it. There was a dream, and one day I could see it. Like a bird in a cage, I broke in and demanded that somebody free it. And there was a kid with a head full of doubt. So I'll scream 'til I die or the last of those bad thoughts are finally out. There's a darkness upon me that's flooded in light.
-The Avett Brothers

ABSTRACT

"I'M GOING TO HAVE TO BE FAR MORE PREPARED": A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER CANDIDATE DISCUSSION AND PROJECTED TEACHING OF LITERATURE

Taylor Rose-Dougherty

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This qualitative dissertation study contributes to conversations around the practical knowledge gap–professional behaviors or practices which are underdeveloped in available research–between critically oriented literacy teacher preparation programs and praxis in early career classrooms. Critical literacy, or engaging with major texts, discourses, and ways of communicating in a culture or context, attempts to locate and disrupt power imbalances and encourage justice-oriented activism. While teacher candidates (TCs) often practice critical literacy in their training programs, they often struggle to facilitate critical literacy instruction in their own classrooms. Using Thematic Analysis (TA) for data reduction and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for data analysis, I explore TC discussion–both spoken and written–in an English Language Arts (ELA) Methods course (Methods) that centered critical texts and topics. Data sources include demographic surveys, Intersectional Identity Maps, recorded book club conversations, transcripts of recorded book club conversations, reflective book club writing, semi-structured interview recordings, and transcripts of semi-structured interview recordings. In analyzing these data, I address 1) the discourse moves TCs make

in order to sustain or evade sociopolitical talk during conversations around critical topics and 2) how TCs talk about enacting critical conversations in future classroom instruction.

The study's findings highlight patterns across TC talk, primarily in how they (a) imagine future students relating to Young Adult Literature (YAL) t exts, (b) c onceptualize adolescents, (c) w eigh what is appropriate content to discuss in the ELA classroom, and (d) conceptualize the role of the ELA teacher. Broadly, TCs privileged relatability when endorsing/rejecting YAL, positioned adolescents as too immature to engage with critical topics and texts, determined that sexual content in YAL undermined its educational value, and conceptualized the teacher as content-area, sociohistorical, and cultural "expert" while simultaneously limited in decision making authority. The implications for teacher educators feature practical vehicles–assignment and discussion prompts for modeling effective facilitation of critical conversations–and pinpoint where additional practical knowledge must be built, regarding when and how teacher educators should more precisely coach TCs toward criticality in their own reading and talk experiences.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

> *[Usually] we know how to ally only with the agreeable kids–the "good" ones, the ones who are most like us. How do we hear the kids who aren't? Teaching cannot work optimally if it is not rooted in this kind of community engagement. We are most powerful when we labor to understand young people and when we work alongside (not for) them. When our vision for kids and for classrooms is guided by a community's vision for their own children, our work becomes real to children and to parents. Relationships are appreciably challenging to maintain, but they become infinitely easier when they are grounded in a shared vision and genuine collaboration. Teaching without this kind of engagement is not teaching at all. It is colonization (Minor, 2019)*

In my educational experiences–training to become an English Language Arts (ELA) teacher, teaching in my high school ELA classroom, and instructing ELA Teacher Candidates (TCs)–I have both learned and taught what we, teachers, call "best practices." Across diverse educational contexts, best practices can refer to many things: learning strategies that are empirically supported, teaching moves that align with one's educational philosophy, and a toolkit of strategies that are generally accepted and promoted for supporting learners. Minor (2019) challenges educators to question, though, what is best or "good"? What does "good" look like, and what do the students, in our minds, look and live like when we, as teachers, make decisions about what is "good" for them? In education today, students and their needs are increasingly diverse, and they require teachers who challenge the notion of "best" by instead considering the uniqueness of their whole students–made up of many essential parts, like their learning preferences, races, ethnicities, languages, cultures, families, communities, and so much more. Minor (2019) encourages teachers to challenge what they accept as best practices that will reach the "good" students we picture when training to become teachers. What do we do, though, when our students' needs don't look very much like the texts, assignments, and

activities we've designed with them in mind? How can ELA teacher educators prepare literacy teachers to be cognizant of who their students are, leverage their assets for learning, and respond with agility when "best" practices fail? Teaching with such engagement is essential, but developing this practice is complex. In this dissertation study, I chip away at both problematic and generative moments in a teacher preparation classroom that might encourage such engagement through studying how TCs themselves learn through talk and talk about how they might teach in the future.

Research Problem

Critical literacy, a concept I develop more thoroughly in the study's theoretical framing, develops within readers the ability to decode and dismantle "ideologically constructed world[s]" (Boyd & Darragh, 2020, p. 51) in ways that interrogate oppressive systems, disrupt privilege, and problematize dominant social narratives. It holds a critical lens up to power relationships, between characters in texts; texts and their authors; texts and their readers; and readers and the world (Freire, 1968). Despite such affordances, research documents a disconnect between critical literacy-oriented teacher preparation and praxis in early career kindergarten through twelfth grade (k-12) classrooms for pre-service and in-service teachers alike (Cercone, 2015; Hendrix-Soto & Mosley, 2019; Isler & Dedeoğlu, 2019; Meier et al., 2015; Scherff, 2012). Scherff (2012) theorizes causes for this disconnect, or as Smagorinsky et al. (2004) call it, praxis shock: TCs in training programs have often never experienced critical literacy in their own education prior to college; TCs are taught critical literacy in preparation programs but are not given the appropriate tools to transform theory into practical and actionable instructional tools, and the versions of critical literacy sometimes taught in teacher education clashes with students' backgrounds or cultural assets. In other scenarios, TCs leave preparation

programs with misunderstandings of critical literacy, from associating it with only high-ability or "honors" students to conflating it with critical thinking (Scherff, 2012). In other words, some TCs misunderstand critical literacy as something a teacher or students, as readers, can "do," rather than acknowledging it as a school of thought and lens through which all literacy events can and should take place–one that extends beyond the classroom walls into everyday life, social interactions, media consumption, and civic action. Additional contextual realities threaten critical literacy approaches in k-12 spaces, from a culture of increasing teacher surveillance by parents and administration (Cook, 2021) to TC insecurities in facilitating critical conversations. Many new teachers wish to avoid controversy or fear seeming ignorant during complex critical conversations with students (Diaz et al., 2021).

Schieble et al. (2020) synthesize additional concerns, which include questioning if the school or community within which TCs teach is supportive of discussing complex topics like racism, feeling insecure about accidentally misspeaking, or being accused of promoting a partisan agenda. Skerett and Smagorinsky (2023) attribute this hesitation of new teachers to a growing culture of "head in the sand" education (p. 3), in which schools evade opportunities to respond critically to current events and instead privilege corporate, "abstract academic learning" such as test-taking skills and rote memorization of facts over confronting topics that are "threatening [students'] existence today" (p. 3). Of course, navigating conversations about complicated social issues is no simple task. Recently, teachers have been disciplined for expressing their opinions on aspects of political or social issues, and there are risks involved with teacher-guided inquiry into pressing social topics without crossing professional and ethical lines of promoting partisan stances (Skerett & Smagorinsky, 2023). Though difficult, teachers must

understand their educational environment–the contexts within which they teach and who/what might influence them–and strike a balance between tackling consequential social issues and imposing personal politics. Instead, they should offer students tools to navigate "topics that matter" (Skerett & Smagorinsky, 2023, p. 4) as they construct stances on and of their own. Schieble et al (2020) explain that new teachers worry about facilitating discussions where outcomes are unpredictable; they might become emotionally charged, the voices of reluctant speakers may become overpowered by more vocal students, and some students could become defensive. In conversations about social issues, vulnerability is required, and vulnerability, or a lack thereof, can look any number of ways–self-preservation in denial, coping with humor, evasion of emotional labor entirely, and beyond (Cook et al., 2022b; Schieble et al., 2020).

In a predominantly female, White[1] teaching force who serves or is preparing to serve increasingly diverse (Langelaan et al., 2024) student populations (Sleeter, 2017), avoiding critical topics has material consequences, disproportionately so for students of socially or historically marginalized identities via the denial of systems of oppression (Schieble et al., 2020). More specifically, 52% of k-12 students in the United States do not fit into dominant (i.e. White, middle-class, and monolingual) social identities (Goering & Gardner, 2024). The ways in which TCs take up critical literacy begins in teacher preparation coursework, and such training plays a crucial role in if and how they enact critical pedagogy in their early classrooms.

[1] I acknowledge the importance of and attention to language and its functions in society. I also recognize the hegemonic nature of language, and I have made capitalization choices informed by this reality. I capitalize Students and People of Color in reverence of a personhood and culture that history has attempted to erase (Mack & Palfrey, 2020). I have also chosen to capitalize White because capitalizing only non-White racial identities upholds Whiteness as the norm from which non-White racial identifiers deviate (Mack & Palfrey, 2020).

Much can be learned from how TCs talk around critical topics[2] in their own learning. Even in teacher preparation coursework that is intended to be critical in nature, researchers across the field notice TCs themselves struggling to engage deeply with topics central to critical literacy, such as racism, ableism, classism, sexism, and homophobia (Cook et al., 2022b). Evasive, defensive, emotional, or silent discourse[3] moves in critical conversations–"discussions about power and privilege that help students think critically about the world and their place in it" (Schieble et al., 2020) –might look like White TCs showing ambivalence or opting for silence around topics of race and racism or could manifest when TCs of dominant identity groups (i.e. White, middle-class, cishetero, abled) attempt to maintain neutrality, ultimately upholding colorblind and normative ideology (Rogers & Mosley, 2008). In a classroom discussion context, these moves might look like staying quiet, dominating the conversation, interrupting speakers, derailing topics, refusing to entertain counterarguments, and withdrawing from discussion entirely (Rogers & Mosley, 2008).

Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation study is two-pronged. It aims first to investigate the verbal and written discussion of TCs in response to critical topics in Young Adult Literature (YAL), and, secondly, to analyze how TCs talk about taking up (or not) critical topics and texts in future k-12 classrooms. I conduct this analysis with the end goal of

[2] Here, I use "critical topics" to refer to ideas, strategies, and learning behaviors engaged in the process of critical literacy. Throughout the study, I also refer to "critical texts" to refer to literature or media that engage critical topics. I wish to clarify, though, that critical literacy is not simply an add-on to how we read texts; rather, it is a frame through which we think, exist, and participate in the world (Vasquez, 2017). If this is true, then, there is no such thing as a critical literacy topic or text because any topic can be critical; any text can be critical. For the purposes of simpler references within the context of the study, however, I lean on these terms.

[3] I use "discourses" here broadly to refer to classroom conversations; however, a more detailed definition of discourse, as it relates to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), is forthcoming.

learning more about how TCs themselves engage in critical literacy, to see how this might inform their espoused early career pedagogical choices and stances. To guide the study, I pursue the following research questions:

1. What discourse moves do TCs make in order to sustain or evade sociopolitical talk during conversations around critical topics?
2. How do TCs talk about enacting critical conversations in future classroom instruction?

Research Gap

Robinson et al. (2011) conceptualize the notion of a "research gap," both naming and defining the types of gaps that can exist in a body of scholarship and that should be addressed by contributions of new work in the field. Such distinctions support researchers producing new scholarship when articulating the value of their study, as it addresses a specific research gap. Gap types include evidence gaps, knowledge gaps, practical-knowledge gaps, methodological gaps, empirical gaps, theoretical gaps, and population gaps (Robinson et al., 2011). In this study, I specifically address a practical-knowledge gap, which occurs when professional practices are not yet deeply explored by research (Robinson et al., 2011). Though research abounds on critical literacy in praxis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and critical conversations in teacher preparation coursework, this study's findings illustrate a disconnect that occurred between TCs' instructional stances and their talk itself, when engaging as "students" responding to YAL. In other words, what TCs said they wanted to do in classrooms was often contradictory to or complicated by what they actually said when they engaged in critical talk. I want to know more about why this happens and how teacher educators can respond, in order to coach TCs toward more critical talk *before* asking TCs to uptake critical instruction in their own

classrooms. I believe this study is valuable to the field of teacher preparation in highlighting the work still to be done, for teacher educators, in effectively modeling and facilitating critical talk. More intentional modeling and facilitation is essential in preparation programs, before teacher educators ask or expect TCs to engage students in critical talk on their own.

Study Framing

Theoretical Framework

Critical Consciousness. Rooted in the work of Brazilian philosopher Paolo Freire (1968), El-Amin et al (2017) define critical consciousness as "the ability to recognize and analyze systems of inequality and the commitment to take action against these systems" (p. 18), which stems from Marxist notions of critical thinking and analysis of power (Vasquez, 2019). In educating minoritized adult workers and working-class communities about oppressive social and class structures, Freire conceptualized critical consciousness to support an analysis of social conditions and systems, encouraging not just to read words but further, the world around them through a critical lens (Freire, 1968; Watts et al, 2011). Critical consciousness describes psychological processes through which historically and socially minoritized groups and individuals can critique multi-systemic (Jemal, 2017) injustice, such as social and economic barriers they experience (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Jemal (2017) describes critical consciousness as a theoretical framework with the goal of disrupting oppression at its core. To become a conscious and therefore truly human (Freire, 1968) individual, citizens must not only identify, name, and problematize inequitable sociopolitical forces but, further, must take action. Thomas et al. (2014) conceptualize critical consciousness in a three-part conscientization (Freire, 1968; Freire & Macedo, 2016): awareness of inequity, awareness of oppression, and

awareness of liberation. In other words, critical consciousness is a set of tools that can deconstruct systemic oppression like racism, sexism, and classism and is facilitated or supported by family, peers, and communities (Thomas et al., 2014). Schieble et al. (2020) mobilize critical consciousness by encouraging an awareness of and discussion around "languages of inequity" (p. 38), interrogating and making unusual (Nayak, 2007) systems of privilege.

Similarly to Thomas et al. (2014), Watts et al. (2011) also conceptualize critical consciousness in three components; however, they characterize how awareness of social justice comes to be and argue how to enact change when it does so. Critical consciousness can be constructed through the triad of critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action (Watts et al., 2011). Critical reflection refers to locating and critiquing social dynamics, practices, policies, and systems of injustices that constrain one's "health, well-being, educational attainment, [and] wealth" (Watts et al., 2014, p. 47); political efficacy refers to one's capacity to use their critical awareness to then engage in individual or collective activism; and critical action refers to one's ability to measurably enact institutional change. Diemer et al. (2021) highlight the importance of action orientations across critical consciousness frameworks. Understandably, they write, engaging in critical consciousness necessitates awareness and reflection; however, they critique reflection or theorizing about injustice without accessible, informed action as shortcomings for the liberatory outcomes Freire (1968) intended (Diemer et al., 2021). Instead, transforming reality hinges on "active, participatory process[es] through which individuals and groups gain greater control over their identities and lives, protect human rights, and reduce social injustice" (Jemal, 2017, p. 605). Further, Freire (1968) positioned reflection and action as reciprocal (Watts et al., 2011). With this distinction in

mind, Watts et al. (2011) disrupt a linear understanding of critical consciousness from reflection to action and, instead, position critical consciousness as reflexive, symbiotic processes that are constantly in conversation with/informing one another.

The force that most powerfully opposes liberation for individuals and social groups is the cyclical nature of oppression, both internalized and systemic (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015); social injustice poisons individuals, families, and communities, and if those affected are unaware of or ill equipped in how to locate and disrupt such injustices, oppression reproduces itself (Freire, 1968; Jemal, 2017). For this reason, teaching critical consciousness (or derivative or tangential instructional models informed by critical theory) is important to develop civically engaged, critically conscious youth, as well as adults. Jemal (2017) explains that critical consciousness is a "strengths-based, nonexpert" (p. 605) approach that is accessible to and empowering for individuals and groups of all ages, and young people are particularly capable in engaging in dynamic cycles of critical reflection and action-oriented goal setting (Diemer et al., 2021). Schieble et al. (2020) include young people as participants in critical consciousness, positioning critical awareness and action as accessible for all–it is a lifelong process of noticing hegemonic forces at work across nested contexts (e.g. self, family, school, community, state, and nation), understanding parts of identities that are manipulated or harmed within those systems, engaging in ongoing reflective processes, researching tools and resources make change realistic and attainable, and rethinking what it means to become fully human.

Critical Literacy. Freire's notion of critical consciousness is directly linked to the teaching and learning of literacy. Freire (1968) characterized reading and writing as vehicles for knowing, and readers and writers must critically reflect on how words

construct language but also how language constructs the world around us (Freire & Macedo, 2016; Vasquez, 2017). This means that beyond simply decoding or functionally understanding print words on a page, critically literate individuals should ask questions that interrogate texts for where and how power is at play. Schieble et al. (2020) write that critical literacy is an interpretive practice, and it shifts how readers make meaning of texts and visual communication in a way that trades searching for main ideas for active, inquiry-based stances that "discover how the text operates in underlying powerful ways" (p. 16). Beyond text analysis, critically literate individuals similarly investigate– "decode, comprehend, and critique" (Bean & Stevens, 2007, p. 18) –power in daily interactions (Rose-Dougherty et al., 2024), relationships, media, policies and procedures, legislation, and social systems.

I borrow Luke and Woods's (2009) definition of critical literacy as a skillset or "toolkit" (Janks, 2010, p. 300) that affords readers lenses for problematizing and critiquing texts, discourses, and media in a given culture or context, directing specific attention to how power influences such texts, their authors, their readers, and society at large. More specifically, critical literacy equips readers to critique cultural ideology that perpetuates exclusion and marginalization; to seek out perspectives of class-based, cultural, and linguistic minorities, as well as voices of non-normative identities on the basis of gender or sexuality; and to engage with and determine the significance of texts, social ideologies, and discourses that shape relationships, politics, culture, and everyday life (Haddix, 2010; Luke, 2012). Bishop (2014) explains that while there is no prescriptive method (Luke, 1012; McArthur, 2010) or single model of critical literacy, critical literacy pursues negotiation and creation of social liberation via praxis, or an iterative cycle of action and reflection. Freire explains that in the reflection/action

relationship, both dimensions are necessary, and if one is "sacrificed–even in part–the other immediately suffers" (Freire, 1968, p. 87).

Janks (2010) offers universal skills critical readers should be able to do, in order to deconstruct texts: decode texts to make sense of the language, make meaning by actively considering the author's intent and activating prior knowledge, and interrogate the text to expose its biases, assumptions, stereotypes, and perspectives and voices (or absence of perspectives; Schieble et al., 2020). Janks (2014) builds upon Freire's (1968) iterative cycle of naming, problematizing, and renaming hegemonic functions of texts, extending critical literacy not just to consuming texts but also producing them. For critical literacy application and eventual social action, Janks (2014) engages students in cycles of constructing or designing texts, deconstructing them through critical lenses, and redesign. Despite some relatively universal principles and practices of critical literacy, Vasquez et al. (2019) explain that its enactment should look, feel, and sound different across contexts, as it is a flexible resource for accomplishing varied types of work–critical literacy can be used as a lens or perspective for teaching and learning, for participating as social or political agents, and beyond (Vasquez, 2017).

In critical literacy, the definition of a "text" becomes expansive. Luke (1995) extends the notion of a text to include written and spoken language, as well as multimodal (visual, audiovisual, electronic) texts and their associated sign and communication systems. Literacy artifacts can also include "picture books, textbooks, articles, images, videos, and other resources that act as a catalyst for analyzing tropes, dominant discourses, and master narratives" (Sotirovska & Vaughn, 2023). In considering the world as text (Vasquez, 2017), even objects can be read as text, such as Janks's (2014) reading of water bottles; any aspect of critical readers' interests,

experiences, and artifacts, through the lens of critical literacy, can be read to participate in the discourses that construct their worlds. Luke (1995) explains that texts provide "moments of intersubjectivity–the social and discursive relations between human subjects" (p. 13) and involve readers, writers, speakers, and creators whose "intentions are neither self-evident nor recoverable without recourse to another text" (p. 13). Gee (2014) also emphasizes that texts are constructed socially. Through this lens, texts are multidiscursive (Luke, 1995), meaning they derive from various interactions, discourses, perspectives, and spheres of knowledge, and every text is accompanied by unique language features, social action, and consequences. Wodak and Meyer (2009) add that texts are spaces within which discourse is negotiated; they are influenced by power and laced with ideologies, calling for critical readings and subsequent action. As discourses are shaped in classroom settings, so too are student and teacher identities (Leander, 2002). Bean and Stevens (2007) consider identities to be fluid social constructions that are easily shaped by interlocutors as social context, interpretation within that context, and dynamic construction act upon language.

If texts are spaces within which discourse and identity are negotiated, teacher educators can leverage such texts to challenge TCs to more carefully examine the world around them. Lewis (2001) argues that the chief role of an educator is to facilitate discussions about literature that are critical in nature and support students in problematizing social and institutional discourses, or "the discourses of popular narratives as well as the official and unofficial discourses of the classroom" (p. 180). To commit to teaching through a critical lens is to adopt a critical pedagogy, or a "vehicle for examining how cultural definitions of gender, race, class, and subjectivity are constituted as both historical and social constructs" (Freire & Macedo, 2016, p. 6). Luke (1995)

characterizes educational equity as the ability not just to develop skills with which to access texts but to "learn to see and weigh [one's] cultural, gender, and social class perspectives" (p. 6) while exploring political possibilities and alternatives for a changed world.

Though the definition and enactment of critical literacy–in the word and the world (Freire & Macedo, 2016)–is malleable, critical literacy scholars provide more concrete ways of thinking about what critical literacy might look like in classrooms. Vasquez (2017) offers key tenets: critical literacy should not be taught as a stand-alone topic or unit–instead, it should function as a lens for teaching and learning as critical beings; students' diverse cultural knowledge and multimodal practices should be leveraged as vehicles for developing critical literacy; the world is socially constructed and should be read as a text; students should be positioned as researchers of language, visual texts, and spaces that are never neutral and always convey messages of their contexts and creators (Bishop, 2014); students should engage in interrogating their own readings of texts, as they transact with reading not as a blank slate but as a cumulation of identities and experiences; critical literacy work needs to focus on dismantling systems of oppression, and opting out of this work results in individuals having live less powerfully; and text design or redesign (Janks, 2010; 2014) can be transformative.

Critical Pedagogy. Freire's (1968) principle of critical consciousness is foundational to critical literacy and also gave way to critical pedagogy, or how classroom teachers engage their students in critical literacy (Perry, 2015). Freire (1968) problematized a common approach to education, which he conceptualized as the banking model of education. The banking model, he observed, was pervasive in American classrooms, and it maintained hierarchies within which the teacher held all the power,

and the students had none. In the banking model of education, students are positioned as empty containers or receptacles, waiting to be "filled" (Freire, 1968, p. 72). In this dehumanizing structure, the power distribution sends poignant messages about teaching and learning rules to students:

> The teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; the teacher thinks and the students are thought about; the teacher talks and the students listen–meekly; the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined; the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply; [...] the teacher confuses authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students (p. 73).

In this model of education, the teacher holds all learning power and makes all learning decisions on behalf of the students. Students are coached, in this structure, into the complicity of "doing school" while passively absorbing and regurgitating information they believe the teacher wants them to produce. A few of myriad educational injustices tied up in this model include a lack of any authentic thinking or agency for the student. Further, this model withholds from students the critical literacy skills that empower them to challenge what information is presented to them and how they should consume it. Freire (1968) offers an inverse to the banking model, problem-posing education, through which "people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves" (p. 83). In redistributing power to reflect a more democratic learning environment, Freire (1968) encourages teachers to assume, as much and as realistically as possible, a students/teacher and teacher/students relationship,

through which teachers and students are co-investigators of authentic, relevant problems–in texts and in the world–as they inquire about solutions.

McArthur (2010) characterizes critical pedagogy as a shared belief that schools and society are inextricably interwoven and that the very purpose of education is liberation for all. Critical pedagogy, McArthur (2010) explains, "involves a strong agenda for change: within education, through education and throughout society" (p. 493). To enact such a curriculum, teachers take up critical stances in designing literacy events within which students practice critical literacy skills in myriad ways. Janks (2013) asks important questions of teachers espousing critical pedagogy: How can education contribute to a world in which our students […] become agents for change? How can we produce students who can con-tribute to greater equity, [...] respect difference and live in harmony with others, and [...protect] the environment? (p. 227). From the student perspective, Comber (2014) positions students researchers of language, resistors of dominant social narratives, and interrogators of classroom and public texts. To achieve such radical roles and dynamics, though, Behrman (2011) argues that familar classroom policies, practices, and power structures between teachers and students must be redefined.

Scholars also developed various critical literacy frameworks that are supportive to teachers when designing instructional materials to exercise students' critical literacy skillsets. Freebody and Luke (1990) developed the Four Resources Model that positions readers as code breakers, text participants, text users, and text analysts (Jones, 2012; Luke & Freebody, 1999) and aims for learners to "read texts with intent, context, and reflexivity" (Sotirovska & Vaughn, 2023, p. 18). Janks (2010; 13; 2014) developed the interdependent model, which promoted social transformation (Behrman, 2011; Sotirovska & Vaughn, 2023) and included four dimensions for reading and composing: power,

diversity, access, and design/redesign. The model provides a matrix through which case studies, social scenarios, and classroom texts can be read critically, particularly in consideration of which influences–power, diversity, access, and design/redesign–are present, absent, and influential to one another. The purpose of this model is to "afford possibilities for new constructions of texts as acts of liberation and creativity, resulting in identity and social transformation" (Sotirovska & Vaughn, 2023, p. 18). Lewison et al. (2002) developed the Four-dimension framework, which challenges readers to disrupt the commonplace, interrogate multiple perspectives, focus on sociopolitical issues, and take action for social justice. While there exist additional critical literacy frameworks and models (Behrman, 2006; Bishop, 2014; Green & Beavis, 2012; Paul, 2022; Sotirovska & Vaughn, 2023), all work to engage critical literacy skills without assigning a one-size-fits-all approach to critical literacy instruction.

Methodology

Defining and Conceptualizing Critical Discourse Analysis

Luke (1995) explains that teacher education is a space within which "dominant sociocultural discourses compete to construct and position teachers and students" (p. 10). Luke emphasizes the cruciality of a critical teacher education to espouse a critical philosophy that will guide new teachers' practice and ultimately influence their students' learning experiences. When instructing adolescents, teachers are positioned to navigate as leaders within these discourses, either in critical, disruptive ways or, conversely, oppressive ways. Operating on varying levels of "unity or disunity" (Luke, 1995, p. 15), discourse can look like a conversation between individuals or a macro-level societal discussion. Rymes (2015) offers the simplest definition of discourse as language in use. Gee (2014) emphasizes the agentive or "doing" nature of social language, explaining in

discourses “always involve more than language” (p. 46). By conceptualizing “capital D” Discourses, or “large-scale ideological formations” (Luke, 1995, p. 10), Gee (1990) emphasizes the importance of the context surrounding discourse that might actively influence its function. Discourse is worth studying, particularly in teacher preparation, because of its hegemonic capacity (Luke, 1995, p. 20). Studying discourse benefits both TCs and teacher educators. As TCs engage with critiquing texts and analyzing “whose material interests particular texts and discourses might serve” (Luke, 1995, p. 20), they practice the critical literacy skills necessary to facilitate critical conversations with students. On the other hand, teacher educators can study the discourse/Discourse of TCs while engaging in critical literacy themselves to inform how teacher educators can better guide TCs in adopting critical pedagogy.

An appropriate methodology for analyzing TCs engagement with critical literacy, then, is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA focuses on “dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies [to observe] the functions of (social, cultural, situative and cognitive) contexts of language use” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 5). It investigates language, in speech and writing, as a dialectical social practice that is influenced by its context but that also, in turn, influences its context (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). It shapes situations, knowledge, identities, and relationships as it is co-constructed between participants (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA is concerned with how discourse can disrupt or sustain social and hegemonic ideologies, what Fairclough describes as “representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 9).

CDA is best characterized by what it “does" and what it believes. CDA is not solely analysis of discourse or texts; rather, it is a systematic exploration of the

relationship between discourse and social processes (Fairclough, 2013). It does not solely offer a commentary on micro or macro-level (D)iscourse(s) but it also provides a critique as it problematizes inequities, particularly those related to power structures within social identities and scenarios (Kress, 1993). Further, CDA critiques the ultimate intention of eventual social reform (Fairclough, 2013). Van Dijk (1993) outlines principles of CDA: CDA should explore primarily discourses of power imbalances and the injustices therefore occurring; it is concerned with sociopolitical issues, and is critical of "power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone, or ignore social inequality and injustice" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 253).

CDA is distinguished from other types of discourse analysis (DA) in that it is "overtly political" (Kress, 1993, p. 84; van Dijk, 1993). It works not only to understand texts but to provide a "critical dimension" (Kress, 1993, p. 84) for texts to disrupt ideology. Unique also from other types of politically engaged discourse, CDA believes that language is a social practice, that multimedia texts are socially situated and typically situated within power imbalances, that meaning results from the interaction of readers and speakers, that participant relations in co-producing texts typically are unequal, and that participants of discourse nearly always have predetermined stances on the topics they explore with others (Kress, 1993). CDA assumes that social and systemic injustices are reproduced and resisted through discourse and the action, positive or negative, that accompanies such discourse, as it has material consequences for how oppression is taken up and challenged or mitigated and reproduced.

As TCs learn about critical literacy, their discourse is reflective of how they navigate critical topics and negotiate meaning. If teacher educators can help TCs notice how they, in their own talk, engage critically with texts and also model for TCs, in

teacher preparation courses, how to facilitate critical discussions, TCs can more easily take up critical pedagogy in praxis (Meier et al., 2015). Further, when their students stop short of criticality, TCs can then challenge them to engage more deeply or, if students are talking critically, TCs can make talk moves that sustain those conversations. CDA sees discourse as a social practice, shaped by participants and that shapes participants themselves (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA is concerned with complex sociocognitive and sociopolitical interactional moves and the contexts within which they occur (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Rymes (2015) also considers social context and interactional context for talk, or "the moment to moment unfolding of action [that] shapes which elements of an individual's repertoire emerge and how they function"' (p. 15). In teacher preparation, TCs engage often in "bounded series of actions and reactions that people make in response to each other at the level of face-to-face interaction" (Bloome et al., 2004, p. 6) as meaning is co-constructed and negotiated, both in response to course learning and the text at hand. Subsequently, "people also react to future actions" (Bloome et al., 2004, p. 7) and consider how their literacy experiences will inform their pedagogical stances in the future.

CDA also views discourse as a wealth for interpreting "situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 5). According to Luke (1995), schools are institutions created and maintained by discourse, and within them, educators themselves are shaped as producers of productive contexts within which to study social identities. This happens, arguably, only through critical discourse to ensure that such contexts provided for students truly are productive, rather than harmful. Exposure to teacher preparation coursework and course experiences grounded in critical literacy provides teacher-

researchers discourses through which they can employ CDA to better understand TC learning. If TCs are able to practice critical literacy in teacher preparation, TC educators can use CDA to study how they come to, take up, and enact critical literacy in their own learning, in order to better instruct them on how to usher critical literacy into their classrooms, as both critical literacy and CDA are aligned in their critical theoretical underpinnings. Broadly, studying TC language around critical topics via CDA can "tell us a great deal about how schools and classrooms build 'success' and 'failure' and about how teachers' and students' spoken and written texts shape and construct policies and rules, knowledge, and, indeed, 'versions' of successful and failing students" (Luke, 1995, p. 11).

The Sociopolitical Landscape

While an overview of the theory that undergirds my reading of the data is essential to meaning making, so too is the context of the sociopolitical landscape that surrounds and influences TC talk at present. It is a particularly difficult time to become a teacher. Lavery and Dahill-Brown (2024) report, between 2021 and 2022, 36,000 unfilled teaching positions nation-wide, 163,000 teaching positions filled by underqualified teachers, and 55% of teachers considering leaving the profession altogether (Nguyen et al., 2020; Walker, 2022). While Lavery and Dahill-Brown (2024) attribute the perilous state of the teaching force to an increasingly low teacher morale due to strained relationships with administrators, parents, and students, Brass (2015) credits the turbulence to attacks experienced, by English educators in particular, on their "professional expertise [Goering & Gardner, 2024], academic freedom, and central passions and commitments" (p. 14). Sociopolitics have always impacted teachers at nested levels, from the classroom to student families to administration to districts to

communities to states to our nation. Scherff and Hahs-Vaughan (2008) attribute, in part, teacher retention issues to a perceived lack of control over working conditions (Pasternak et al., 2004). In unprecedented measures, sociopolitical influences on teachers and partisan politics have taken shape in the forms of heightened parental involvement in curricular decisions, an increased surveillance of teachers' practices, policing of classroom texts, and even legislation permitting what teachers can and cannot discuss with students, even when related to curricular content and while developing disciplinary skills (Goernig & Gardner, 2024; Lavery & Dahill-Brown, 2024). Current sociopolitics not only impact emerging teachers in how they perceive their professional roles but, further, inform how teacher educators understand TC engagement with preparation curriculum as they plan to make classroom choices of their own. I provide here a brief overview of sociopolitical influences on the field of education to situate TC talk throughout the study and, ultimately, to argue why critical talk in teacher preparation and middle/secondary ELA classrooms is both more fraught and important than ever.

Appleman (2022) describes the political challenges of teaching literature, on a national scale, particularly from the start of the 2020s until now. Increasingly so, pressures from both ends of the partisan spectrum weigh on teachers and their impressions of which texts and topics they are "allowed" to use in the classroom (Appleman, 2022). Brass (2015) characterizes this shift as the "governance of curriculum, teaching, and teacher education" (p. 13), through which power has moved from educational professionals, such as teachers, administrators, teacher educators and literacy researchers, and professional organizations of teachers to democratically elected bodies, such as school boards and local and state legislatures. For example, conservatives largely support the use of Common Core state standards; however, Appleman (2022) critiques

the curriculum's reduction of literacy to standardized, flattened regurgitations of textual facts. Ginsberg (2022) agrees, reporting the shared sentiment of her own TCs that the Common Core state standards were forced on them without context or professional development on how to address and meet the many standards included (Pasternak et al., 2004).

Beyond a prescriptive set of skills teachers are required to teach, Sotirovska and Vaughn (2023) add that teachers now experience an ever increasing surveillance of how closely teachers enact the curriculum, even to the extent that schools have mandated scripted literacy lesson delivery. Appleman (2022) attributes an expectation for strict adherence to state standards to the conservative right, problematizing Common Core's over-reliance on informational and nonfiction texts, which she believes to be taking the place of literature in the classroom. Pandya (2015) explains the importance of teaching critical literacy in spite of the ongoing implementation of Common Core. "Standards alone," she explains, "cannot change the way children are taught; nor will they force larger social changes–like reducing poverty–that would do much more to help many children than a change in teaching goals" (Pandya, 2015, p. 50). Appleman (2022) also attributes the shift toward nonfiction texts and away from literature to a censorship of texts in ELA, and with such censorship comes an extinction of critical literacy skills. Historically, censorship addressed what teachers, parents, and districts deemed inappropriate language or the presence of sexual content; however, more recently, censorship in English departments, districts, and even state-wide legislation has extended its reach to queer or trans identities (Appleman, 2022). Brass (2015) theorizes an eventual conservative effort to dismantle public education in lieu of privatizing education. On the other hand, the political left, Appleman (2022) argues, pressures teachers' instructional

decisions by arguing the necessity of trigger warnings and leaning too heavily into cancel culture, significantly disrupting the politics of English teaching.

In part, an increased interest in and effort to control classroom topics and texts stemmed from remote learning in the spring of 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic. Rehn (2023) explains that with the evolution of digital teaching techniques, classroom teaching and learning entered homes in a new way as students attended class, parents attended board meetings and teacher conferences, and students engaged in class discussions–all from inside the home and with a new witness and awareness of parents. Koganzon (2023) explains that while parents and politicians are not to be villainized for their heightened opinions on best practices for their children's teaching and learning, non-teaching adults (Pasternak et al., 2004) are now, more than ever, impacting the books that are available–or unavailable–for k-12 students to read.

On a national level, book banning and challenging is not a recent notion. What is unique to this moment in time, Rehn (2023) describes, is the extent to which literature texts are being banned and challenged across the country. The Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) of the American Library Association (ALA) records requests for book bannings. From June of 2021 to September of 2021, it tracked over 150 requests–the most submitted by Iowa, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wisconsin–to censor books in libraries nation-wide, which was more requests than the OIF had received during the previous year entirely (Rehn, 2023). With an increase in requests came an increase in public opinion and effort, from local and state-level politicians across the country and grassroots parent organizations, to remove certain texts and topics from public school libraries and ELA curriculum altogether. Kogonzon (2023) writes that "when parents or school boards request that books be removed from a classroom or school library, the

curatorial hand of adults suddenly becomes visible" (p. 2). Rehn (2023) explains that many of the book ban requests in recent years have come from parent advocacy groups such as the Tennessee chapter of "Moms for Liberty" who compiled a list of books they demanded be banned, presented to the local school board and state Department of Education. On the opposition, the Texas parent group Round Rock Black Parents Association (Rehn, 2023) impacted local policy by writing petitions to keep challenged books on local library shelves.

Appleman problematizes curricular decisions influenced primarily by external, politically motivated players–individuals who are not the highly trained disciplinary experts who are the classroom teachers. She asks:

> If we remove all literary works with texture, complexity, and realism, what will remain for our students? A rote curriculum completely devoid of the opportunity to confront and discuss real world issues in a safe space? A list of texts that meet students exactly where they are, in terms of beliefs, experience, and perspective? A menu of readings that does not provoke, disrupt, or challenge? (Appleman, 2020, p. 12)

In her work, Appleman not only discusses how calls for censored curriculum infringe on a classroom teacher's authority and pedagogical expertise, but further, censorship establishes the precedence that any stakeholder–parents, administrators, and politicians–can call for the removal of any curricular content they deem unsuitable. The problem, she explains, is that any literature can prove problematic, disagreeable, or troubled. So, instead of calling for literature that features any possible discomfort or unfamiliar content to be removed, ensuring students are forever shielded from it, teachers should instead be allowed to prepare students with the critical literacy skills to know how to deconstruct

and interrogate texts when they encounter them. Moreover, she argues that problematic texts can be leveraged as powerful teaching tools through which students can learn to talk back to the world around them. Appleman's (2022) argument boils down to this: literature teaching and learning must persist. She describes the increasingly difficult task of teachers making curricular decisions under public scrutiny, now more than ever: they must find a balance in teaching literature texts that exclude "demeaning, offensive, and downright harmful" (Appleman, 2022, p. 14) content while pushing to keep texts that, though possibly problematic in their language or representation, have "important value–aesthetically, historically, developmentally, and curricularly" (p. 13).

Adding to national pressures of partisan influence and local/state level influences of parents advocating for or against the inclusion of literature in ELA curriculum, 2022 posed entirely new considerations for teachers and their curricular decisions in the realm of state legislation. In the state that housed this study specifically, a senate bill was signed into law in January of 2023 that allows parents to challenge books, lessons, activities, and materials that they believe are harmful to minors by filing formal complaints with the school. A house bill was also signed by the state governor in April of 2023, which requires local school boards of education to allow parents to orally recite passages from lectures, lessons, texts, events, and even classroom subjects they wish to remove. Under this bill, if school boards deny parents the opportunity to challenge the material at hand, it will be subject to immediate removal from the curriculum.

Other state legislature has also begun to set legal precedent for what teachers are and are not allowed to discuss in the classroom. Cooper and Casey (2023) describe Florida's 2022 CS/CS/House Bill 1557: Parental Rights in Education, known nationally as the "Don't Say Gay" bill, which was signed into effect in the spring of 2022. This

legislation bans classroom discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade classrooms and legalizes banning children's and young adult literature that features protagonists who identify with non-normative identities (Cooper & Casey, 2023). In the state that housed this study, a Pronouns and Public Education bill is presently in committee, which would forbid school teachers from using "nonconforming pronouns" in the classroom and affords parents the opportunity to submit written objections to classroom conversations or text topics that conflict with their religious beliefs. Cooper and Casey (2023) argue the importance of such laws, as others can now use their precedence to continue perpetuating dominant identities via classroom libraries.

The National Education Association (NEA) also released overview documents for teachers to understand their own rights and new limitations, as a result of the Florida law. The Parental Rights in Education law took effect July 1, 2023 and has implications for classroom instruction, as previously mentioned, in addition to pronoun use in the classroom, educational approaches to reproductive health, and book bans. Regarding classroom instruction, the NEA adds that the discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity is banned through eighth grade, except when instruction is required for sexual health lessons on abstinence (National Education Association). Legislators have amended the state-level professional conduct standards to include that talk of sexual orientation or gender identity in classrooms extending through twelfth grade is forbidden, unless explicitly discussed in state academic standards (National Education Association). Additionally, parents can raise concerns about teacher compliance with the law, which are then processed within schools. If the complaints are not resolved, they escalate to the

district or even the state level board of education. While this law has been passed in Florida alone, educators wonder which state legislatures will follow suit.

Among legislation targeting non-normative gender identification and sexual orientation is that of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. As of March, 2024, conservative legislators in over 30 states have passed over 100 bills to either restrict or eliminate entirely DEI programs, policies, and initiatives at the post-secondary education level, as well as in industry and governmental contexts. Florida recently banned colleges from using federal funding for DEI programs, events, and resources, and a Utah bill currently under review by the governor aims to remove campus offices that promote diversity from colleges and universities. Conservative lawmakers argue that DEI programs have backfired, creating further racial division on the basis of White guilt. Further, they claim that educators are using public funding to advance partisan agendas to youth audiences. At the state level, the state that housed this study also proposed a senate bill that allows any educator or student at the post-secondary level to sue, for monetary rewards up to $100,000, public universities and colleges who engaged DEI conversations, policies, or programs that could be perceived as divisive. Another seeks to ban instruction that advocates for DEI or belonging in k-12 schools, which defines the discussion of social issues as inherently divisive and deems social activism as intended to achieve partisan outcomes.

Emerging and inservice teachers now, more than ever, have sociopolitical implications to consider at varying levels when making instructional decisions–individual classroom parents, local parent groups, building and district-level administration, state law, and even political discourses of political parties trickle down into their classrooms and day-to-day choices about how to teach texts and readers. As a critically oriented

educator, I align with Deborah Appleman's (2022) stance on the very purpose of teaching literature:

> Literature helps us to understand what it means to be human. Through literature, we will be both awed by the beauty and confronted with the complexity of the human condition. Therefore, through literature we will confront some ugly truths about humankind, truths that should not be avoided. The power of literature should not be removed by cancellation or censure or be blunted by trigger warnings. Literature makes us more human (p. 10)

She argues that rather than attempting to shield our students from encountering any literary content that might cause discomfort or that might not align with our their personal preferences, it is worthwhile still to look outside ourselves, as readers and humans, and concern ourselves with the human experiences of others. In doing so, we often learn more about ourselves anyway–implications for how we live with one another, how we treat one another, and how we move in systems that benefit us but harm others. Whether TCs take up the critical stance described above or not, it is abundantly clear that their choices are under a microscope, and there is much to be learned about how such sociopolitical contexts impact their thinking, reading, talk, and choices as they embark on their first years in the teaching profession. A study that investigates TC talk around instructional decision making can support teacher educators in better identifying when and how sociopolitical conditions come to bear on TC stances as they make choices for themselves and their many future students.

Overview of Dissertation

This study is developed through five chapters. In this chapter, I offer background to illustrate the research problem and locate where the study contributes productively to

conversations in the academic community of its audience, teacher educators. I describe the broader theoretical framework of critical literacy and pedagogy which undergird my reading of the data, honing in more narrowly on the study's methodology, CDA. In Chapter 2, I offer the review of literature, spanning both theoretical and empirical discussions in teacher preparation contexts that further situate the study's findings. Chapter 3 consists of the study's research design from broad (the design of the course that housed the study) to narrow (the participants, the data sources, and the data analysis). Chapter 4 reports five major study findings that surfaced in the talk of TCs in their engagement with YAL and discussions about instructional decisions, and, finally, Chapter 5 puts the study's findings back into conversation with the literature in the field as I interpret valuable takeaways and implications for teacher educators in preparation programs.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In pursuing the issues discussed in the study's research problem, I investigate how and why TCs arrive at instructional decisions and stances in early career classrooms. Berghoff (1997) conceptualizes "stance" as the day-to-day positioning and practices of new teachers as they "navigat[e] the uncertain waters of these educational times" (p. 3). Berghoff (1997) positions stance as a pedagogical act rooted in agency and social possibility, if leveraged to promote equity and justice in learning spaces. In the day-to-day, teachers make all sorts of decisions around instructional approaches, texts, and topics to pursue with their students. These commitments are a culmination of what they learned in teacher preparation programs, who they believe their students are, and the instructional strategies and tools they believe will best serve them. These decisions are also, though, the product of various influences on training and emerging teachers. The review of literature situates the study through three major lenses, all of which inform TCs' instructional choices: TCs' conceptualization of adolescents, TCs' learning and talk in teaching methods courses, and the educational context of Whiteness.

Conceptualizing Adolescents

Often, a first and major set of choices an ELA teacher makes is around texts, both which to include in a classroom library and which will be required for students to read. Westby (2022) discusses how ELA teachers should offer window, sliding glass door, or mirror texts (Sims Bishop, 1990); window texts provide glimpses into worlds and experiences entirely unknown or even unimaginable, while sliding glass door texts afford readers the opportunity to step into new contexts, which, though unfamiliar, they can access through imagination. Mirror texts can validate readers' human experiences as they

see themselves represented in the narratives of others and explore their role and place within a larger human experience (Westby, 2022). Westby (2022) also discusses how with mirror texts, if representations are positive and not stereotypical, readers with diverse racial, cultural, linguistic, gender identities, and (dis)ability statuses are able to more deeply develop their cultural identities in seeing themselves in literature, a space that was long occupied by White authors, characters, and narratives. So, for many good reasons, teachers consider right away–will my students connect with this text?

Often, educators in both k-12 and higher education contexts teach the popular connection-making strategy between readers and texts as a way of establishing resonance of the text for students. Such a strategy is typically taught alongside "drawing inferences, asking questions, synthesizing, determining important ideas, monitoring for understanding, repairing for comprehension, and activating prior knowledge" (Jones & Clarke, 2007, p. 99). In this way, educators often conflate relatability with relevance—if readers relate to a text, it will matter to them. This is a notion discussed in depth throughout the dissertation study. Jones and Clarke (2007) complicated the exercise of connection-making with autobiographical experiences, though, explaining that when readers are taught primarily and consistently to look for and center parts of themselves in literacy experiences, criticality can become thwarted. For example, teacher researchers (Jones & Clarke, 2007) noticed that when they placed illustrations in front of second grade girls and asked them to respond, they were quick to make connections both to their own lives and dominant social narratives, focusing immediately on similarities between their lives and what they perceived to be happening in the illustrations. When prompted to disconnect from the image, though, students were then able to see more clearly–to look outside their own experiences they assumed aligned with parts of the image and to, then,

reconsider what they believed to be "truths." They realized they had made associations between the image and money, essentializing what they assumed to be the subject's lived experiences and labeling her as "spoiled." They teased apart stereotypes about what it meant to be rich or a girl/woman. Ultimately, they discussed more nuanced aspects of representation and stereotypes across multimedia texts.

Norris and Phillips (1987) establish the value in engaging schema theory, which is the notion that a reader can comprehend a text by activating an existing source of knowledge or creating a new schema within which they can situate new ideas. They articulate, however, that connection-making leads readers to automatically accept the authority of the text's author, without engaging in the critical literacy practices of problematizing character representations or stereotypes, challenging dominant narratives, critiquing power structures, or interrogating the conditions under which the text was created (Jones & Clarke, 2007). Sotirovska and Vaughn (2023) define dominant narratives and discourses as "language [that] is codified to express ideology, sociopolitical beliefs, biases, and worldviews often of a given social group" (p. 5). So, not only should critical educators task students with challenging representations of characters, languages, and identities in the text or critique how a story is told, but further, critical readers should consider the text itself and under what circumstances it was created.

Freebody et al. (1991) articulate common questions of literacy teachers, the answers to which justify their instructional choices, to some extent–what counts as reading? What makes quality literature (Appleman, 2015)? When teachers are taught to evaluate texts primarily upon whether or not they will resonate with readers via connection-making, the background knowledge and personal experiences of readers

whose cultural identities are featured first and foremost in literature are privileged, reinforcing students' topical knowledge over cultural resources (Freebody et al., 1991). Spector and Jones (2007) noticed that when connection-making alone was decentered, readers engaged more critical, sophisticated literacy skills to determine whether they accepted or resisted the representations of characters and social perspectives provided in texts, disrupting ideologies as they worked to both "deconstruct and reconstruct themselves and their worlds" (p. 47). Pytash and Hylton (2021) also promote social perspective-taking, or "or a person's ability to understand people accurately" (p. 27) as a way of developing readers with more well-rounded, informed cultural perspectives who have broadened emotional capacities to practice empathy for imagined characters and worlds (Appleman, 2015). In this process, readers still experienced personal pay-offs, an outcome that previously motivated a connection-based approach; instead, their growth as readers occurred both in their enhanced understanding of cultural perspectives on global events and in reconsidering their own positionalities toward them. Lewis et al. (2001) added that even when reading multicultural literature, the commonly accepted "good reader" practice of making personal connections can create resistance in White readers who clash with themes that destabilize their Whiteness. Instead, "good reader" skills should be repositioned so that everyone interacting with a text works to interrogate the dominant social discourses that inform their understanding of their identities and experiences, as well as interrupt problematic ideologies perpetuated in text (Lewis et al., 2001).

When teachers question, "Will my students connect with this text?" they attempt to answer those questions by hypothesizing who those students will be. Sulzer and Thein (2016) add to this list of common ELA TC considerations– "Would adolescents choose to

read this book? What problems or issues could I address with this book? Would adolescents see these issues as relevant?" (p. 163). Researchers explain that these questions are shared by ELA TCs and teacher educators alike, particularly around YAL. Such wonderings are important for TCs to imagine future instructional decisions; and in many cases, in pre-student teaching scenarios, imagined future classrooms are the only context TCs have for their pedagogical choices. Scholars across the field explain, though, that hypothetical decisions can be fraught with an essentialized view of who TCs believe adolescents to be and what, instructionally, they predict they will need (Lewis et al., 2015; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015).

Sulzer and Thein (2016) define adolescents as teenagers maneuvering through a universal stage toward adulthood, battling physical and emotional change, rebellion against authority, and emotional turmoil. Lesko (1996) explains that monolithic social constructions of adolescents have been long established in American and Western history; from popular culture to advertising, they are depicted as predictable and constricting (Sarigianides, 2012), one-dimensional and fixed. The media and society at large characterize adolescents broadly as full of raging hormones (Sulzer & Thein, 2016), tumultuously emotional, and even uncivilized (Lesko, 1996). While adolescence is a natural process that all humans, who live long enough, eventually experience, society perceives that experience to exist in a vacuum, decontextualized from historical influences, when, in reality, adolescence is the effect, outcome, or byproduct of social domains (Lesko, 1996). Such depictions contribute not only to a positional inferiority of adolescents in society but additionally an age inferiority, therefore, upholding adults as the superior social group who know more, who can do more, and who adolescents then rely upon for survival (Lesko, 1996).

Stereotypes of adolescents persist in the field of English education and teacher preparation. Petrone and Lewis (2012) explained that pervasive conceptions of youths often shape how teachers think about their students and bear consequences for how they make instructional decisions. Similarly to Lesko's (1996) observation of the child/adult binary that creates adolescents' perceived positional and age-based inferiority to adults, Petrone and Lewis (2012) write about the misunderstanding of a universal set of adolescent needs, which are both immediate and intense, another way of positioning adolescents to require a constant and essential support from adults as they sit, passively, in their vulnerability. Petrone and Lewis (2012) see this hierarchy replicated in classrooms as teachers assume roles of gatekeepers of knowledge (Freire, 1968), controlling adolescents and wielding literacy curriculum to maintain such a relationship. Cook et al. (2022a) described how the socially constructed and maintained uncivilized/civilized binaries between students and teachers give way to problematic classroom narratives that adolescents need adults, or teachers in educational contexts, to realize their potential, determine their futures, and be "saved" from the stereotypical temptations of youth along the way–experimentation with drugs, alcohol (Petrone & Lewis, 2012) and sex (Sarigianides, 2012).

Sarigianides (2012) explains that many teachers reject non-essentialized views of adolescent students, including those unique to intersectional identities and experiences. Intellectually, teachers minimize adolescents' cognitive abilities, reducing them to thought potential or curiosity (Sarigianides, 2012). Such pervasive narratives about adolescents seep into instructional choices of teachers, expressly in the texts they choose, many of which feature equally stereotypical and problematic views of teenagers and young adults. Sarigianides (2012) writes, "teachers lean toward texts with protagonists

that reinforce stereotypical views of youths struggling with their identity and risky choices" (p. 224). When characters follow flattened depictions of adolescents and their experiences, falling victim to typical vices or making bad decisions, teachers assume their adolescent students will connect with those "realistic" characters and narratives (Sarigianides, 2012).

Sulzer and Thein (2016) describe that despite the growth of the field of critical youth scholarship, which advocates for a "more complex and nuanced view of young people" (p. 164), ELA TCs still subscribe to dominant narratives and biological-psychosocial views of young people that result in them performing a "teacher identity" to distinguish and distance themselves from their students (Sulzer & Thein, 2016) and choosing to teach YAL that features problematic representations of youth. More optimistically, though, Silva and Savitz (2016) synthesize critical studies that engage the youth lens and work to deconstruct essentialized views of youth as represented in YAL. The Youth Lens (Petrone et al., 2015) argues that adolescence is a constructed social identity, that the notion of a universal adolescent experience is a myth, and that adolescence does not exist in a silo; rather, adolescence is foundational to adulthood, and one's development throughout adolescence persists in how one looks, thinks, communicates, and behaves well into adulthood (Silva & Savitz, 2016).

Clearly, there are many complicating factors for TCs hypothesizing what texts will be impactful for students based upon who they believe their future students to be. Even once TCs have a sense of texts they believe will act as rich vehicles for developing students' disciplinary literacy skills, they continue to reckon with external forces that influence what texts they believe they will be allowed to teach. Boyd and Darragh (2020) explain that despite imagined text sets or literature TCs use for instructional planning in

preparation programs and hope to one day usher into their classrooms, they grapple, in early career placements, with unclear parameters on whether their departments and districts have approved texts lists; if their text selections should be mild, in terms of content that might be construed as controversial; what opinions their superiors–department heads and administrators–hold around text selections; if parents and community will support their text selections, and more. Teacher educators emphasize the importance of text selections in the ELA classroom because they serve as grounds for rich and critical discussion between readers, teach students about new perspectives, and help students explore pressing social issues (Boyd & Darragh, 2020). Falter and Kerkhoff (2018) echo the capacities of classroom texts, specifically YAL, as vehicles for critical literacy as readers develop a sympathetic imagination for characters of unfamiliar identities and experiences. Miller and Silfkin (2010) agree, arguing the literary merit and rigor of YAL and proposing that multicultural YAL is a powerful resource for building empathy, disrupting prejudice, understanding complex socioemotional and interpersonal relationships, learning about diverse intersectional identities, and considering one's own implications in interrupting systems of oppression (Falter & Kerkhoff, 2018).

Boyd and Darragh (2019) highlight the realities TCs face when entering the teaching force and making text selections that fuel critical discussions–they have to contend with the possibility of parents, school boards, and administrators disapproving of their text selections. This potential created a sense of fear for TCs–specifically of parents, school boards, and administrators objecting to their text selections (Boyd & Darragh, 2019)–around their instructional decision making, despite their resolve that the YAL at hand would offer rich discussion topics and learning experiences for ELA students. Beyond having to justify their text selections in a variety of sociopolitical contexts, TCs

have to juggle the reality that the United States operates on no official national curriculum, that they will likely be handed district-specific curricular documents written by individuals who have never met their students and potentially have not taught in classroom settings, that their decisions will have to be guided by quantitative measures like Lexile scores and standardized test preparation texts, and that their students will also have individualized reading preferences, interests, and strengths/areas for growth (Boyd & Darragh, 2020). As a result of considering these many factors, teacher educators compiled words TCs used to refer to emotions that come up when considering critical topics and texts to introduce in their classrooms: anxious, afraid, uncomfortable, scared, worried, unsafe, and overwhelmed (Ellis & Goering, 2023, p. 537). TCs linked these emotions to overarching themes of fear of discomfort, the urge to avoid politics, and their own lack of racial literacy (Ellis & Goering, 2023, p. 537).

Overall, the many compounding factors TCs consider–and that act upon TCs as they consider–when choosing the topics and texts to include in their teaching practice are anything but simple. In this study, I continue to seek, through TC talk and writing, the additional considerations TCs make when imagining future pedagogical stances and when making imagined future instructional decisions. I believe that better understanding how TCs talk in responding to critical texts and topics as readers themselves and in how TCs talk about how they rationalize taking up (or not) such topics and texts in future classrooms can support teacher educators in supporting TCs through these realistic tensions and empower them to navigate complicated sociopolitical contexts to be able to teach students in a way that is critical, justice-oriented, and aligned with their personal philosophies as educators.

Talk in Teacher Preparation

As TCs consider who their future students will be and what they will want to read, they often brainstorm, pitch, and rationalize their approaches in teaching methods courses (Campano et al., 2015). Teaching methods courses typically occur after general education courses as TCs develop key disciplinary pedagogical knowledge (Schulman, 1987) . Often, methods courses are accompanied by a field observation component and occur as a precursor to TCs' student teaching experiences. Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) describe the various approaches of a methods course to include "survey, workshop, experience-based, reflective, and theoretical" (p. 9). Across these diverse approaches, scholars offer criteria for a well-rounded approach: the course should be theoretically grounded, learning should be situated in relevant activities, reading/writing/talk should be transactional, growth should be process-oriented, and student reflection should be centered (Pasternak et al., 2004; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). Further, methods courses should develop effective emerging teachers, or professionals skilled at teaching literacy skills and strategies, informing educational coursework and enactments in early classroom with knowledge from prior field or clinical work, meeting the needs of diverse learners (Langelaan et al., 2024), and adapting technology for engaging instruction (Pasternak et al., 2004). Brass (2015) provides an updated account of Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) research, highlighting a shift in the field of teacher preparation away from major influences like "developmental psychology, constructivism, student-centered instruction, instructional scaffolding, cognitive reading and writing processes, whole language, and transactional theories of reader response" (p. 2) and toward language and literacy as social practices, rooted in cultural studies (Webb, 2015). Perry (2015) characterizes the post-shift Methods course as grounds for developing TCs' sociocultural competencies, or the skills that help them better understand the "social and cultural lives

of students, families, and communities with whom they will work" (p. 137). Sociocultural competencies include an understanding of student development, both inside and outside of school, recognition of the complexities of teaching in various sociohistorical, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic contexts, and a knowledge of and experience in social justice work in school and community settings (Perry, 2015).

To Pasternak et al.'s (2004) qualities of effective teachers, Bissonnette (2016) adds that quality teacher education prepares emerging teachers to be agile in developing and delivering rigorous disciplinary content, in offering remediation and enrichment for diverse learners, and in creating culturally responsive pedagogical tools and dispositions. Bissonnette (2016) here engages the term "culturally responsive," a concept that both derived from and gave way to various related justice-oriented terminology. "Culturally responsive" pedagogy stems from roots in the disciplines of anthropology and linguistics, specifically from Au and Jordan's (1981) use of "culturally appropriate" and later, Mohatt and Erickson's (1981) notion of cultural congruence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 466). "Culturally responsive" (Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982) was termed to "describe similar language interactions of teachers with linguistically diverse and Native American students, respectively" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 467). Ladson-Billings (1995) then ushered the term into the realm of education, revising it slightly:

> A next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. I term this pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy (p. 469).

Culturally relevant pedagogy, then, tasks teachers not only with recognizing differences in student learning preferences, identities, and experiences in a way that tolerates them. Instead, this framework challenges classroom teachers to center students' cultural–racial, linguistic, familial, and community-based–realms of knowledge and position them as assets in learning spaces. Ladson-Billings challenges educators to know their students well enough to leverage who they are to benefit their learning and to promote the importance of cultural diversity in the classroom, a practice that disrupts dominant social narratives that promote a White, normative image of what a good student looks, sounds, and communicates like, as well as how they behave.

Though these terms have continued to evolve in the field of education, a common critique persists–how does a teacher actually enact culturally responsive pedagogy (Foster et al., 2020)? I spend time on the evolution of this term to argue that critical literacy is a lens through which TCs can look to develop more clarity on how to mobilize justice-oriented pedagogy and to achieve the desired outcomes of culturally responsive pedagogy: to activate students' prior knowledge, to utilize cultural knowledge as learning assets, to critique White-centric styles of performance, and to recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in the classroom (Gay, 2002; 2018). Scholars agree that teaching through a culturally responsive lens is requisite in a successful teacher preparation program, and critical literacy–readings of texts, creation of texts, and discussions about the word and the world (Freire, 1968)–prepare students to interrogate "power, privilege, and marginalization that mark the classroom" (Bissonnette, 2016, p. 12), readying them further to critique dominant educational norms, behaviors, perspectives, practices, and policies. These skill sets only develop when TCs refuse to side-step critical conversations (Bissonnette, 2016).

Speaking to Smagorinsky and Whiting's (1995) notion of relevance, Bissonnette (2016) argues that the most essential teaching and learning, with an ever increasing national population of non-White students (Sleeter, 2017), revolves around culturally responsive pedagogy. Unfortunately, some teacher preparation and teaching methods courses are failing to develop culturally responsive educators who are prepared to effectively teach multicultural and historically oppressed populations (Bissonnette, 2016; Meier et al., 2015). These shortcomings exist largely due to the reality that teacher preparation has never been created, nor effectively developed over time, to prioritize justice-oriented outcomes (Bissonnette, 2016). Aligned with the study's research problem, Bissonnette (2016) explains that even in teacher preparation and methods courses that are designed to center on social justice and critical engagement, TCs still struggle to enact critical pedagogy post-graduation (Sotirovska & Vaughn, 2023). Teacher educators believe that an important vehicle for understanding how TCs take up and enact, or fall short of taking up and enacting, justice-oriented pedagogy is TCs' talk in preparation courses. Cook et al. (2022b) agree, specifying the necessity of methods coursework to disrupt status-quo injustices in educational spaces by developing TCs who can facilitate and sustain critical conversations.

Much of this training-to-praxis chasm has to do with how TCs talk about critical and justice-oriented topics in methods coursework (Meier et al., 2015). Cook et al. (2022b) explain that teacher talk even in discussions meant to be critical "can reify the very racist, sexist, and classist oppressive schooling structures that such conversations are intended to disrupt" (p. 343). In their study, Cook et al (2022b) observed a phenomenon called shielding, or a protective discourse move that TCs employed to side-step emotional labor or potential discomfort in critical conversations. In field placement

interactions and preparation courses, Diaz et al. (2021) noticed silence. One TC, while facilitating a critical conversation in a field placement lesson enactment, encountered a student response to a children's literature text that was racially stereotypical. In response, she asked the other members of the class if they had additional contributions but quickly resumed the lesson, without actually addressing the stereotype. This vignette illustrated a stance of silence that is pervasive in teacher preparation during critical conversations (Diaz et al., 2021). Diaz et al. (2021) explain reasons for why moments like the one in the vignette occur–TCs can be uncomfortable discussing racism, they can feel pressured to pursue or not to pursue critical conversations within the hierarchical nature of teaching in a mentor teacher's classroom, or they can deem interrogating problematic student responses as tangential to curriculum when pressed for time.

Bisonnette (2016) attributes TC evasion of critical talk to an educational culture of niceness, which she argues is the greatest hindrance in preparing TCs to teach literacy in critical and culturally responsive ways. The culture of niceness is perpetuated in teacher preparation programs, as TCs are expected to maintain a level of professionalism, which often means complying with, rather than challenging, disrupting, or problematizing, new or handed down information, stances, and narratives. Bissonnette (2016) explains that due to wanting not to seem controversial, TCs opt for a more sanitized, traditional approach to teaching. The issue, however, with traditional educational structures is that they are rooted in normative ways of thinking and being–traditions that perpetuate the exclusion of historically oppressed students and uphold the comfort and security of dominant identities as critical talk is conflated with controversy. In their own courses, Cook et al. (2022b) also observed silent or neutral TC stances in critical conversations in the form of protective discourse moves, including deflecting,

evading controversy, and minimizing emotional labor. Such withdrawals or evasion were observed specifically in response to conversations about sociopolitical topics. Cook et al. (2022b) position these talk moves as protective, rather than intentional; however, perceived silence or neutrality often results in race-evasiveness or denial of systems of oppression and one's navigation within–and often role in upholding–them. Sometimes, too, TCs evade participation in critical conversations because of the potential discomfort of reflexivity; it can be disconcerting to interrogate one's complicity in oppressive structures (Bender-Slack & Young, 2016; Cook et al., 2022b; Damico et al., 2018).

Cook (2021) studied teacher talk in a methods course beyond critical class discussions and related to an assignment that asked TCs to 1) identify educational inequities and 2) discuss methods for improving them. Cook (2021) observed various TC stances that illustrated what he conceptualized as passive activism, or "adopting inactive (or hands-off) roles (e.g., creating resources for other teachers to implement) toward activist work as a way to remove oneself from the visibility and vulnerability that accompanies public or external activism" (p. 541). In one example, he described a TC's goal of developing a project that would outlast her, hoping to leave a legacy of positive impact. In doing so, though, she distanced herself from being the actor and agent in the project and, instead, opted for developing a project that would run without her continuous involvement or active and visible engagement. Cook (2021) explains the added element of wishing to be recognized for one's justice-oriented work as an ulterior motive to activism, reinforcing the socially perpetuated archetype of the White teacher savior (Warren & Hotchkins, 2015). Another TC in the study assumed the role of mentor, developing a project that she would support others in executing; however, this stance also distanced her from potential discomfort and an active role in developing and carrying out

a project on her own, ultimately privileging her White comfort over the justice-oriented outcomes of the project (Cook, 2021). Finally, a third TC reflected on the ideology behind his activism; however, he, too, distanced himself from planning and executing a project by designating his thinking to the theoretical world, rather than the operational and actionable. Cook (2021) explained that considering culturally responsive pedagogy only through the lens of the hypothetical is a privilege enjoyed by TCs who are able to isolate themselves from the discomfort of enacting liberatory pedagogy. Further, TCs who enjoy this privilege are not at risk for experiencing continued and worsened oppression as incrementalism hinders, and often halts, justice-oriented initiatives.

Scholars investigated additional reasons TCs choose silence in critical conversations, whether in taking silent or neutral stances in their own coursework or in facilitating discussions with students in field placements. Diaz et al. (2021) reported that many new teachers felt unprepared facilitating conversations about systemic oppression in field placements and early classrooms, and a vast majority attributed the lack of preparation to their training programs and the absence of instruction dedicated to engaging in and considering how to facilitate such talk. TCs also reported feeling unable to discuss issues like racism with students unless texts explicitly mentioned it (Diaz et al., 2021). Other influences on TC discomfort stemmed from fear of seeming unknowledgeable or lacking authority on critical topics, of being perceived as teaching politically, or from assuming that young learners are not yet capable of participating in critical talk.

Schieble et al. (2020) added that beyond their own silence, TCs worry about the imagined silence of students, wondering how to effectively engage and honor all student voices in critical discussions. Such fears, additionally, are linked to assumptions TCs

hold about who their students will be and how they might respond to critical conversations; however, these concerns act as compounding pressures on TCs when imagining enacting critical work with students. TCs, in imagining facilitating critical classroom discussions, feel ill prepared specifically to navigate student emotions. TCs feel daunted by potentially intense, unpredictable emotional responses, by the potential of emotional reactions when asking students to share personal experiences with peers, and by the unknown social outcomes of challenging students to be vulnerable (Schieble et al., 2020). Schieble et al. (2020) describe the complexity and range of student emotional responses to critical conversations, from employing humor to minimize painful topics, emotional expression informed by social customs and practices in home environments, and pain involved in sharing personal experience with systems of oppression, all of which TCs feel unprepared to confront.

How TCs talk about critical topics and texts in their own preparation coursework, how they imagine facilitating similar talk in their future classrooms, and how they talk, in reality, in field placements is crucial in that it can implicitly and explicitly sustain harmful, dominant social narratives and reify oppressive ideology (Diaz et al., 2021). Whether TCs worry that critical talk will cause conflicts with parents and administrators; feel insecure about their own sociocultural identities and their subsequent influences on pedagogical choices; or espouse the White-washed stance that politics have no place in the ELA classroom (Bissonnette, 2016), culturally responsive and justice-oriented teacher preparation hinges on critical conversations that disrupt normative perspectives, that make unusual taken-for-granted privileges, and critique passive activist stances that relieve White TCs, in particular, from directly and actively engaging in critical pedagogy.

Whiteness in Teacher Preparation

Many of the interactional stances during critical conversations previously mentioned–silence, neutrality, shielding (Cook et al., 2022b), passive activism–are made in avoidance of discomfort but that, in turn, maintain Whiteness (Diaz et al., 2021) via colorblind racism (McCausland, 2020). Colorblind racism occurs when teachers espouse stances of "not seeing color," or claims that all students are the same. Though intended to establish equality as an inverse of racism, this stance is problematic in that realistically, students are not the same–not even close. Students' multidimensional, intersectional identities (Ginsberg, 2022) are complex and evolving, and espousing neutrality stances rooted in White norms and standards positions non-White students as deviations from the norm. Rather than considering their differences as assets in classrooms, learner differences–what make them unique–are overlooked. Bissonnette (2017) conceptualizes Whiteness as a social identity developed intentionally to mobilize hegemonic purposes. It allows for systemic advantages both blatant and covert, as Whiteness is positioned as usual, mainstream, and status-quo (Bissonnette, 2016). Both the dangers of and the likely persistence of Whiteness-as-normality stems from the problematic and often unchallenged narrative that Whiteness is just "how things are," as opposed to the truth that Whiteness was constructed to operationalize and maintain systematic racism and continued oppression of non-White individuals. A participant in Rogers and Mosley's (2008) study referred to "white talk" (p. 107), which is when White TCs laugh off uncomfortable discussions of race, ignore racism, evade direct engagement with the effects of racism, or expect non-White peers to understand and account for ignorance or the perpetuation of racist stances.

Nayak (2007) defines Whiteness through the lens of Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) as a modern conception that is ever evolving but that can be named and

interrogated (Wilson & Kumar, 2017). It contains unspoken or common-sense privileges and is positioned as normal; however, it must be disrupted through the process of making Whiteness unusual and even grotesque (Nayak, 2007). Matias and Mackey (2016) explain that Whiteness has socioemotional, physical, and political power, so its constant disruption is necessary. Jupp et al. (2016) holds the lens of Whiteness up to educational contexts, specifically, through the theoretical framework of White Teacher Identity Studies (WTIS). This sector of educational research "seeks to prepare and conscientize a predominantly White preservice and professional teaching force for teaching and learning across cultural differences in public schools" (Jupp et al., 2016, p. 1151). In educational settings, such material consequences discussed by Matias and Mackey (2016) include deficit perspectives and stereotypical perceptions of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Warren & Hotchkins, 2015; Wilson & Kumar, 2017), "cultural mismatch[es] between home and school" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 468) that lead to lower achievement and graduation rates, and even harsher disciplinary measures for Students of Color (Miller et al., 2009).

Miller and Tanner (2019) argue that understanding White identities and the relationships White individuals have with racism is complicated, flexible, and tension-laden. Though WTIS in its conception positioned White teachers as consistently race-evasive (Miller & Tanner, 2018), it later developed to avoid the oversimplification and essentialization of how White individuals come to know and understand their Whiteness in pursuing anti-racism. Miller and Tanner (2018) explain that "pigeonholing" (p. 5) White teachers in unproductive–it is essential that White teachers reckon with their Whiteness and use that knowledge to critique oppressive educational systems; however,

the journey of White teachers in coming to know and navigate their Whiteness is often complex and non-linear.

Still, Jupp et al. (2016) maintain the necessity of White educators to transgress the handed-down educational policies and practices that position non-White students–and their looks, behaviors, languages, family structures, traditions, cultures, and communities–as incompatible with school structures. Further, Matias and Boucher (2021) remind educators that CWS and WTIS has shifted too often to center White individuals' identity exploration, distracting from the intended outcome of centering the consequences of Whiteness, which disproportionately impact Students of Color. While it is necessary for White TCs to consider their Whiteness, name it, and locate how it drives their instructional choices and pedagogical practices; the work cannot conclude there. It must, rather, refocus back onto the students such reflection aims to serve.

Tying Whiteness back to many of the talk behaviors witnessed by teacher educators in the field, scholars point out how in teacher preparation, the discoursal maneuvers of White teachers to evade critical conversations and prop up White-centric pedagogy persist into career classrooms, manifesting in White saviorism, false empathy, and White fatigue. Rogers and Mosley (2008) explain that oppression is "constituted, reproduced, and resisted" (p. 110) through talk and subsequent action. Talk impacts the world by how it positions humans and social problems, and based upon this positioning, individuals take action to disrupt systems of oppression–or not (Rogers & Mosley, 2008). For example, Warren and Hotchkins (2015) discuss Delgado and Stefancic's (1997) critique of the absence of empathy in American institutions, as "minorities get little if any genuine empathy" (pp. 266-267). This results from a lack of space reserved for the voices of People of Color in both classroom and in the curriculum. On the other hand, a

perceived empathetic stance of TCs when rooted in Whiteness, when misunderstood as activism rather than passive activism, and when unchecked by critical examination, fosters complicity in racist systems. Warren and Hotchkins (2015) argue that while teachers are often prepared as though they will teach in highly diverse educational settings where they are a part of the racial minority, but in reality, "these same teachers are guided by dominant perspectives and cultural norms characteristic of the majority White population" (p. 267). These viewpoints, left unchecked, foster "false empathy" or a false sense of allyship, which researchers conceptualize as: "an individual's tendency to think, believe, and act as if he or she possesses more empathy than what can be personally confirmed or validated" (p. 267).

Another phenomenon in teacher preparation programs that do not interrogate Whiteness consistently is that of White fatigue, which Wilson and Kumar (2017) explain occurs when White TCs are told they are complicit in perpetuating Whiteness but are, themselves, hesitant to critique their role in those systems (Cook, 2021). When such complicity occurs, TCs reported feeling "helpless and victimized" (p. 185). This tension sometimes leads training and new teachers to distance themselves from critical topics, sanitize critical discussions with students, or avoid these conversations altogether. Teacher educators, then, must pursue a balance between nurturing White TCs' individualized growth toward advocacy and, conversely, encouraging a healthy discomfort (Cook, 2021) that accompanies critical reflections on one's participation in and enjoyment of privilege in a White society (Wilson & Kumar, 2017).

Borsheim-Black and Sarigianides (2019) understand Whiteness in the United States to be a "White problem" (p. 3), meaning that it is the responsibility of White teachers to "shoulder responsibility for interrupting racism in our classrooms" (p. 3).

Implications for teacher educators in modeling critical talk facilitation to disrupt Whiteness baked into uncritical talk/stances in TC preparation coursework are forthcoming; however Rogers and Mosley (2008) remind teacher educators of the meaning behind this work: "We cannot separate the talk, such as direct (or indirect) racist language, that constructs racism at the level of individual interactions and larger social practices from the material impact of racism on people of color" (p. 110). Here, researchers argue that critical talk is inextricable in effectively preparing TCs to enter a diverse teaching landscape, and the outcomes that result from attention to critical preparation has effects in k-12 educational contexts which are dire.

Overall, the concepts explored in the literature—how TCs conceptualize adolescents, how TCs talk within the context of methods courses, and how TCs talk in critical conversations—situate the talk of TCs in this study. Teacher researchers in the field observed that TCs tend to essentialize adolescents, underestimating their capacity for thinking and feeling deeply or independently of the stereotypes assigned to them in society and popular culture. In methods courses, not only do TCs work to disrupt commonly accepted depictions of adolescents, but they, further, consider how they will engage them in complex conversations about power and privilege. Scholars observed that in such conversations, TCs sometimes side-step critical talk in favor of choosing silence or neutrality, moves teacher researchers conceptualize as protective. Within the context of Whiteness, though, evading critical talk is a vehicle for sustaining White supremacy. In privileging one's comfort or evading potential discomfort in participating in potentially vulnerable or emotionally charged critical conversations, critical talk is thwarted, and Whiteness is maintained.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODS

Researcher Positionality

This project's theoretical framing hinges on the belief that meaning is co-constructed between speakers in social contexts, and similarly, "in all interpretivist research there is an assumption that knowledge is situated in relations between people" (Bukamal, 2022, p. 328). While I conducted this study independently, Bukamal (2022) points out the innately human aspect of research and the ongoing conversations built between researcher and data, which Smagorinsky (2008) calls the social construction of data. When I show up to this work, I bring with me my own identities and experiences that will inevitably color how I read talk, social interactions, and data, transacting with them as I work to decipher meaning (Damico et al., 2018). I lean on Matteson and Boyd's (2017) definition of researcher positionality, which results as a culmination of various identities and considers "a host of factors, such as ability, nationality, religion, race, citizenship status, orientation, gender, and social class" as well as "fluidity in identity characterized by differing social settings and discourse communities" (p. 33). Luke (1995) argues the impossibility of reading neutrally–I argue socially co-constructed talk as a form of text that can be read (Au & Brace, 2004; Luke 1995)–in isolation of one's own identities and resulting positionality. Sybing (2022) agrees, explaining that individuals will always read the world uniquely and depending on their own characteristics, and in qualitative research, this means that data are primarily "a product of researcher interpretation" (p. 759). With this in mind, awareness of a researcher's positionality helps one to better decipher their position, relative to what they are attempting to observe (Sybing, 2022).

Subsequently, my own ever evolving, multidimensional, intersectional identity (Ginsberg, 2022) impacts the lenses through which I view the data–lenses I am unable to remove; however, my awareness of their presence is essential in working to produce ethical and trustworthy scholarship. To achieve this reliability, I engaged in recursive moments of reflexivity throughout the research design and data analysis processes, specifically in my teaching journal. Reflexivity "comprises an awareness of how a researcher's background and experiences can largely shape all stages of the research process, including the research design and later interpretation of the findings" (Bukamal, 2022, p. 328). Bukamal (2022) positions reflexivity as a powerful resource for researchers in interrogating their own biases, considering how their personal histories inform their interactions with participants, and reflecting critically on how they represent the voices of study participants.

The main identities that impact most prominently my researcher positionality include those of a White, middle-class, cis female. Layered onto these aspects of identity, I am also a course instructor and a teacher-researcher, all of which impact how I read and interpret data and TCs themselves. Regarding my more demographically-oriented, personal identifications, I reflect on my race and gender, specifically as they relate to this project and its goal of contributing to justice-oriented pedagogy. As previously mentioned in the Research Problem section, the teaching force at the k-12 and higher education levels is composed mostly of White, female educators who serve an ever increasingly diverse student population (Jupp & Badenhorst, 2021; Jupp et al. 2016; Picower 2009; Sleeter 2017). Racial and cultural mis-matches like these have material consequences, disproportionately so for Students of Color, from positioning students of

differing racial identities through deficit perspectives to more easily stereotyping these students and their families (Warren & Hotchkins, 2015).

In more overt scenarios–ones that are still common, though–such biases can result in harsher discipline toward behaviors, both personal and academic, racialized by White teachers (Buehler et al., 2009). More covertly and ever related to a research project housed in a higher education context, my Whiteness and its privileges are couched in education as a White space. Education was designed with people who look, sound, and sometimes behave like me. It systematically measures students against White norms and standards (Nayak, 2007), and as a White individual, it is essential to notice and disrupt the, for me, taken-for-granted and handed down curricular and instructional practices (e.g. grading policies, language requirements, and disciplinary measures) that maintain and uphold ideologies that benefit White folks. Though I will often come up short in this pursuit, it is ever important that White teachers commit themselves to the ongoing learning and commitment to justice-oriented instruction (Sleeter, 2017). Most importantly, I must interrogate closely my personal and instructional practices and avoid silence-stancing in my classroom, disrupting the privilege of White educators to opt for perceived but illusory neutrality or to avoid reflexivity to maintain White comfort at the cost of equitable teaching (Borsheim-Black, 2015; Cook, 2021; Diaz et al., 2021; Haviland, 2008; Hendrix-Soto & Wetzel, 2019).

It is necessary also to consider my positionality as course instructor and teacher-researcher, roles informed by my identities and that layer onto how I collected and analyzed data. Freire and Macedo (2016) explain that any pedagogy is inherently linked to power, as an "[embodiment] of concrete relations between diverse human beings and traditions, and [that] all interaction contains implicit visions about the role of the citizen

and the purpose of community" (p. 6). In the microcosm of the teacher preparation classroom, despite attempts for democracy and co-construction (Freire, 1968) there inherently exist undertones of a teacher/student hierarchy. While I believe the participants in this study communicated, in their talk and writing, candidly, the realistic context of the data collection is this: TCs were completing assignments they knew would be read by me and, further, evaluated for a grade. With this reality in mind, I reflected often upon the TC talk I analyzed and how it might have been influenced by power dynamics at play. When appropriate, I theorize and discuss the implications of this in the data analysis. Further, I had taught three TCs in the Methods course in a different course the previous semester. Because of this familiarity, it became exceedingly easier to believe I knew how to read and interpret TC talk based on my knowledge of and experience with TCs as my own students. With this reality in mind, as I read and interpreted data, I reviewed my findings with a particular awareness of how my relationships with and understanding of TCs might be informing them. I engaged in this reflexive exercise recursively throughout writing the study's findings, triangulating (Smagorinsky, 2008) data sources as often as possible.

As a teacher-researcher specifically, my interpretations will, of course, be colored by the theoretical lenses I have chosen to hold up to the data in this project. In addition to identity and role-based positionality, I have chosen to use CDA to analyze moments where power is in function. It is essential for me, in these moments, to ensure that my interpretation of them–though through a designated methodological lens–is sound. Antaki et al. (2003) critique common missteps related to researcher reliability through the lens of DA, specifically, questioning–how do we know what we know because of the language? Antaki et al. (2003) outline errors that are abundant in the field:

> Writers are not doing analysis if they summarize, if they take sides, if they parade quotes, or if they simply spot in their data features of talk or text that are already well-known. Nor are they doing analysis if their discovery of discourses, or mental constructs, is circular, or if they unconsciously treat their findings as surveys (p. 7).

As I read my data, I returned to the following questions to account for my researcher positionality: How have my personal and professional roles and identities contributed to how I read this data source? Is there any member checking that needs to be done with this participant to be sure I read this data source accurately? How can I describe this data source through the lenses of my study's methodological framework of CDA? How do I know what I know based on language (Antaki et al., 2003)? How is this description anchored to the bigger theoretical picture of critical literacy? What are other scholars in the field saying about what I think I see? How does the work of other scholars converse with this work?

Study Design, Context, and Participants

Study Design and Context

This study took place at a mid-sized Midwestern university. The study was housed in a teacher preparation program, in a course called Methods. This course is an upper level, disciplinary-specific course that is required for degree completion for a Bachelor of Science in Education or a Master of Arts in Teaching program, if TCs did not first complete the education undergraduate program. There are four types of TCs who take this course. The first is a traditional undergraduate TC (undergraduate). These TCs are completing disciplinary-specific coursework in the undergraduate program and taking Methods the semester before student teaching. The second is a graduate student, who

majored in content other than education in completing his/her/their undergraduate degree but is earning his/her/their Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT). Both undergraduates and MAT TCs observe minimally 56 hours in the field during their Methods coursework, enacting two lesson plans to be observed by university supervisors, who liaise with cooperating teachers at TCs' school-based clinical experience sites. The third type of TC in Methods is a residency candidate. This TC is in a local classroom full-time, observing under a mentor teacher and completing coursework through the university to earn credits toward a higher education degree. Finally, alternative certification (Alt Cert) TCs are teaching full-time in a local classroom, taking Methods because it is a required course en route toward their teaching certification. These TCs are teachers of record in the local district. With a diverse TC population, all at different stages of their learning and engaging in different programs, it is essential that Methods utilizes educational philosophy, texts, and instructional models that are relevant and that attend to the needs of the various types of TCs in the course.

The Methods Course. I further situate the study's context by describing the instructional approach and design of the Methods course, as I taught it this particular semester. Generally, the purpose of a methods course is to prepare TCs for their program's or early career next steps–student teaching or their first/second years in the classroom as teachers of record. Methods courses typically work to marry educational theory with practical instructional models, within which students can practice instructional design and enactment and make sound decisions about their pedagogical approach for their first or early classrooms. TCs in methods courses typically practice instructional design by developing and rationalizing various lesson plans, transforming

given instructional models across thematic and genre-based contexts, and designing one unit of instructional materials, aligned with curriculum or state-based standards.

The Methods course–for this study, specifically—description explains that TCs will apply materials and methods to effectively teaching middle and high school ELA. To achieve this outcome, some goals of the Methods course include developing a knowledge of educational theory, growing pedagogical skills teach disciplinary literacy, forming professional stances and dispositions, reading and processing curricular materials, and composing instructional materials that align with one's educational philosophy (see Appendix A). Course objectives include that TCs will be able to apply theoretical understandings to concrete curricular materials, make decisions using higher order thinking skills, design culturally responsive instructional materials, develop engagement strategies for students of diverse learning needs, and effectively utilize educationally relevant technology. Some common methods course assignments include lesson plans and written rationales, as well as unit-level instructional design.

Often, methods courses are also accompanied by field observation experiences, within which TCs can contextualize and enact their learning by teaching one or a few observed lessons in a mentor teacher's classroom. The Methods course for this study also had a field work component (56 hours) through which TCs observed veteran teachers and enacted two observed lesson plans. Bazemore-Bertrand and Porcher (2020) argue that a key to anti-racist teacher education is TCs' intentional placement in diverse field experiences, which research supports improves the readiness of training teachers (Sutherland et al., 2021) due not only to TCs applying their learning in authentic contexts but also via exposure to diverse students and student needs. Minor (2019) explains that even more crucial than understanding students' cultures, practices, and interests inside

the classroom is familiarizing oneself with students' communities and community cultures and priorities outside the classroom–privileging classroom goals over community goals is not, in fact, teaching at all. Bazemore-Bertrand and Porcher (2020) explain how greatly TCs are influenced by their own perceptions that intentional and carefully planned immersion in new communities beyond the classroom can support a celebration of diversity. Ginsberg (2022) notes that Teachers of Color are more inclined to consider the families and communities of Students of Color as cultural assets and funds of knowledge (Campano et al., 2015) for rich literacy, linguistic, and cultural practices of students (p. xxi). For white educators, though Ginsberg (2022) agrees that cultural immersion is important and can be powerful, teacher educators must support TCs in avoiding common, un-critical missteps involved in instructional practice. Problematic missteps that ELA teachers might take could look like assigning texts that tokenize or stereotype characters from non-dominant social groups without prompting critical reflection. For teacher educators, missteps might take the form of soliciting TC reflection on their identities without linking them to systems of oppression or assigning school observations, service learning, or community engaged research in siloes, which inherently provides limited perspectives and can ultimately reify, rather than disrupt, linguistic, familial, racial, cultural, and community-based stereotypes (Ginsberg, 2022).

In the semester I conducted the study, I also co-instructed the Methods course with Dr. James Chisholm, my dissertation advisor. I relied upon James's teaching and research expertise often when designing the dissertation study and planning class content. While the class met once a week for three hours, James supported me in the data collection process by keeping a teaching journal, which I will describe later in this chapter. What was somewhat unique about this particular semester of Methods

instruction was that I made some revisions in the course design to more intentionally center critical conversations, with my research questions in mind. I rely on Schieble et al.'s (2020) rationale for centering critical conversations in the Methods course:

> Critical conversations support students with the tools to speak back to injustices they encounter in and outside of school. These discussions also foster ways to recognize and reflect on how people benefit from historic and present injustices in our society and institutions. Thus, critical conversations build students' literacies for full participation in civic life and democracy (p. 13)

So, to position the Methods course to center, more so, critical conversations, I made several adjustments to the class, from how I'd taught it previously. First, I added language to the existing course description: "The purpose of this course is to prepare preservice middle-level and secondary English language arts (ELA) teachers to create and enact standards-based instruction through the lens of critical literacy (Schieble et al., 2020)." I also added to the course objectives that TCs would be able to apply critical understandings to their instructional design materials. More broadly, I added activities and assignments that I believed would foster critical talk among TCs, as well as challenge them to imagine if and how they might take up facilitating critical conversations in their future classrooms. An example of such an assignment was the book club conversations, which I will continue also to discuss later in the chapter as a data source. Several aspects of critical talk were tied up in book club participation. Mainly, I wanted TCs to engage in the work of book club conversations so that they might better understand the experiences of prospective students in reading, talking about, and writing reflectively about YAL. First, before each book club session, I lectured about characteristics of critical conversations, characteristics of un-critical conversations, and talk moves—made by

teachers and students alike—that might either sustain or evade critical talk in classroom settings. I relied heavily upon Schieble et al.'s (2020) characterization of critical conversations to guide lecture content. Schieble et al. (2020) also offer teachers tools that can help TCs facilitate critical conversations through both humanizing practices–de-essentializing, being mindful, and critically listening–and problematizing strategies–noticing and naming, interrupting, surfacing, and strategizing (p. 75). The practice of de-essentializing challenges readers to see past dominant social narratives when reading about characters' identities and experiences, and mindfulness draws readers' awareness to their language and how it positions themselves, characters in texts, and their peers. Similarly, I borrowed various critical reflection prompts (Schieble et al., 2020) for TCs to consider, both through the lens of being a student participant and through the lens of being a teacher, imagining instructional stances and opinions. I also encouraged, after each book club meeting, TCs to refer back to that day's lecture on critical conversations, noting where they believed their group sustained and/or evaded critical talk.

Broadly, I made tweaks to the course to more intentionally center critical talk with the belief in mind that "no curriculum is neutral" (Bishop, 2014, p. 54) and that teaching literacy necessitates political and moral decisions (Luke, 1995). I believe that practicing active antiracism is essential in practicing critical literacy and in creating critical instructional materials. In alignment with Sleeter (2017), antiracism cannot be an "add on" of any course; it cannot be supplementary and must instead be a core tenet of critical instruction. I argue that TCs can benefit from engaging in critical conversations in three major ways: 1) they practice the critical literacy skills themselves that they can later, more easily teach to students via experiential knowledge; 2) they learn from watching teacher educators facilitate critical conversations via modeling; and 3) they imagine how

they might assign texts or write discussion questions for their own classrooms that could foster critical conversation. Further, critical conversations can work to problematize the absence of diverse perspectives and voices in extant curricula, critique unjust but commonly accepted assessment and discipline strategies, and disrupt stereotypical viewpoints of students and communities different from the largely White teaching force.

Critical conversations were also a vehicle for mobilizing the theoretical underpinnings for the course, which were rooted in critical consciousness (Freire, 1968). Critical consciousness is an essential outcome of problem-posing education (Freire, 1968). This authentic investigation challenges learners to "develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (p. 83). Cornelius Minor, a contemporary voice heard throughout the Methods course syllabus and whose ideas echo Freire's, explains that a major obstacle in taking a critical stance for new teachers is a "business-as-usual" attitude (Minor, 2019, p. 10), coupled with binary thinking and inflexibility with which teachers are typically conditioned to approach problems in the classroom. Minor (2019) explains that problem-posing in teacher education may look like questioning rules, policies, and practices that comprise dominant classroom cultures, perpetuate the status quo, and disproportionately benefit some students while marginalizing others. Critical literacy scholars assert that to support a problem-posing stance and a critical awareness, teacher preparation programs must encourage TCs to make connections between the world and their students' lives, consider student (in)access to required knowledge, explore problematic texts and behaviors, disrupt social scenarios which benefit some over others, and imagine hopeful possibilities for activism (Janks, 2014). With these goals in mind, and considering student

evaluations from Methods courses over the past two years, I revised the Methods course to focus on instructional design but revised lecture content and added course assignments that focused on critical conversations, particularly through the critical stances of Scholars and Teachers of Color (e.g. Bertrand & Porcher, 2020; Chavez, 2021; Diaz et al., 2021; Ehrenworth et al., 2021; Ginsberg, 2022; Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021; Minor, 2019; Warren & Hotchkins, 2015).

To operationalize critical theory in instructional design, I chose to incorporate the Reading/Writing Workshop Model as the main structure within which TCs would develop and enact practice lesson plans. The "Workshop" model, existing in various forms originally from pedagogists like Lucy Calkins and Nancie Atwell, operates on key principles that align with critical underpinnings: there exists more focus on what comes out of students' mouths, rather than teachers' mouths, student voice and choice, student ownership of learning, thinking and practicing skills for large "chunks" of time, the establishment of a community of learners, and flexible assessment (Bennett, 2007). In this 15 minute-45 minute-15 minute structure (which can be modified flexibly), the teacher delivers an efficient mini-lesson, followed by extended time for student transfer of skills and individualized coaching, and concludes with a debrief of the day's learning. Lessons, day to day, should follow a recursive cycle of assessment, planning, and instruction (Bennett, 2007; Tovani, 2011).

I chose one required course text that well supplemented the Workshop structure to offer teacher choice and creativity within that specified model, which itself is quite flexible, despite the time suggestions. The Gallagher and Kittle (2018) textbook, *180 Days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents,* features genre-based conceptual units of study that operate within the Workshop model. This text shows

TCs how to digest a curriculum into manageable units that are thoughtfully sequenced and that incorporate applicable learning targets, lesson media, and resources for conferring with/coaching students. Sometimes [teachers] remain quiet about public figures and policies.

Though not a required course text, many of my lectures and aspects of course assignments throughout the semester leaned on the Schieble et al. (2020) text, *Classroom Talk for Social Change: Critical Conversations in English Language Arts,* because of its marriage of critical theory and applicable discussion prompts for developing teachers. While the text overviews critical literacy theory and empirical works alike, it offers critical discussion topics for training teachers, challenges them to theorize why critical topics might prove challenging in classroom discourse, and instructs them on how to facilitate critical talk. Schieble et al. (2020) argue that "discussions about literature are and have always been political, because they are about people's lives and the hard questions we ask about how we live as a society" (p. 1). The text aims to offer a framework for conducting critical talk that examines power and holds space for diverse perspectives while developing discourse moves that sustain critical conversations.

Finally, the culminating project requires students to map out one unit of instruction, including 5-10 completed lesson plans. TCs provide context for the unit, as well as a unit plan rationale (Smagorinsky, 2018). The unit plan rationale justifies how the learning targets, texts, remediation/enrichment, engagement strategies, and ways of demonstrating knowledge afford all learners equitable access points to success. The rationale must support claims for critical instruction both with concrete examples from the unit plan design and with theoretical underpinnings from course texts.

Data Collection

Throughout the semester, I created opportunities for TCs to engage in discourse–written or spoken–that required them to reflect upon how they show up to texts as readers. "Showing up" to, or approaching a text, in this sense, prompted TCs to consider their intersectional identities and how they might be predisposed to or espouse somewhat automatically beliefs and opinions related to texts based upon who they are and what they have experienced thus far. Further, I asked them to engage in talking and writing about texts as readers and to write and talk about how those literacy events informed their instructional decision making around critical topics and texts they would incorporate into their classrooms, modify to incorporate into their classrooms, or avoid altogether. The data sources are listed below, followed by a description of each (see Table 1 for precise data quantities and Table 2 for data totals):

1. Research Journal: Taylor's Teaching Journal Entries + Methods Audit
2. James's Teaching Journal
3. Book Club Conversations + Reflective Writing
4. Semi-structured Interviews

Table 1

Individual Data Quantities

Data Source	Quantity
Book Club 1 Recording (Group 1)	22:18
Book Club 1 Recording (Group 2)	22:06
Book Club 1 Recording (Group 3)	25:02
Book Club 1 Recording (Group 4)	24:46
Book Club 1 Writing	11/11 submissions
Book Club 2 Recording (Group 1)	29:14

Book Club 2 Recording (Group 2)	29:22
Book Club 2 Recording (Group 3)	29:00
Book Club 2 Recording (Group 4)	35:17
Book Club 2 Writing	11/11 submissions
Book Club 3 Recording (Group 1)	14:38
Book Club 3 Recording (Group 2)	34:26
Book Club 3 Recording (Group 3)	39:25
Book Club 3 Recording (Group 4)	38:25
Book Club 3 Writing	11/11 submissions
TRD Teaching Journal	5 pages ● 1.9.23-2 pages ● 1.23.23-.25 pages ● 1.30.23-.75 pages ● 2.6.23-.25 pages ● 3.6.23-.75 pages ● Remaining 1 page: notes to see JSC teaching journal notes
JSC Teaching Journal Pt. 1	50 pages ● 1.23.23-4 pages ● 1.30.23-6 pages ● 2.6.23-11 pages ● 2.13.23-11 pages ● 2.20.23-7 pages ● 2.27.23-3.5 pages ● 3.6.27-7 pages
JSC Teaching Journal Pt. 2	21 pages ● 3.20.23-10 pages ● 3.27.23-4 pages ● 4.12.23-7 pages
Interview 1	32:12
Interview 2	47:53
Interview 3	33:56
Interview 4	53:03
Interview 5	58:46

Interview 6	44:05
Interview 7	56:37
Interview 8	1:05:56
Interview 9	51:09

Table 2

Data Quantity Totals

Data Source	Total Quantity
Book Club Audio Recording	343 minutes, 9 seconds (~5.72 hours)
Book Club Writing	83 pages
Teaching Journals	76 pages
Interview Audio Recording	443 minutes, 6 seconds (~7.4 hours)

Research Journal

The first data source that I created was a research journal (Ortlipp, 2008), which included my reflective teaching journal entries and a research methods audit. Before the semester began, I started planning the Methods course, and from this point forward, I recorded the decisions I was making from broad to narrow. For example, when making foundational choices about course texts, I rationalized my choices in the teaching journal and contextualized them within my research questions. More narrowly, I reflected upon day-to-day planning, choosing and rationalizing similarly assignments, discussion prompts, and reflection questions that I believed might chip away at diverse aspects of my research questions as TCs engaged in critical literacy. Also in my teaching journal were narrative observations of organic talk I observed, either before or during class, that felt relevant to the research foci. Whenever possible, I tried to capture exact wording of TC talk I overheard in class. After each class session, I also reflected broadly on how TCs talked about and engaged with the session's content.

Separately, from the early stages of revising the Methods course and onward, I dedicated a section of my research journal to a Methods Audit, which recorded the precise steps I took in designing and executing the dissertation research project. With a project of this scale, I paid special attention to articulating each decision I made, how the decisions were informed, as well as how I operationalized each step of the study's design, so that I would be more clearly able to describe my research methods when writing up the project. I also hoped to capture any in-process or spontaneous decisions I made in my teaching or research that could not have been forecasted in the study's original design. Essentially, the Methods audit tracked my moves as a researcher across my planning and actual enactment of the research process. Secondly, I accessed James's teaching journal to use as an additional form of reliability checking, as well as to incorporate anecdotal data from class sessions during which I was teaching and unable to write notes simultaneously. It is relevant here to note that throughout the semester, though we planned each class session collaboratively, I delivered more direct instruction to TCs each week, between James and myself. So, during most class sessions, when I was teaching and therefore unable to jot observations or record snippets of TC talk, James was recording in his journal. The nature of James's teaching journal was less reflective than my own. Rather, he recorded verbatim lines of TC talk that seemed relevant to the research questions. James hand-wrote his teaching journal and shared scanned copies of them with me at the close of the semester. I then transcribed the journal notes into an online word processor to code alongside my other data sources. For additional context, though James's teaching journal is quantified in Tables 1 and 2, his journal was hand-written and housed in a much smaller composition notebook, whereas mine were captured in single-spaced pages of a word processor. This is the reason for the

disporportionality between the data quantities for these two sources seen in Tables 1 and 2.

A few other important notes about James's and my teaching/research journals pertain to how I used the journals as data sources. When reducing my data, a process described later in this chapter, I included only the parts of my teaching journal and James's teaching journal that featured words and phrases said by students, verbatim. To minimize premature or biased interpretation of TC talk, I separated my reflective journal content from the direct recording of TC talk, either by James or myself. For the words and phrases said by TCs and recorded in our journals, I treated them as data points and included them in the data reduction and analysis processes, along with the other data sources. For the reflective aspects of my teaching journal, I referred back to them periodically throughout my data analysis process as a way of checking my researcher positionality. For example, after each phase of the data reduction and analysis process described later in this chapter, I returned briefly to my teaching journal for review. If there were any entries that I felt influenced my reading of the data due to my own personal interpretations of or reactions to TC talk, I attempted to be aware of an tamper any instances of colored data readings, based upon my experiences as the course instructor.

Book Club Conversations + Reflective Writing

The second data source that I collected during the Methods semester was a set of audio recordings taken during book club discussions. The dissertation research design takes a two-pronged approach: first, TCs engage in literacy experiences themselves, as "students" and readers; then, TCs shift into thinking as teachers, weighing their imagined future instructional decisions, informed by their participation in literacy events. Rogers

and Mosley (2008) support the use of book club conversations–TCs responding to, asking questions of, and challenging an anchor text and one another to construct and negotiate meaning. Researchers explain that book club talk provides a bounded interaction that allows for the tracing of "resemiotization of discourse across conversations and contexts, which signals learning and transformation" (Rogers & Mosley, 2008, p. 111). This means that as TCs both deconstructed ideas and co-constructed meaning through their talk, the ways in which meaning develops throughout the book club conversation–and how consistent group members' stances evolve over the course of multiple book clubs–can be studied as a reflection of learning. Regarding book club written reflections, too few opportunities, researchers argue, are afforded for TCs to engage in guided practice of critical self-reflection (Vetter et al., 2020). Bean and Stevens (2010) argue that the field at large lacks studies which examine the power of reflection of TCs on their literacy discussions. Schieble et al. (2020) define self-reflection as a "powerful tool for teachers to transform teaching and learning" (p. 36) but distinguish critical self-reflection as an "earnest cycle of self-reflection and empathy" (p. 36) that, rather than existing only internally and in one's mind, looks outward and seeks opportunities to pursue new knowledge and perspectives.

Bean and Stevens (2010) agree that guided reflection in TC education is accepted widely in the field as effective teacher preparation, particularly when reflection is critical in nature to "raise awareness and acknowledgement of [...] power distributions as a step toward changing them" (p. 205). Bean and Stevens (2010) did observe, however, that even when TCs engaged in guided critical reflection, they critiqued micro discourses but failed to extend their critique to macro discourses or problematic social systems. The reflection prompts, rationalized below, attempt to both offer critical reflection

opportunities, challenge TCs to consider how they will transform literacy events into future instructional action, and disrupt system-level Discourses as they reflect on co-constructed talk.

I chose YAL texts for TCs to read because this genre aligned well with the local school district's recommended readings for ninth grade, which I used as a mid-point to bridge the learning needs of TCs preparing to teach middle school versus high school. Descriptions for each of the texts can be found in Table 3. I included text summaries from *Goodreads,* because these are the text summaries I shared with TCs in the Methods course at the beginning of the semester.

Table 3

YAL Text Summaries from Goodreads

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Sherman Alexie)	*Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (Marjane Satrapi)	*The Poet X* (Elizabeth Acevedo)
Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled	In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The intelligent and outspoken only child of committed Marxists and the great-granddaughter of one of Iran's last emperors, Marjane bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country. Persepolis paints an unforgettable portrait of	Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking. But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, who her family can never know

with poignant drawings by Ellen Forney that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live.	daily life in Iran and of the bewildering contradictions between home life and public life. Marjane's child's-eye view of dethroned emperors, state-sanctioned whippings, and heroes of the revolution allows us to learn as she does the history of this fascinating country and of her own extraordinary family. Intensely personal, profoundly political, and wholly original, Persepolis is at once a story of growing up and a reminder of the human cost of war and political repression. It shows how we carry on, with laughter and tears, in the face of absurdity. And, finally, it introduces us to an irresistible little girl with whom we cannot help but fall in love.	about. With Mami's determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself. So when she is invited to join her school's slam poetry club, she doesn't know how she could ever attend without her mami finding out. But she still can't stop thinking about performing her poems. Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.

To prepare for book club conversations, TCs completed written responses to prompts that asked about their personal connections and disconnections to or from the YA text. During book club conversations, TCs could record in-process thoughts, follow-up questions, and notes for later reflections in the same space as their preparation work. Following the book club conversations, TCs completed scaffolded written reflection prompts (see Appendix B-D for Book Club assignment sheet). The reflection prompts came from Schieble et al. (2020) and are scaffolded in an inward to outward approach–in Book Club 1, TCs are asked to reflect on the familiar and their positionalities to the text; in Book Club 2, TCs are asked to assume the role of listener, decentering their own perspectives slightly to make space for those of their peers; and in Book Club 3, TCs are

asked to link their ideas to larger Discourses and systems at work, both in literature and in the world around them (Freire, 1968). Schieble et al. (2020) explain that the questions asked in Book Club 1 position TCs as critical learners, so that they might experience what it feels like to be one of their future students engaging in the book club discussions. Then, in the Book Club 2 prompts, TCs step outside their own experience and practice critical listening, or "learning how to hear and think critically about the messages about power that are circulating in talk" (p. 59). Finally, the Book Club 3 prompts challenge TCs to consider a "so what" of their critical reflections–they combine their own reading experiences and those of critically listening to peers, in order to begin considering "humanizing approaches to classroom challenges" and discuss actionable steps toward solutions (Schieble et al., 2020, p. 37).

Book club conversations occurred three times throughout the Methods semester, taking place toward the beginning, middle, and end of the course to offer snapshots of the arc of TC learning. The snapshots develop a resemiotization of discourse across learning moments similar to that described by Rogers and Mosley (2008). Book club groups included 3-4 TCs, who were grouped together because of their shared program status (e.g., Alt Cert and MAT). In other learning activities and discussions throughout the semester, it was important for TCs to work with pre and in-service teachers to garner diverse experiential perspectives; however, in discussing how they might take up/reject certain topics and texts in their classrooms, I wanted the in-service teachers to be able to benefit from talking with fellow teachers of record or teachers in classrooms full-time, and I wanted the pre-service teachers to be able to make connections with peers across their other preparation courses. For the teachers in the classroom full-time–the residency candidates and Alt Cert candidates–I allowed them to choose their book club members, as

long as there were no more than four. Also, it was important for me to keep the book club groups and members consistent throughout the semester, as many of the topics discussed in the YAL texts led to potentially personal talk, and I wanted TCs to build, over the semester, a sense of community and trust with fellow book club members. The book club conversations lasted anywhere from 25-40 minutes, depending on how much class time could be allotted during book club meeting days. One designated TC from each group recorded the book club conversation and shared the recording with me immediately after. I decided to have TCs record and share with me their conversations after they participated in them to avoid the power imbalance of a teacher's presence in book club discussions to influence what they felt comfortable sharing. Alvermann et al. (1996) observed high school ELA students engaging in literature circle discussions. They argued that students' "social, cognitive, and motivational aspects of talk are intertwined" (Alvermann et al., 1996, p. 247) analytically. High school ELA students reported that both the texts teachers assigned and the talk formats they designed for students influenced their participation, and those decisions influenced how students negotiated their roles, relationships, responsibilities, and performance norms for text-based conversations (Alvermann et al., 1996). In attempting to minimally influence further these talk conditions by listening in or contributing to book club talk, I remained distanced, analyzing their conversations in the days following book club meetings. After the book club conversations took place, TCs had one week to complete their reflective writing and submit their work to our online classroom management system.

The first book club text TCs read was *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (*PTI*; 2007) by Sherman Alexie, a mixed-medium YAL text that is semi-autobiographical. The narrative follows a middle school boy, Junior, who expresses

himself through diary entries and doodles. Junior lives on a Native American reservation and grapples with the decision of whether to leave the "rez" to attend a more academically rigorous but all-white school beyond. *PTI* (2007) is well known for being polarizing for teachers and student readers alike; it falls on many banned and challenged lists, it is written by an author implicated in the *"Me Too" Movement* by being accused of multiple accounts of sexual assault, and the text features both cursing and sexual content. Despite the controversy surrounding the text, I chose to include it because it is featured in the local school district curriculum as a suggested text for ninth grade. Scholars in the field believe this text to offer a wealth of discussion topics that are critical in nature, from problematizing the systemic issues in the text to discussing current events and its author (Cook et al., 2022a).

The second book club text was *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (*Persepolis;* 2007) by Marjane Satrapi. This graphic novel is a memoir of Marjane's life between the ages of six and 14 in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution. Throughout the story, Marjane details adolescence during the Iranian Revolution, exploring motifs of freedom, revolution, education, and family. Finally, the third book club text was *The Poet X* (2018) by Elizabeth Acevedo. In this novel in verse, the protagonist, Xiomara, navigates growing up in Harlem. She channels her emotions into writing poetry, which she relies on especially in encountering her first love, navigating a complicated relationship with her mother and religion, and society's gender stereotypes. In addition to offering TCs texts from diverse perspectives (gender, race, geography, experience, and voice)–all written by authors whose racial identities align with those of the protagonist–I wanted to expose TCs to three distinct genres of YAL (fiction, memoir, and semi-autobiographical), as well as three types of media (mixed-media, graphic novel, and verse novel). Such diverse

texts, in addition to offering rich topics for discussion, would also afford TCs diverse contexts within which to practice lesson planning using the Workshop model and to practice teaching a range of disciplinary literacy skills.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The third major data source I collected was semi-structured interviews (Glesne, 2016). I invited each study participant (12/12 TCs were invited to participate in the study, but only 11/12 elected to participate) to engage in an interview at the close of the semester. I followed an interview protocol that included the following steps: 1) I sent an email to invite each study participant at the beginning of the last month of the course (April, 2023); 2) I sent one follow-up email to study participants who had not yet responded during the second week of April; 3) I scheduled 1-hour time windows with participants who agreed to interview via email upon their response; and 4) I used Microsoft Teams, the university's adopted office suite, to schedule the virtual interviews. If participants asked to preview the interview questions beforehand, I obliged. Each interview I conducted featured six standardized questions (see Appendix E) and two customized follow-up questions. The interviews lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour, depending on how much the TCs wanted to share. I asked TCs about each aspect of participating in the book clubs, first through the lens of engaging as a student and reader, and second through the lens of thinking as a teacher. I designed the questions to build one upon the next, so that the questions about instructional decisions would be informed by the previous reflection on participation in the book club experience. When I created the interview questions, I also built in broad moments where I could play for TCs excerpts of their book club talk and ask them follow-up questions, either to clarify meaning and as a means of member checking or to garner what significance, if any, that moment had for

the TC and their learning. I chose these excerpts based upon their relationship to my research questions and included maximally two excerpts per interview, as not to exceed a one hour time limit. This aspect of the semi-structured interview process was particularly helpful, as well, in terms of refreshing TCs' memories on the book club conversations throughout the semester that had potentially occurred weeks before.

Alignment

To synthesize the research design, I put my selected data collection methods back in conversation with my research questions, considering which data sources would actively chip away at aspects of each question. For the data source alignment matrix, see Table 4.

Table 4

Data Source/Research Question Alignment

Research Question	Data Sources that Work to Answer the Question
What discourse moves do TCs make in order to sustain or evade sociopolitical talk during conversations around critical topics?	● Transcripts of book club conversation recordings ● Reflective writing assignments ● Transcripts of semi-structured interview recordings
How do TCs talk about enacting critical conversations in future classroom instruction?	● Research Journal ● Transcripts of book club conversation recordings ● Reflective writing assignments ● Transcripts of semi-structured interview recordings

Participants

At the beginning of the semester, I put in place two forms of getting to know TCs. The first is a demographic survey that is more logistical in nature and asks TCs to list

their name, pronouns, and program. The second is an Intersectional Identity Map (Ginsberg, 2022) assignment, which I built into the design of the study not to collect as additional data sources but to support participant bios in a way that is voiced directly from the TC. I will rationalize this assignment further below.

Demographic Survey

As previously mentioned, four types of TCs take the Methods class as part of their required coursework. To better understand who was taking the class and how to meet their needs, I asked TCs to complete a general survey in the first week of the semester to help me know more about them and their program status (see Appendix F). Table 5 shows TCs' responses to the demographic survey.

Table 5

Participant Demographic Information

Name (Pseudonym)	Pronouns	Program	Listed Identities
Cindy	she/her	Alt Cert	I come from rural Ohio. I am a high school English teacher and love to travel. I spent 6 years, after my first master's degree, living in and teaching English [abroad]. I believe that education is very important and can always help us to improve, so I completed a second master's degree in the spring of 2022. My job and education have defined most of my life to this point and I find that I often introduce myself as a teacher first and rarely get into the other aspects of my life. I tend to be a fairly private person and work very hard. One of my weaknesses is that of being a perfectionist, so I often struggle to feel truly successful in any of my endeavors.
Ellie	she/her	Residency Candidate	I am an educator, a positive individual who has high hopes and dreams fueled by [the residency program] and my passions to help guide students in their educational paths. I'm a

			23 y.o. white female who has been on her own since she was nearly 17 /18 years old. I want to be an administrator or counselor with a doctorate by my 30's.. :)
Erica	she/her	Residency Candidate	A Life-long learner who does not like long winded stories. Racial & Career identification are essential in knowing me because it makes up a big portion of why I am pursuing a field in education.
George	he/him	Alt Cert	teacher, husband, parent, cishet, sober, advocate, white--in a general way these are the foundations to my identity insofar as they provide some orientation for self-understanding and are the more visible identifiers others experience of me. Though very significant, I do not think they are the sum of my personhood. But, there you have it.
Hazel	she/her	undergraduate	I am majoring in Middle/Secondary ELA, and am in the second semester of my Junior year. I identify as a female and am caucasian. I would identify myself as lower class because I make very little at the moment, or in other words enough to keep my head above water. My boyfriends family is upper class, and I am fortunate enough to receive help from them for college. I feel like I have a unique situation with my own family which allows me to look at situations from different perspectives. My identity as a caucasian female is important to who I am because I would label myself as a feminine person and being caucasian allows me to acknowledge the privileges I do have.
Henry	he/him	MAT	Hello! I'm Henry— a traditional MAT student pursuing a career as a high school English teacher! I have always loved English and all of the different aspects/applications of it. I would describe myself as a very creative person, and English studies have always given me an amazing outlet to talk about that creativity and express myself in that regard. I also love reading and writing, and the study/analysis/research/ discussion that can go into those things, which is another reason I

			have always been drawn to the world of English. It is also a dream of mine to pursue the teaching of English beyond the high school level and teach it at the college level. Thus, I would love to one day pursue a Master's and eventual doctorate in the discipline. When and how this would come about though, I have no idea. It is certainly a dream though!
Levi	he/him	Alt Cert	To be honest, this one is one that is hard to answer for me. From the outside, I would be described as: white, middle-class, straight, male. These are definitely all factors that have influenced my life and upbringing of course. But I wouldn't say they're things I think about in my daily life per-se. I think I identify more with certain personality traits and interests. I value harmony and peace above all, and enjoy calm activities like taking walks outside or reading a good book. I think I would describe myself as a curious person, and love learning more about the world around me. I also devote time to creative pursuits, such as yoyoing and music making. Without writing my whole life story, I would say that some of these things are ones I've inherited from how I was raised, while others are those that I developed in resistance to that environment.
Liza	she/her	undergraduate	I am an African-American woman who has a passion for helping others. I find writing and listening to music therapeutic. I believe I have many talents but struggle to find time to explore and intensify them. I am impressed by this fact about myself because it reminds me that life is limitless and I am capable of anything. These are two gems I try to consistently tell myself so I can stay motivated. I am a dreamer who loves to learn, grow, and be enlightened. All of this information is essential in getting to know who I am because it heavily reveals itself in my actions and because I mentioned the fact that I love to learn and grow means that I will always be developing into someone smarter, stronger, and wiser. So to anyone who meets

			me, I will always be different the next time we encounter again.
Noah	he/him	undergraduate	I am an undergraduate student at UofL and I am a cis male, but neither of those really get at WHO I am. I think my racial identification, that being mixed Black and White tells a lot more about who I am because of how it has impacted my life. I believe this has helped me greatly in becoming an open-minded person because of the way I always saw things from two perspectives.
Tiffany	she/her	Residency Candidate	Suburban African American Female
Tim	he/him	MAT	I identify as a white male, middle-class. I don't believe any of this information is essential to get to know me as a person.

Intersectional Identity Map

In the past, the Methods course has begun with an Educator Identity assignment. For this assignment, TCs consider the educational theory that has guided their practice thus far and set goals for growth as an emerging teacher. Schieble et al. (2020) argue the need for TCs to "critically examine their personal identities related to curricular approaches" via reflective activities (p. 256). In this version of the course, I revised this writing assignment based upon Ginsberg's (2022) Intersectional Identity Mapping activity (see Appendix G). Ginsberg's (2022) map and reflective prompts focus on critical aspects of identity exploration beyond race, class, and gender, challenging TCs to consider identity as "fluid, multidimensional, contextual, and intertextual" (p. 1). Ginsberg's (2022) assignment also asks TCs to consider how they identify themselves versus how others perceive their identities, how identities can be manipulated for benefit or silenced and oppressed, and how stereotypes might be assumed of various identities TCs claim. These assignment responses, as previously mentioned, supported me in

writing participant bios that would be more descriptive in nature than offering demographic information alone, and they would inform the bios using the language of the TC in describing their personal and professional identifications.

Participant Bios

The participant bios in this section work to contextualize the talk of the TCs throughout this study. I compiled information from the demographic surveys and the Intersectional Identity Map (Ginsberg, 2022), choosing information to include that I believe informed the study's research questions, that related to the study's theoretical framing and methodology, and that informed the individual's talk around instructional decision making throughout the study.

Cindy (she/her): Cindy is a Caucasian female Alt Cert candidate. She is from rural Ohio but lived abroad for several years teaching English. Her experiences abroad and interracial marriage informed her approach to understanding identity in the classroom:

> On paper, I believe that most of my identities fit neatly into the categories and most of them would be considered dominant identities that bring with them a sense of power and confidence. [...] While there are many comforts associated with this dominant identity, there should be, I think, some discomforts. There should be more consideration of the difficulties faced by those that do not fit so neatly into categories. These ideas of categories and who fits where must be considered in the classroom. While there does not need to be an explicit discussion of who fits into what category, it is the responsibility of teachers to create a classroom environment that encourages students to share about their lives (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response)

Ellie (she/her): Ellie is a 23 year old White female who has been "on her own" since she was 17, as described in her demographic survey. She is a residency teaching candidate. Ellie reflected that her racial, gendered, and language-oriented identities fit neatly into the prescribed categories on the mapping activity; however, her mental and physical disabilities of progressive vision loss and anxiety put her at social disadvantages. In her mapping activity, she explains briefly the tensions she feels related to her ethnicity and its intersection with religion: "My familial background ranges from Great Britain to Ireland to Scotland so it's very complex and intertwined. I can opt out of religion as I was raised Catholic but as a teenager I chose to be an atheist" (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

Erica (she/her): Erica is a 51 year old Black female teacher residency candidate. In her mapping assignment, she talks not only about why her race, gender, and age identities are important to understanding her history but also about how they inform her advocacy for Scholars of Color [(referring to her students)]–an identity affirming term, in itself:

> I take pride in my age and the experiences that come with it, as well as in my Blackness and womanhood. At the same time, I recognize that these identities can also be used to marginalize and oppress me. I am forced into these categories by societal structures that prioritize whiteness, youth, and masculinity. While I cannot opt-out of these identities, I can resist the ways in which they are used to limit my opportunities and experiences. [...] Additionally, I can advocate for policies that support older adults, and I can also speak out against racism and sexism in my personal and professional life. [...] What this means is that I am sensitive to the plight of the [(student)] Scholar of color. Having to operate

within a system that has been (historically) against them (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

George (he/him): George is a full-time teacher of record in the Alt Cert program. He identifies as White and cishet and assumes additional identity roles of teacher, parent, and husband. George explains that about one half of his identities are easily categorized and align with those in socially dominant identity groups. The other, less visible identities, though, particularly those related to his class status and mental health complicate his identities and place him in more vulnerable social categories. He writes:

> My ease in labeling my identities is in many cases because they are located among the dominant or privileged places along the identity spectrum. My most difficult identities to label are those that have been complicated by evolution in our understanding of what certain aspects of humanity mean. For example, I am cisgender, heterosexual, and male. But, I know that there is far more complexity in the areas of gender, sexuality, and sex than I was first taught growing up. At once, I recognize that I am of a privileged gender, sexuality, and sex, meaning that those parts of me would help and not hinder my climbing of the social hierarchy, while recognizing that those identities arise out of a mixture of biology, socialization, and maybe even something resembling choice. [...] However, I have a few complicating variables that bring me down a bit from unfettered access to power. For example, I am middle class, which is a shifting category. But, I work for a living, have no wealth, am burdened with insane debt, and I took on said debt to have access to education and the work that I do. I do not believe I have much social mobility (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

George discusses how his reflections on a privileged identity motivate him to be a

"traitor" or transgressor through the lens of class, race, and gender. In his teaching, this looks like leveraging his own privilege to make space for and honor the minoritized or oppressed identities of his students.

Hazel (she/her): Hazel is a caucasian, female undergraduate student who recognizes her privilege as a part of the dominant racial group in society. Thinking about her ethnicity is harder for her, though, because she is unsure of how to define it apart from race, and she also has limited knowledge about where her family comes from. She explains, however, that she identifies as being part of a minoritized class group, as she classifies her family as lower class. Additionally, though she believes she possesses physical characteristics that society favors as stereotypical beauty standards, a concept she defines as "pretty privilege" (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response); however, she vaguely mentions potential disadvantages to being a woman.

Henry (he/him): Henry is a White male MAT candidate who described, in his demographic survey, his love for the English discipline. He expresses his creativity through ELA content and also appreciates research, hoping to one day get a doctoral degree in English. In his mapping activity, he explained being unsure of whether his identities fit into dominant social groups, admitting that he had not given many of his identities much thought prior to completing the assignment. In the reflective questions after completing the map, though, he considered the identities of his students:

> The reality is, I won't be just teaching to kids who share my identity, but also a great number of kids who don't share those identities. I'll be teaching kids of different races/ ethnicities, kid[s] from different religious/nonreligious backgrounds, kids from different socioeconomic backgrounds, kids who are queer and/or genderqueer, kids of different abilities… the list goes on! The point is, I

> need to realize that, as someone sharing in many of the historically and socially dominant identities in the US—a White, middle class, straight, Christian, cis-gender man—there is a lot that I haven't experienced that my students will have experienced. Thus, it will be my responsibility to not only strive to learn from my students, but to go further and actively foster an environment where all my students can learn from one another. (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response)

Levi (he/him): Levi is an Alt Cert candidate and describes that from the outside, he is a white, middle class, straight male. He distinguishes, in his survey, that parts of his identity are the product of his upbringing and that others have been born out of resistance to that environment. In his mapping activity, Levi discusses the intersections of religion, nationality, and ideology that he carries with him into reading experiences and his classroom:

> I grew up in an extremely fundamentalist, nearly cult-like church. Without writing a whole novel, the church was very much a cult of personality based around the supposed superior holiness of the pastor there. As a former Vietnam Marine vet, the pastor there had a very militaristic view of spirituality and the world, with war and conflict often being used as a metaphorical framing for spiritual life and how we should see the world. The church promoted a very nationalistic, "America is the greatest" ideology with some definitely racist and xenophobic overtones at times. Anything outside of what the church viewed as spiritually or morally acceptable was a source of danger, and since this view was so limited I had a very isolated childhood (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

Because of his perceived unique upbringing and religious/family experiences, Levi works

to avoid essentializing students based upon their claimed or assigned identities: “I can't assume that just because one of my students is "a boy" or "black" for example that they necessarily have certain needs or experiences. Rather I actually have to talk to them and get to know the whole them and what these various factors in their life might mean for them” (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

Liza (she/her): Liza is an undergraduate African American woman who is committed to lifelong learning, growth, and reinvention. Liza’s identities that fit into dominant social categories include that she speaks English as her first language; however, most of her other identities fall into non-dominant and oppressed social categories. In her own words:

> Being a prominent African American[4] educator is what I was called to do. [...] I desire so much for myself and to impact others around me. Education is my power; it is my key to success. I love feeding my brain, and I will always be content if I am learning, which is why I admire English. [...] There are several occurrences where people misidentify who I am because of my sexuality. I am bisexual, but most people assume I am a lesbian when I dress in tom-boy clothes” (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

Liza emphasizes the importance of avoiding judgment based upon perceived or assumed identities, a priority she will bring with her into her early classroom.

Noah (he/him): Noah is an undergraduate student who explains that his identities of being mixed race (Black and White) convey much more about who he is than his identities of being a cis male. He believes that his mixed racial identity has impacted his

[4] In this section, I use the exact race identifiers and capitalization used by study participants in their writing, which may be inconsistent with the labels and capitalization of race throughout the body of the dissertation.

life in that it has developed a dual perspective that he will bring with him into the classroom. In his mapping assignment, he talked about this duality, as it pertains to intersectionality:

> My ethnicity and race impacted me every day when I still struggled to find myself and was torn between my "white side" and my "black side." [...] When I first thought of identities interrelating, I first thought of how these identities can come together to oppress someone even more. For example, Black people are already disadvantaged in our society because of systemic racism and many other reasons. Women are disadvantaged because of extreme sexism in society and for the multitude of ways our governments hold control over them and their bodies. Therefore, a Black Woman has many more ways she is disadvantaged and oppressed in our society. This Black Woman could also be an LGBTQ+ member, have disabilities, not speak English, and these can all come together to highlight my point even further. [...] Because of who I am, I am pushed into both positions of power and positions that disadvantage me. I am a straight male, which certainly gives me a lot of power in society. [...] The most obvious for me is my bi-racialness (is that a word?), which gives me power because I am white, but also pushes me down because I am black. [...] For my teaching practice, this made me want to incorporate genuine mature conversations about these topics and categories in my classroom, when appropriate of course (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response)

Tiffany (she/her): Tiffany is a Suburban African American Female in the teacher residency program. Tiffany discusses further her specification of her racial identity as a "Suburban" African American, in terms of the duality she has experienced being of

mixed race. She explains moments in her educational experience that will impact how she views her own students and the social constructions of race:

> I was often misidentified when it came to my class or race. Oftentimes, many teachers or classmates would have a negative assumption of me based on my race. They had many expectations of me being "ghetto" or "lower class" just to name a few. Growing up, I was often confused because I did not grow up in the areas or environments people assumed I did. It created conversations and socializations awkwardly because I had no clue about the stereotypes people tried to place me in. Many white teachers and classmates did enjoy my presence more when I acted more "civilized" or "white". This caused confusion for me, because it encouraged me to hate my blackness and aspire to a more white identity. [...] It also caused me to have a negative internal bias against black people for a point in time. I did not feel comfortable in black spaces, because people assumed that I was a "sell out", and I couldn't relate to them. (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

Tim (he/him): Tim is a white middle-class male in the MAT program, though he explains in his demographic survey that he does not believe any of these identifiers are essential in getting to know him as a person. Tim, in his identity map, reflected on his identities that are fixed and those that are subject to change. He also considered which of his identities are visible, realizing some key implications for his teaching practice. In his own words:

> Even though most of my attributes fit into the dominant categories, I understand how not being a part of a dominant category could and would cause a sense of discomfort or even strong negativity for those that do not identify with a dominant

characteristic. I try to always take a neutral stance and to understand everyone as best as I can; however, it is impossible to deny the privilege of being in a dominant group whether that is by choice or not. (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response).

Finally, though participants are mostly called by name (pseudonym) throughout the report, I sometimes refer to them in terms of which book club group they were a part. The book club groups can be found in the table below.

Table 6

Book Club Group Members

Book Club Group 1	Book Club Group 2	Book Club Group 3	Book Club Group 4
Hazel Liza Noah	Henry Tim	Cindy Ellie Tiffany	Erica Levi George

Data Processing, Reduction, and Analysis

After I collected the data sources outside my own research journal–James's teaching journal notes, the book club discussion recordings, the book club writing, and the interview recordings–I used Otter.ai to complete an initial transcription of the book club discussion recordings and the interview recordings. Once generated, I re-listened to the book club conversations and interview recordings to check for and correct errors in the initial transcriptions.

In cleaning up the recording transcripts, I began to make decisions about what I would keep and omit, with the study's purpose in mind. The major decisions I made in cleaning up the recording transcripts included keeping, for the time being, false starts and filler words and phrases such as "like" and "you know." At this point, I also kept utterances like "um" and "uh," as well as non-"standard" English conventions, such as

African American Vernacular English (AAVE). I knew immediately that I wanted to keep any deviations in language from standardizations to maintain the authenticity of the sound of participant voices and also to disrupt the dominant social narrative that "academic" talk is normative and White. I will describe soon how I handled filler words and punctuation in the transcripts I selected to include in the study, as well as the decisions I made via written TC work.

Next, I began reducing the data sources. Smagorinsky (2008) argues that data reduction is a largely overlooked aspect of qualitative research and must be outlined, in order to ensure the study's replicability, and therefore, reliability. He explains the common phenomenon of qualitative researchers only providing general accounts of how they read the data or found broad codes and themes, which falls short of effectively representing trends across data sources (Smagorinsky, 2008). Further, it is essential for researchers to communicate the guiding principles behind what information they keep and/or omit, linked to and situated within the study's larger theoretical framing (Smagorinsky, 2008). Essentially, a researcher should write out how they reduced their data through the eyes of an audience member–as nearly as possible, a reader should be able to recreate the data reduction process, as a result of the researcher's specificity and articulation. With such a critique in mind, in my methods audit, I explicitly tracked each step of the data reduction process, which I outline here.

I created individual documents for each data source and copied and pasted the entirety of the data into the document. At the top of each sheet, I copied and pasted my research questions, highlighting the first question in red and the second in blue. As I read through the data in each sheet, anytime the data related to, disconnected from, or informed one of my research questions, I highlighted it in red if it pertained to the first

research question, blue if it pertained to the second research question, or purple if pertaining to both. This type of sheet acted as a preliminary data processing step to begin pinpointing where I should spend time more thoroughly reducing the data sources. A sample preliminary data processing sheet and contextual example can be found in Table 7. Next, I explain how this preliminary data processing sheet became the first phase of my data reduction method, which was a six-phase Thematic Analysis (TA; Nowell et al., 2017).

Table 7

Sample Preliminary Data Processing Sheet and TA Phase 1

Research Questions:

1. What discourse moves do TCs make in order to sustain or evade sociopolitical talk during conversations around critical topics?
2. How do TCs talk about enacting critical conversations in future classroom instruction?

Data Source	Data Excerpt
Book Club 1 Group 1 Noah 10:24	I haven't read this book before but I didn't know I knew there was a passage in here because I was looking at banned books and like I saw this is on a lot of banned books and challenged books and it was because of a passage about masturbation and you know it's really just silly like us reading it but if you're you know looking to challenge and ban a book it definitely stands out so it's just silly nonsense talked by young adults and these passages and the masturbation passages are they reasons to ban a book or would you consider that reasons why a book should be read especially by young adults and you know teenagers

By highlighting excerpts of the different data sources, I indicated the points that jumped out as relevant to one or both of my research questions. In highlighting, I determined "relevant" as data that "talked to" or chipped away at part(s) of the research questions. This meant that the highlighted data illuminated some aspect of the research question itself, or connected to/disconnected from/complicated/stood in tension or at odds with

another piece of data related to the research questions. Essentially, I highlighted parts of the various data sources that seemed to be in conversation with one another. I then copied and pasted the data excerpts that had highlighted material into one, new document so that I could focus more intentionally on those data sources individually and their interaction with the highlighting across other data sources.

Having read Smagorinsky's (2008) paper before designing the dissertation study and having kept detailed steps of my research methods throughout the study's execution, I chose ahead of time a data reduction method that I believed addressed his concerns of seemingly random or underqualified coding and data reduction processes. TA's traditional usage is that of a data analysis method (Nowell et al., 2017). In this study, though, I take a critical stance to TA, as I believe the six "analytical" phases better describe an operational data coding and reduction method than an analysis framework. The six phases entail researcher familiarizing themself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and communicating thematic patterns for substantiating patterns across data types. TA provides a "method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes within a data set" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2), particularly when the data features diverse modes, such as audio recordings of book club meetings (and transcripts), written reflections, and audio recordings of interviews (and transcripts). TA increases trustworthiness in research practice by introducing criteria of credibility and dependability as it communicates a researcher's process, which must be "logical, traceable, and clearly documented" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). I believe that this method has an operationalized, replicable procedure for organizing data and reducing it systematically into themes; however, I do not believe that the phases themselves, nor

their cumulation, afford the researcher with tools to analyze the data once themes are determined. So, in tweaking how the framework was intended–from analyzing data to organizing and reducing it–I used TA for determining the themes in my data that I would then interpret using a combination of other analytical tools that align with the study's theoretical frames.

In transcribing the audio data, organizing all the written data into sheets, checking for transcription errors by re-reading and re-listening to all the data sources, and highlighting the parts of the data that were connected to my research questions, I completed Phase 1 of TA, which is familiarizing oneself with the data. Then, as previously mentioned, I copied and pasted the highlighted data into the new document. To apply Phases 2 (generating initial codes) and 3 (searching for themes) of TA to my existing data sheets, I then added the following columns to the data processing sheet that contained all the highlighted data: Initial Code and Potential Theme (see Table 8).

Table 8

Sample Data Processing Sheet: TA Phase 2 & 3

Research Questions:

1. What discourse moves do TCs make in order to sustain or evade sociopolitical talk during conversations around critical topics?
2. How do TCs talk about enacting critical conversations in future classroom instruction?

Data Source	Data Excerpt	Initial Code	Potential Theme
Book Club 1 Group 1 Noah	I haven't read this book before but I didn't know I knew there was a passage in here because I was looking at banned books and like I saw this is on a lot of banned books and challenged books and it was because of a passage about masturbation and you know it's really just silly like us reading it but if you're you know looking to challenge and ban a book it definitely stands	Deficit Conceptions of Youth/Asset Conceptions of Adults "Allowed"	Adolescents Appropriate-ness

10:24	out so it's just silly nonsense talked by young adults and these passages and the masturbation passages are they reasons to ban a book or would you consider that reasons why a book should be read especially by young adults and you know teenagers	versus "Banned" Content	

A complete list of initial codes and emerging themes across the data can be found in Table 9. Though not yet analyzing the data through the lens of CDA, I wrote initial codes when I saw patterns of power at play. This looked like TCs talking about power in YAL, exercising power in guiding the discussion during meaning-making, talking about their own power as teachers (or lack, thereof), exercising power through talk in leaning into/disrupting dominant social narratives, or certain talk moves enacting power over others to sway the conversation. The initial codes consisted of brief but descriptive phrases. Then, I started to jot broader themes that the initial codes could fit under to nuance aspects of that umbrella theme. After generating the initial codes and pairing them with an umbrella theme, I highlighted the most prominent emerging themes in yellow. These two steps completed TA Phase 4 (reviewing themes).

Table 9

Initial Codes and Emerging Themes: TA Phase 4 & 5

Initial Codes	Potential Theme(s)
Oppression on systemic vs individual scale	Oppression
"Liking" or "relating" to characters/stories/content	Relatability Adolescents
Naming oppressive systems	Oppression
Deficit conceptions of youth	Adolescents

Asset-based conceptions of adults	Adults Teacher/Authority
"Allowed" versus "banned" content	Appropriateness Adolescents
Role/identity of teacher	Teacher/Authority
Teacher's authority/lack thereof	Teacher/Authority
Curriculum as affirming/denying humanity	Curriculum Adolescents Relatability
Defying/reifying stereotypes	Oppression
"Home" content versus "School" content	Appropriateness Teacher/Authority
Neutrality discourses	Humanity Oppression
Speaking stories into existence	Humanity Relatability Adolescents
Fear of unknown discussion outcomes	Emotions
Perception of student ability	Adolescents Relatability
Perception of student interest	Adolescents Relatability
Complicating student viewpoints	Adolescents
Emotional ties to content	Emotions
Human experiences based in fear	Emotions
Teacher choices	Teacher/Authority
Sexuality in YAL	Appropriateness
Sexual content in YAL	Appropriateness
Decision making as teachers	Teacher/Authority
Standards	Curriculum
Balance challenge of teachers (parents,	Teacher/Authority

standards, religion)	
Conceptions of adults/parents	Teacher/Authority
Religion in schools	Teacher/Authority Appropriateness
Teachers as "experts"	Teacher/Authority
Teaching as unbiased/unpolitical	Teacher/Authority Appropriateness
Teaching in policy/law	Teacher/Authority Appropriateness

Finally, I completed Phase 5 by defining and naming my themes. Since my emerging/umbrella themes from Phases 3 and 4 were broad, I word smithed the themes into thematic phrases that were a bit more descriptive but that wouldn't predetermine how I would interpret the data. These thematic statements included:

1. How TCs Relate to/Imagine Students Relating to Texts
2. How TCs Conceptualize Adolescents
3. How TCs Weigh what is "Appropriate" to Teach
4. How TCs Conceptualize the Role of "Teacher"

After articulating these themes, I organized the highlighted text from the data sources that represented various facets of these themes under the respective thematic headings.

It was then time to re-transcribe the written data, this time not for the purpose of ensuring the words from the audio transcriptions were correctly represented, but this time around, for the purpose of representing the talk-based data in a logical way to readers. For the purpose of the study's analysis, I organized the transcriptions according to Gee's (1990) notion of idea units. Idea units are lines of transcriptions or written data sources that are broken up by idea. So, once a new aspect of an idea is expressed, it is entered

onto a new line of text. Idea units segment language into more individual, isolated thoughts, which are important to analyze alone and, additionally, in conversation against the other idea units in that segment of the transcript or written data. In analyzing ideas individually and together, the researcher can then interpret meaning, as the data sources communicate aspects of the thematic heading under which they are categorized. Organizing the transcripts into idea units necessitated listening, for a third time, to the audio recordings of the book club conversations and interviews to ensure that ideas were segmented accurately.

Because the transcripts of recorded talk were then divided into idea units, I removed capitalization and punctuation, which could distract from the idea unit groupings. Again, in this step, I maintained language deviation from standard English. At this point, however, I removed filler words like "um" and "uh" for readability. I did, though, keep in filler words when they represented false starts that I believed mattered to how the TCs expressed certain ideas or made meaning in the passage. If/when this was the case, I discussed this in the analysis of the passage. For TC writing, I also removed capitalization and punctuation to maintain the idea units, and I corrected spelling errors to enhance readability. Similarly to the spoken TC talk, I maintained language deviations from standard English. Then, I discussed the idea unit, both individually and in relation to the larger segment of transcript in the study's Findings. In describing thematic patterns, I completed TA Phase 6 (communicating results).

Finally, I analyzed the data using CDA. To develop an operationalized approach to analyzing my data that avoided the critiques expressed by Antaki et al. (2004)–namely under-analysis through summary–I combined the approaches of three bodies of work. First, I used Barbara Johnstone's (2018) Discourse Analysis (DA) tools to analyze the

data generally through DA. Johnstone explains discourse analysis as "a set of methods that can be used in answering many kinds of questions" (p. 3), some of which are interdisciplinary and include questions about "social roles and relations, power and inequality, communication and identity" (p. 3). She distinguishes, though, that these questions are not what characterize DA; however, what identifies DA is how researchers try to answer such questions, which, in the case of DA, by investigating the "function of language in use" (p. 3). Functions of language, which she developed into a heuristic for analyzing discourse (p. 3), include how discourse is shaped by and shapes the world, people's purposes and possible purposes, linguistic structure, participants, prior discourse and possibilities for future discourse, and media (Johnstone, 2018). Some ways to do this, Johnstone (2018) explains, include breaking down language into parts–or in this study's case, idea units–and systematically asking a number of questions. I garnered and adapted several questions from Johnstone's (2018) work that aligned with interrogating power in a "text," which in this case is TC spoken and written talk, which would give me an initial analytical frame:

1. What is this "text" about, "since clearly what a person is talking about has a bearing on what is said and how it is said" (p. 8)?
2. Who is saying this, and who is the intended audience? Who are the actual hearers/readers?
3. How might the speaker be perceived, given the sociocultural context of the conversation?
4. What motivated the "text" or talk, and how does it usually fit into what people usually do with such talk?
5. What language is used, and what is that language *doing*?

6. How does the language of one speaker interact with the language of other speakers?

Within these questions, I engage Gee's (2014) analytical frame of d/Discourse. Calling back to Gee's argument that talk is always both agentive and social–language in use (Gee, 1990)–I analyzed my findings by interpreting what TCs were literally saying and theorizing any socially constructed influences on that talk. When applicable, I analyzed the Discourse (Gee 2011; Gee, 2014) of TC talk, explaining where large-scale ideologies crept into how TCs responded to texts themselves and imagined teaching (or not) about such topics and texts in their own classrooms.

Gee (2011) explains the contextual nature of d/Discourse. When someone speaks to us, we don't just consider what they're saying but, further, under what conditions language is being said. To consider who a speaker really is, we grasp for their social identity, role, and what they are trying to accomplish with their words (Gee, 2011). So, Gee describes "big D Discourses" (Gee, 2011, p. 1) as "ways in which such socially based group conventions allow people to enact specific identities and activities" (p. 1). Big d Discourse is composed of distinctive ways of using language that stem from what Gee (2011) conceptualizes as social language. Social language embodies "distinctive styles or varieties of language with which people enact specific socially recognizable identities and actions or activities" (Gee, 2011, p. 1). With such associations, Gee explains, our language functions not just in what we say but in how we say it, and as communicators, we are constantly situating talk within broader Discourses, or "distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, and believing" (Gee, 2011, p. 2).

In this study specifically, I recorded Discourses that arose in TC talk that I unpacked in the study's analysis (see Table 10). Some Discourses aligned with those described in Schieble et al.'s (2020) book on critical conversations, and others arose out of the data analysis process. Though not an exhaustive list of all possible Discourses or dominant social narratives, those that emerged in the data analysis process are below, as well as an indication of their alignment with Schieble et al.'s (2020) work or their organic development in the data analysis.

Table 10

Study Discourse List

Discourse	Source (Aligned with Schieble et al. [2020] or Original in Data Analysis)
Racism	Schieble et al. (2020)
Classism	Schieble et al. (2020)
Sexism	Schieble et al. (2020)
Ableism	Schieble et al. (2020)
Heterosexism	Schieble et al. (2020)
Whiteness	Schieble et al. (2020)
Neutrality	Schieble et al. (2020)
Silence	Schieble et al. (2020)
Heteronormativity	Schieble et al. (2020)
Individualism	Schieble et al. (2020)
Masculinity	Data Analysis
Nationalism	Data Analysis
White Saviorism	Data Analysis
Gendered Sexuality	Data Analysis
Purity Culture/Abstinence	Data Analysis

Coming of Age	Data Analysis

To add a final analytical lens that aligns with the theoretical framing of the study, I engaged Rebecca Rogers's (2018) work in CDA. Rogers (2018) defines CDA as an "umbrella term for pedagogical and research approaches to language and power" (p. 4), which stems from critical literacy underpinnings. CDA, as mentioned in the study's methodology, recognizes that "language is a value-laden tool and construes the ways in which we read, write, and contribute to the world" (Rogers, 2018, p. 4). In studying the power at play in talk, Johnstone (2018) explains that critical discourse analysts consider hegemonic forces at three contextual degrees–local, institutional, and societal, and "if we are to become better at studying and enacting relations of justice, we need a fuller engagement with the dialectic of power, including emancipation" (Rogers, 2018, p. 9).

To operationalize this analytical process, for each piece of data I reduced through Phase 6 and organized under thematic headings, I completed the headings in Table 11 (see below for a contextual example).

Table 11

Data Analysis Table

Data Source Description	Data Excerpt	Analysis via Frame: Johnstone (2018) discourse → world; world → discourse discourse → people's purposes; people's purposes → world discourse → linguistic structure; linguistic structure → discourse discourse → participants; participants →	Analysis via Frame: Gee (2011) d/Discourse(s)	Analysis via Frame: Rogers (2018) Power w/in Context (local, institutional, societal)

		discourse discourse → prior discourse; prior discourse → discourse discourse → possibilities for future discourse; possibilities for future discourse → discourse discourse → media; media → discourse 1. What is this "text" about, "since clearly what a person is talking about has a bearing on what is said and how it is said" (p. 8)? 2. Who is saying this, and who is the intended audience? Who are the actual hearers/readers? 3. How might the speaker be perceived, given the sociocultural context of the conversation? 4. What motivated the "text" or talk, and how does it usually fit into what people usually do with such talk? 5. What language is used, and what is that language *doing*?		

		6. How does the language of one speaker interact with the language of other speakers?		
Book Club 1; Group 2 (5:11-5:56) Tim	this is a personal example but alcoholism runs in my family so some of my relatives deal with addiction and when I describe it to other people like my friends I use some similar coping mechanisms where I make light of it and kind of detach myself from it so that I can be able to joke about it and usually the response is that people do laugh or they have defined it like interesting or endearing but ultimately it really is a coping mechanism and I see the same thing here	discourse → world; world → discourse Tim wants to connect with others in the world by sharing his experiences but isn't sure how to do that, so he copes with humor; he changes his discourse to make others/the world more accessible; others, in response, aren't sure how to react; their discourse shapes his world, as he feels potentially even more distanced than he did before he shared; he disconnects from others when their discourse labels his discourse as "interesting" or "endearing"; these interactions shape who he tries to connect with and how Tim's discourse that describes coping with humor is influenced by media in his connection to Junior; this makes him feel at home with the text, but he doesn't necessarily critique whether his coping/Junior's coping through humor is productive Tim's language interacts in this moment with the discourse of the other speakers in that they	discourse: "personal example" indicates vulnerability and perhaps emotion attached to his talk discourse: "make light of it", "detach myself from it" indicate emotional coping strategies Potential Discourse: silence Rationale: Tim says he is used to privileging the comfort of peers in scenarios of sharing his grief. To do this, he copes with humor. Does he exercise another type of privileging peer comfort in discourse when he, after this, changes the subject to something more palatable or accessible for his peers, when they don't immediately jump in?	local; Tim's peers hold power in whether or not they uptake his idea; what he does next will likely be in response to their reaction to him sharing something personal societal; Tim's group members have characterized their experiences earlier in the conversation as "privileged." When Tim shares a personal experience with alcoholism shared by the protagonist, they are silent. Instead of pursuing alcoholism, a central topic in the text and one related to power and addiction in Native communities as a result of systemic oppression, Tim pivots and privileges a topic that is more relatable, but less substantial…perhaps to maintain peer comfort?

		don't respond to him sharing this personal information. Earlier in the conversation, there was much more affirmative cross-talk, but here, they're silent. Tim seems after to pivot to a new topic.		

Overall, analyzing talk through these frameworks helped me to interpret where power was at play in TC conversations, whether in how TCs communicated with one another and co-constructed meaning; how TCs decided to uptake others' ideas (or not); how shielding around critical topics privileged silence, comfort, or "neutrality"; how systems of oppression were disrupted/maintained; and how ideology was critiqued or perpetuated. Further, I linked how this co-constructed talk influenced how TCs, individually, determined texts and topics that they would or would not introduce into their future classrooms. Later, in the Discussion, I put into conversation what I saw in the data with the work of scholars in the field, arguing for both theoretical and practical implications for teacher educators and teacher-researchers.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

Throughout the Methods course, TCs engaged in book club discussions, reflective writing assignments, and class discussions that were designed to foster critical thought and conversation. Through these experiences, TCs engaged in critical work themselves, as their future students might. They read and reflected first-hand, co-constructing evolving meaning through recursive cycles of reading and talk. TCs then leaned on these experiences to inform how they considered whether or not–or to what extent–they might take up the texts and instructional strategies with which they engaged. Further, they considered what that uptake might look like in the unique lens of today's sociopolitical climate. In this section, I report the five themes that emerged from the talk and writing gathered from participants and reduced using Thematic Analysis (Nowell et al., 2017):

1. TCs Were Uncertain and Fearful of Making Instructional Choices in Today's Sociopolitical Climate
2. TCs Privileged Relatability when Endorsing/Rejecting Instructional Texts
3. TCs Positioned Adolescent Maturity through Asset and Deficit Perspectives
4. TCs Considered Sexual Content with Extreme Caution
5. TCs Conceptualized the Teacher as "The Expert," but One Without Authority

Broadly, TCs 1) were unsure of how much of their decision-making capacity lied in their professional training and expertise versus how much of their choices were dictated by outside stakeholders; 2) heavily weighed relatability of texts initially and ultimately when deciding which books they would incorporate into current or future classrooms; 3) conceptualized adolescents as ill equipped to maturely discuss sexual aspects of YA novels; 4) deemed sexual content as the driving force in what makes a text appropriate

for adolescents to read in classroom settings; and 5) positioned the role of "teacher" as that of an expert, deciding to avoid texts due to the discomfort of their perceived lack of experiential knowledge and conversation topics that might give way to uncertain outcomes. In each of these findings sections, though, I offer examples when TC talk challenged, complicated, or offered exceptions to the general patterns that emerged. Though distinct, these themes are interconnected, and the findings will extrapolate how they overlap with, depend on, or converse with one another. In analyzing TC talk, writing, and interviews that revealed such themes, teacher educators might better understand the decision-making process of emergent teachers around critical texts and topics, many of which contribute to the established and ongoing chasm between critical literacy teacher preparation and implementation in early career classrooms. In one TC's own words, he had "a hard time discussing [the text] with my two adult friends, so whenever the time comes for that in the classroom, I am going to have to be far more prepared" (Noah, Reflective Writing 1, 2/6/2023).

The findings offer a window into the reading experience of TCs as "students" that guided their decisions in sometimes unpredictable or contradicting ways when they settled on instructional choices and stances. Such pivotal moments shed light on what troubles TCs in enacting critical literacy—ones that are fruitful for teacher educators in understanding what goes into TC decisions and when/how teacher educators might be able to step in and offer support when criticality wavers. The findings offer a reading of the data that pinpoints the forces holding power over what TCs feel capable of and confident in teaching—and which forces drive them to change certain stances, choose or avoid certain texts, and evade or broach certain topics with students. They illustrate how TCs respond to young adult literature (YAL) as readers and how they consider whether

the content and mode of such learning have a place in their future classrooms, talk that drives the study's discussion and implications for teacher educators.

TCs Were Uncertain and Fearful of Making Instructional Choices in Today's Sociopolitical Climate

Ehrenworth et al. (2021) explain the common discomfort of teachers, especially new teachers, to engage with students in discussions about topics that could be perceived as political. They argue that educators avoid discussion of current events for fear of seeming partisan; however, silence "props up" (p. xix) power imbalances and perpetuates harm for oppressed students (Ehrenworth et al., 2021). Ehrenworth et al. (2021) distinguish being a teacher motivated by spreading their partisan views from being an advocate who, regardless of political affiliation, will ensure that certain truths persist–that we have a zero-tolerance for hate speech and that diversity of identity, experience, and personhood is essential to the success of our learning spaces.

While I was reducing the data for this study, it became clear that TCs were reckoning with perceived sociopolitical pressures and influences, at varying levels, that they believed to exist as they prepared to step into their early career classrooms. Whether these perceptions aligned with what was actually happening, legally, in the world around them, understanding how TCs read that world was essential in understanding their talk and subsequent stances. Such considerations, again, colored how they talked about taking up (or not) specific instructional practices, facilitating discussion around certain topics, and incorporating certain texts into the classroom space. I offer this finding first, as TC perceptions of sociopolitics influenced how TCs later talked about their text selections, framing adolescents, deeming what instructional materials were appropriate, and constructing their authority in such decisions. In this section, I utilize the language of TCs

to illustrate their perceptions of sociopolitical landscapes at the immediate (classroom, Peer Learning Community/PLC, department, administration), local (parents, district, county), and government (state and national) levels.

At the classroom level, some TCs perceived a responsibility to avoid accusations of being political by maintaining stances of neutrality. Others believed this to be impossible. In Week 4 of the Methods course, we used PearDeck, a digital engagement software, and asked TCs to respond anonymously to the following prompt: "We are being political when we are democratically making decisions about questions that ask, 'How should we live together?'" (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 4). Talking about literature has always been political – it involves people's lives and how we live as a society. What does that mean for the ELA classroom? A TC responded:

> It means that political stances and policies within the literature that we teach should be analyzed and discussed while withholding our own political stances. We are not in the classroom to pass our own beliefs onto our students but rather to guide our students to the subjective truths of the text (author's perspective and intentions) so that they can make their own sense out of it [...] especially in a landscape where outside forces are trying to keep any kind of political discourse out of the classroom. Shutting out the political, then, might mean shutting out human experience (1/30/2023 Anonymous PearDeck).

This TC response illustrates the tensions felt by new teachers. The TC perceives that an educator's responsibility is to keep personal opinions anonymous. Through this lens, teachers are mediators for an author's opinions but must conceal their own. Further, it is their job to "keep any kind of political discourse out of the classroom," even at the cost, the TC contends, of "shutting out human experience." The diverse reactions of TCs to

this comment illuminate how TC perspectives sometimes stand at odds with one another, adding to the tensions of navigating a muddy expectations and roles for new teachers. During Book Club 1, Hazel, on the other hand, explained the inevitability of political issues surfacing in literature about the human experience. She argued, "politics are everywhere. No matter what we're reading, politics are ingrained in it. So we can't feel like we are the ones being too political" (Book Club 1; 21:29). Here, Hazel explains that often, literature itself introduces and necessitates political discussions and that the teacher can talk through such topics without being accused of being political. Later in the semester, she continued to rely on the logic that if a text necessitates talk about topics deemed political, the teacher is able to discuss them. Further, she explains that simply because a text includes a topic that is not of interest to all readers or misaligns with the identities or experiences of all readers in the learning community, it should not be assumed that all readers will be pressured to align their thinking accordingly. She explains:

> Using a text like [*The Poet X*] opens the door for many discussions, and I really like how they were discussing the diversity of people in this text. A religious person could connect to this text, but other people could for different reasons. A dominican person or person of color could relate to Xiomara and her family, and so could a caucasian student for a different reason. I do not think a student has to be sexually active or interested in sexual nature to read a text that discusses sexual nature. It is a part of others lives, even if it is not a part of theirs at that current moment in their life. Exposure to other parts of human life (i.e. race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion) is all a part of human life, yet it is political. Especially the world we live in today, I don't know of one topic that could not lead into a

> political conversation. I do not see how a parent or teacher has the ability to shelter anyone from political conversations, or in other words, critical conversations (Hazel, Reflective Writing 3, 2/27/2023).

Hazel explains the facets of Xiomara's, the protagonist, intersectional identity–one tied up in religion and Dominican culture and becoming an adult. Just as the character is complex, so too are the parts of the story that readers can connect with–and readers, Hazel explains, don't have to relate to every aspect of the story to learn from it. Hazel also distinguishes that readers don't have to have or want to have Xiomara's experiences in response to reading the text. They do not have to agree with or even like her–but they can still learn about human experiences from her. This aspect is what Hazel believes to be perceived as political. She believes that exposure to other races, ethnicities, sexes, genders, and religion are parts of creating a global, human awareness and citizenship, and learning about the lives of others can always become political, in Hazel's mind. She concludes by arguing that any attempts at shielding an adolescent from critical conversations is futile, nor should it occur. Critical conversations about texts and how humans experience life is, in Hazel's stance, something all readers can learn from.

In his interview at the end of the semester, Noah explained that sociopolitical influences on what TCs are able to discuss in their classrooms extend beyond the classroom space and into the administration's perspective, the school culture, and legislation. Noah referenced, specifically, the "Don't Say Gay" bill (HB 1557) signed into law in Florida by Governor Ron DeSantis in the spring of 2022. The bill's stated purpose was to censor, in various ways, classroom talk about gender identity or sexual orientation, specifically in response to non-normative gender identification or sexual orientation, entirely in early grades but only in secondary grades if included directly in

state standards for learning or with the purpose of reproductive health education. Liza also mentioned, in her interview at the close of the semester, that despite learning about and believing in critical conversations, she felt pressured to avoid them, based on her perception of legislation where she wanted to teach. She said that she didn't believe she could teach about racism because of the new state-level legislature. Despite her talk about the values of the text in her book club conversation and reflective writing, she concluded that she wouldn't bring *PTI* (2007) into the classroom presently, because she hoped to move to Texas, and "[she didn't] know what [she] can say and what [she] can't when it comes to race in the classroom now [...]" This decision stands at odds with Liza's talk in the Intersectional Identity Map assignment response, which states that "being a prominent African American educator is what [she] was called to do" (Intersectional Identity Map Assignment Response). The word prominent carries with it a sense of pride, or at least a visibility that Liza is now subduing, not knowing if disrupting or condemning the systemic oppression of individuals who share her racial identity directly will be banned from discussion in her own classroom.

In their discussion of *Persepolis* (2007), George, Levi, and Erica also grappled with what they believed a teacher was allowed to talk about related to politics and connections between the Islamic Revolution and 9/11. Some beliefs were informed by what they believed to be their role in the classroom, and others were related to what they believed to be the law. George explained that he was in seventh grade when 9/11 occurred, and he recollected that his history teacher had taken an obviously conservative partisan stance regarding the conflict. He connected this memory to his current considerations of how to responsibly teach *Persepolis* (2007) without being accused of being political. In this conversation, George distinguished the difference between two

important terms: political versus partisan, a term TCs often conflated in the course when talking through sociopolitical considerations and implications for their teaching. His issues with how his own high school teacher approached the topic is that he revealed and promoted issues related to a political party. What he argued is different, though, in discussing the political is that there exists no such apolitical reading of a text, as there is always context for who created it, why they created it, who it is intended for, whose voices are in/excluded, and who the narrative benefits/silences. He explains finding balance: "I'm not trying to teach an objective reading. But I do think there's a right and wrong in how you responsibly do that without clearly being partisan" (George, Book Club 2, 9:50).

In response to George's talk, Erica interjects, saying that teachers are supposed to be neutral–that they should not offer their opinion on topics in texts. George responds by asking, "Is that like a legal thing, that they're not supposed to know what we think?" (George, Book Club 2, 10:43). In this back and forth, TCs are drawing an important distinction that TCs all semester worked to tease out–they are attempting to determine when inserting their opinions as teachers is motivated by pushing a partisan agenda versus when sharing their opinions as teachers either 1) sets expectations for what is right and wrong in terms of civic viewpoints for how students will speak and behave in their classrooms and 2) gives students the tools to critically understand the political contexts and implications for topics and texts in the classroom, as no text is ever truly neutral (Bishop, 2014). In his post-book club reflective writing, Levi attempted to find balance. He questioned how a teacher determines and teaches students to determine what is true in literature and the world and how information given to students might be colored by those they know and trust, such as parents and teachers. He also critiqued Erica's neutral

stances, asking, “are some issues so polarized, morally or politically, that it is possible to find more than [truthful side]? [...] I think the best we can do is to [...] always question the perspectives and possible motivations of whoever is giving [...] information” (Levi, Reflective Writing 2, 2/13/2023).

Overall, TCs remained fairly scattered on the topic of politics in the classroom, who at various levels influences what is considered political, what the teacher’s role is when discussing political content, if political means partisan, if everything is political, and if there are moments when regardless of politics, a teacher’s role is to speak out and break the commonly perceived responsibility of remaining neutral. Tim, in his interview, maintained that it is his goal to remain unbiased in every way–that he can distance himself from the topics discussed in YAL and only believed that teachers act politically when they’re intentionally trying to cast their partisan-based ideas onto students. He explained that if students critically approach a topic, he feels confident in his ability to mediate; however, he would end the discussion if it got too “deep” or “intense.” He was willing to “test the water” or “ride the line,” but ultimately stated that being a new teacher, he would “stay under the radar” by talking to more experienced educators in his department and follow their lead because, after all, his goal was securing his employment.

On the other hand, George and Levi explained that their job as educators extends beyond fear of parent or administration upset when setting norms for their classroom communities–even if such boundaries are accused of being political. George, in his interview, explained that though issues of sexuality, particularly in the LGBTQIA+ community, are currently being banned from classroom discussion and being linked with partisan agendas, one of his students made homophobic comments and he confronted him

directly, in front of the class. He recognized that he might get fired, at some point, for what he said to a student in front of the class, in response to a homophobic comment: "You are well within your right to believe whatever you want; your beliefs are your beliefs. But as far as a public school classroom, you cannot make statements like that." George explained the tensions at work in this moment. He wanted to afford the student an opportunity to maintain his stance; however, he felt he made it clear that a gay student's rights to exist free of vocal judgment in George's classroom is not up for debate.

It also feels important to consider my own positionality, as a course instructor, when interpreting TC stances on what makes political teaching and how my instruction likely influenced some TC talk. For example, from the beginning of the semester, I positioned the theory that undergirded the entire Methods course as one critical in nature. I defined and described critical literacy, conversations, and pedagogy for TCs, and I prompted them to talk and respond to questions derived from critical theory. So, when I prompted TCs to respond to Hess & McAvoy's (2015) prompt that inherently positions teaching as political, I likely influenced TC stances from that point forward. Further, knowing that I agree with Hess and McAvoy's (2015) argument that no teaching is neutral, I practiced constant reflexivity in analyzing the data in this section. Because of my personal pedagogical beliefs, I questioned often if I were representing TC talk that advocated for neutrality through a deficit viewpoint in the data analysis. I was careful to notice when I was positioning TC opinions on neutrality in a good/bad or right/wrong binary. While I discuss throughout the paper—in sections outside of the data analysis—why "neutral" teaching stances are damaging, I reviewed the language I used frequently, in this section's analysis, to ensure that my own opinions were not coloring how I interpreted or presented the data at this stage.

Finally, I wish to share the perspective of a TC who confirmed anonymity with me before recording our interview and ultimately asked for the recording to be stopped before elaborating upon his/her/their stances on how a classroom teacher's role interfaces with perceived sociopolitical influences. I typed out the TC's talk and asked them to confirm, before concluding our interview, that I had represented their ideas without any identifiable context and in an accurate light, which they did. The very fact that they took such precautions, I believe, is indicative of a great deal of tension this emerging teacher was experiencing when political influences and personal convictions were at odds:

> We live in a very dangerous time regarding what we can and cannot teach. There are real consequences for these choices for students. We literally are forced, policy-wise, to omit teaching the stories and experiences of people who don't fit a "traditional" mold with gender identity and sexuality. Students are explicitly allowed not to protect certain identities via policy. What values do we want to have as a society when our policy reflects this? It says you deserve to be harassed, assaulted, etc. As teachers, we have an explicit responsibility to make sure everyone is safe and can learn, and to me, that means baseline tolerance for people who look or believe differently than you. When we talk about these concepts in a course, I don't think we can try to avoid discomfort. No one ever learned or grew when they were comfortable. That's not how learning works. We have a duty, when these issues arise, to engage with the discussion honestly and thoughtfully, without bias, fear, disrespect. You can't force people to believe anything, but when we're in my room, we're going to face racism, sexism, intercultural violence, etc. and its expressions without freaking out about it. That's more philosophical than pedagogical, but at the end of the day, when the school or

policy says what you can and can't do and it doesn't line up with humanity, you gotta go with humanity.

These TC narratives illustrate the complexity of TC instructional decision making that are relevant both to situating the study's other findings and to teacher educator understandings of their higher education students. TCs in the Methods course were able, generally, to voice topics that they felt were essential to incorporate into their teaching, not just through a personal and professional lens but in regard to the ELA curriculum. TCs felt that many of the discussions necessary to fully engage with the ELA curriculum would be questioned by outside forces at nested levels. Though some teachers felt more confident in their navigation of sociopolitical forces in the classroom, they recognized that taking distinctive stances about responding to student talk could result in them losing their jobs. Others felt that while they had clear opinions about what they wanted to or should teach, they ultimately decided to repress parts of reading, talk, and their own identities to avoid accusations of political talk in the classroom.

TCs Privileged Relatability when Endorsing/Rejecting Instructional Texts

The texts read and discussed by TCs–*PTI* by Sherman Alexie (2007); *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (2007); and *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo (2018)–feature protagonists from diverse backgrounds and experiences, ranging from race to culture to sexuality to religion and beyond. Many, though not all, of such experiences proved diverse from those of the TCs in this course. As TCs read and discussed as readers/students, they often engaged first in reader-response (Probst, 1994), measuring their own proximity to characters and their lives. Eventually, they mapped this thinking and talk onto their hypothetical or current students, evaluating whether these stories might be generative for critical conversations in 5-12 settings. Overall, TCs highly valued

the relatability of YAL when considering whether or not to introduce it to 5-12 ELA students, often determining a text's relatability, or lack thereof, as a first and ultimate measure of merit.

The notion of "relating to" a text, though, became nuanced and complex during TC talk. Though every book club group in every recorded book club conversation mentioned, at some point, the notion of "relating to" a character or story, some groups discussed a chasm between their own experiences and those of the protagonists, which hindered the relatability of the text for themselves and, in turn, would likely create a similar disconnect for their students. In the first book club, while discussing *PTI* (2007), Tim begins to discuss the fundamental, systemic issues within the text–addiction, violence, and racism. While he can relate personally to the text's motif of addiction, while sharing this connection, he pivots to facilitate peer conversation through more surface-level topics that he perceives his group members might more easily connect with.

Tim: this is a personal example
but alcoholism runs in my family
so some of my relatives deal with addiction
and when I describe it to other people
like my friends
I use some similar coping mechanisms
where I make light of it
and kind of detach myself from it
so that I can be able to joke about it
and usually the response is that people do laugh
or they have defined it like interesting or endearing
but ultimately it really is a coping mechanism
and I see the same thing here
[...]
I was just able to relate with that part of it
which was just pretty cool
it is tragic what [you] just kind of go through at home
but again it just keeps coming back to these systematic problems is like
Native Americans on reservations
and what they're able to actually do to make income realistically
and the stereotype is casino work or something like that
but sometimes that is the most profitable outcome in certain areas

especially in Las Vegas
I want to say it's sad
it's so sad
why are we doing
let's see
have you had any any life experiences that narrow or echo this main character
have you ever had to switch a school

Tim begins his sharing and eventual question for his book club members in discussing Alexie's tone and voice of the protagonist, a middle school boy who often shields his emotion or uses levity to downplay his often extreme circumstances. He relates to Junior's experiences of a family member struggling with addiction and choosing to share with peers using humor, identifying his approach as a coping mechanism. He explains that in response, peers will find his humor funny, interesting, or endearing but clarifies for the second time that rather than attempting humor, he is, in fact, coping with much more serious issues, despite the contrast in how he chooses to share them. He also says that his peers, in responding to him sharing his experiences, "define" them. When his peers' reactions compound with his existing emotions, he feels as though he becomes the object of the sympathy or disconnection in a lack of shared experience of others. Despite the devastating nature of the issues Tim shares in connection with Junior, he describes being able to relate to the character as "cool," soon after, naming the shared experiences as tragic, as his talk continues to waver between playful and poignant.

Soon, Tim links his own experiences to larger Discourses of the systematic oppression of Native people, which limits their employment opportunities, as well as the stereotype that Native people are addicted to gambling and/or only work in casinos. Tim nods to the tension between this stereotype and the reality of limited employment opportunities, especially depending on geographical location, that often results in Native people having to live and work within society's confines to provide for their families.

Though he introduces such topics, he stops short of digging in to offering commentary on the systemic, societal issues, repeatedly describing them as "sad" to express his sympathy for the protagonist.

Though he begins to tee up his book club conversation to broach several critical topics such as gentrification, stereotypes, and addiction, the talk of his group members has shifted. While moments earlier in the conversation there existed much affirmative cross-talk while each group member shared, peers quietly listened to Tim's comments during the above conversation. Toward the end of sharing, Tim's talk features more frequent false starts and word repetition of "sad" as he considers where to steer the conversation. Tim responds to his peers' silence, or lack of uptake, by shifting the conversation's course, toggling instead to asking about a safer, more universally relatable conversation of whether or not group members can relate to the text via the experience of switching schools. Though Tim's facilitation here has much critical potential, he makes a decision based upon the previously established—and later reiterated—privilege his group members identify in their own lived experiences, based upon their privileged white race and privileged life experiences, none of which they identified as systemic.

In response to Tim's inquiry about changing schools, a member of the group who is not participating in the study does redirect the conversation to bigger, more critical issues, namely alcoholism, poverty, and death. In this case, then, Tim shifting the conversation to an experience that group members could relate to, in order to broaden the conversation's access points for group members with privileged experiences and identities, ultimately moved the conversation away from the text's critical issues. Here, relating to the text thwarted criticality as more important issues were glossed over because of the book club's lack of experiential knowledge. Tim articulates the

importance of texts to act as teachers in scenarios when the teachers themselves cannot relate to or identify with the text's contents:

Tim: it really is important to think outside of yourself
and not to assume what your students' life experiences are
up until the point of having them in your classroom
I guess because like you said it might not relate to someone at all
if they've had a really privileged life with very little to no turbulence
but maybe to someone else that hits home
so I guess that's why it's important to have an eclectic group of texts
I also related with with him in on some points
now again I haven't had relatives die
in house fires or shot in the head

Here, Tim begins to apply his group's conversation by considering the text selections of his future or hypothetical classroom, through the lens of being the teacher. Though before this moment he starts to evade deeper and more critical conversation about the big issue he introduced, addiction, he responds to his group member's redirection and begins to consider the implications for his teaching practice in curating classroom texts that are diverse, regardless of whether or not students can relate to them. This shift in talk–away from the notion that text relatability determines validity and toward the notion that the value of a text lies instead in its capacity to disrupt reader relatability–signals a development in Tim's thinking about whether a text's capacity to "hit home" is a chief consideration for whether or not to teach it. Many TCs throughout the study discuss values in instructional choices that cause tension with one another—on one hand, their chief meter stick for a solid text selection for adolescents in the classroom is relatability; however, on the other hand, TCs say it is important to have a diverse classroom library that reflects the lived experiences of diverse identities. While both can be true, teaching a text with diverse representation of identity and/or experience will inevitably, as seen with Henry, limit relatability for others, particularly those whose experiences are commonly featured in ELA curriculum and in the literary canon. Group 2 navigates the important

discussion of when it is more important for students to connect with a text and when, in turn, it is actually more beneficial for readers not to connect with a text at all.

As the conversation moved toward whether participants could relate to the texts in regard to its bigger-picture ideas, Henry described relating to the text in a new way–he related to the text as a member of the perceived audience, White society. In this moment, Henry welcomes what TCs throughout the study seem to believe will alienate readers who don't share experiences with protagonists in YAL; rather than feeling disconnected and, therefore, rejecting the text at hand, Henry feels the importance of not being able to relate to the text, recognizing his privilege and pursuing the learning experience of reading about characters unlike himself.

Henry: I related to a lot of his comments about
White society
because he mentioned in one part
he went back to school after his sister died
because he didn't know what to do
he made this comment about how
the White kids at his school could count significant deaths in their life
on one hand
whereas he used his all of his fingers and all of his toes
I mean I could count them on a single hand
[t]his is where these two worlds differ
I could relate to
[t]hat opposite side that he's talking about
[…]
he was really calling out
all these like very specific parts of the school
I went to a very White school
so yeah he's right
but I felt [that in] him doing that
I oddly related more to him
felt more included by his open talk about it
Tim: I understand that
I also can't like count a bunch of familial deaths
on two hands
one one way I related to him
was just the process of switching schools
I did switch middle schools twice
because I dealt with some bullying in sixth grade

> I was just struggling in middle school
> but yeah it's tough to face adversity in school
> it's really hard
> and that's why it's important to have teachers on your side

Here, Henry explains that despite identifying with the White audience he believes Alexie is attempting to "call out" through Junior's story, he actually feels called into the topic in being able to relate to those in the story whose experiences drastically differ from those of the protagonist. In this moment, seeing through a window to a diverse experience served a much more powerful purpose for Henry than seeing himself reflected in the text. Rather than feeling isolated in this way, Henry characterizes Junior's tone and voice as "open," acting as an access point for Henry into the text, even though Henry describes such an experience as odd. Henry shows in this discussion that the experience, as a reader, of identifying with or relating to a text extends beyond having similar experiences as the main character; rather, readers can also engage with a text as members of the text's audience who can learn from the disconnect in their experiences and those they read about. Such a realization is important for how TCs might re-position the notion of relating to a text—in some cases, it is important; in some cases, it hinders student ability to engage critically. In others, if positioned as an asset, disconnection from a text can fuel student learning as they use the text as a guide and teacher on its own.

In this moment, my positionality as a former high school ELA teacher resulted in a feeling of surprise at Henry's talk. In my personal experiences as a classroom teacher, I have had students argue that they cannot "get" anything out of a text they cannot relate to. When I was analyzing Henry's talk, I realized that my surprise at such an engaged stance of a university student—one who shared no common experience with the protagonist but felt called in as the intended audience of a critical message—indicated a

greater personal underestimation of adolescents to do the same. Despite what I know to be true—that adolescents have a broad capacity for engaging critically with a text and that they do possess the resilience to be "called out" by an author—I found myself doubting youths in the same way my TCs were. In analyzing the data, then, I dedicated a more acute awareness to the complexity of such stances, attempting to capture the nuance in what TCs said and believed to be true when discussing young people and their capacities. Adolescents are capable, as Henry was, of feeling called to a text for the function of learning, not needing to see themselves centered in a text to enjoy or engage with it, as TCs perhaps assume. Problematizing or complicating the notion of relating to a text as a chief indicator of a successful instructional tool is a generative move, in scenarios like this, for teacher educators in challenging TCs to reconsider the instinctual promotion of relatability. Liza, a member of a different book club echoes Henry's emphasis on the importance of engaging with diverse texts through which one cannot relate in her Book Club 2 reflective writing assignment:

> In order for us teachers and students to gain empathy, respect, and a better understanding of those around us, we must read diversely. We have to engage in texts that are different than what we usually read, different genres, different characters, different authors, etc. (Liza, Reflective Writing 2, 2/13/2023)

Tim continues the conversation by agreeing that he also lacks shared experiences with Junior in terms of familial deaths, ending this line of inquiry in his characterization of the talk being "interesting," a catch-all term Tim uses, in inconsistent contexts–sometimes positively, sometimes negatively, five of the six times the adjective is used in this book club conversation. Rather than digging into the experience of disconnecting with a character and/or using this reading experience to extend his thinking on instructional

decisions as a teacher, as he had before, Tim circles back around to his original discussion topic of relating to the text via his shared experience with Junior in switching schools. Tim returns to this topic to re-create an entry point back into the conversation after his group members failed to latch onto any of the other critical topics he listed, choosing a relatable avenue through which to steer the conversation. Tim does use this access point to highlight more universal experiences shared by Junior and likely other middle schoolers, such as bullying and change, emphasizing the importance of parental and teacher support during adverse times. Though not necessarily chipping away at the system-level Discourses he and his group members touched on earlier in the conversation, Tim does sustain the group's talk by introducing new topics based upon the parts of the text he could relate to. This sentiment reappears later in the findings section about how TCs position the classroom teacher as the "expert" on all content discussed in literature related to their courses. TC might also ask—even if 5-9 ELA students are interested in a text they don't personally relate to, how might they access a conversation about that text or talk critically about issues they haven't experienced themselves? Ultimately, should 5-9 students be limited to reading and talking about topics and texts TCs and inservice teachers have personally had, their learning would suffer immensely. Instead, it is the role of teacher educators to prepare TCs, who will later teach their 5-12 students, to pursue learning through their critical reading, writing, talking, and thinking skills that allow them to engage in texts in a way that transcends their own personal lived experiences and identities.

During the second book club meeting, discussing Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2007), Group 2 engaged in similar talk around the value of relating to a character's story.

Noah: I noted the strange ability to relate to her
even though none of us have been through major wars
but just the main thing that I related to is the growing up aspect
but I think it's important if we teach this to kids
I would say middle school [or] early high school
that they can have that ability to relate to the struggles she had growing up
because when she was a teenager
one of the first things she does is change her look completely
and adopt different ideas
and then as she grows up that happens more and more and more
and of course that happens when you grow up
you think different things
you change your look
so I just think that's a good thing to have in a book
when you're teaching it to students
like even as detached as we are from the realness of it
the ability to relate to it
that can draw them in

Noah's talk here nuances a bit the tensions in the previous conversation. TCs are qualifying various ways of relating to a text, from shared experiences driven by systemic forces such as war, oppression, racism, and addiction; to universal experiences, such as growing up and bullying; to opposing experiences that still, somehow, draw the reader in based upon their lack of ability to relate. While Henry characterized his experience with the latter as "odd," Noah also explains a "strange" sense of relatability to Marji's story via the hallmark aspects of coming of age that are experienced, though uniquely, universally by adolescents–events that Noah describes as changing one's look or adopting different ideas. This stance also mirrors Tim's connection to Junior, not in shared experiences of systemic oppression but in growing up; however, Noah emphasizes the importance of recognizing the magnitude of Marji's situation, seemingly pushing back on the notion that relating to Marji's coming of age alone is incomplete without contextualizing it through the lens of the then current events and conflicts.

Noah navigates the tensions of garnering universal truths from a human experience and balancing that aspect of relatability with a responsibility to learn

imperative contextual information within which the human experience lives. Noah distinguishes that while Marji's story holds value for any young person—that an inability to understand her exact context shouldn't be a barrier for adolescents reading this text—it is still important that young readers don't dismiss the complexities of the sociopolitical landscape that informs how Marji moves throughout her life.

The other members of Group 1, Hazel and Liza, grapple with the notion of relating to/disconnecting from a text through the lens of sympathy and empathy. Group members discussed the protagonist's experiences as she navigates coming of age, a complicated relationship with her mother, and her evolving view of religion during the Iran/Iraq war.

Hazel: I said something along those lines too
not so much that I can relate to her
but that I have sympathy for her
I have a lot of sympathy for the main character of the text
my impression is that she wants to have a very quote normal life
which is an idea that I can connect to
and I think a lot of young people can
so like the idea of that coming to age
but then alternatively
the history of Iran is something very unknown to me
so I developed a deep interest in how she responds to life around her
and then when she becomes more rebellious
in quotes again
I feel like that's when the story really starts to get interesting for me
but I really had sympathy throughout the text
not that I necessarily related to her
but I had sympathy for her

Liza: Yes I agree definitely have sympathy for her
or we could say empathy Hazel
we could say empathy because we were able to understand her
we were able to place ourselves into her shoes
and realize the circumstances she lived in
but I feel like this is a great book
for students to read
because I feel like they'll be able to connect with the text
even if they can't picture themselves
growing up in Iran
being a human in the society that we live in you know

is still the same
there's still unfair treatment
it's nothing different
just the place

Hazel's talk works to distinguish sympathy from empathy, a line she draws in relating to universal experiences of adolescence. This distinction is important in that TCs and 5-12 students should not equate exposure to ideas with a true understanding via experience. TCs across the study grappled with this notion of sympathy, like when Tim pitied Junior in previous book club talk, which may lead them to un-critical readings of texts or oversimplified dismissals of stories as "sad." Hazel's discussion, though, does stop short of articulating the complexity of adolescence within the historical and political contexts of the book. Because TC talk positions relating to a text so positively, in Hazel's case, she feels the text resonates, and she imagines her students will respond similarly; however, relating to the text thwarts critical reflection on how disconnection is, in this case, generative for the conversation. Because Hazel glosses over the differences between the protagonist's experiences and equates any oppression or "unfair treatment" as "the same" universally, she oversimplifies this particular character's sociopolitical context—a context that cannot be removed from the character's identity and experiences in order for readers to more fully understand the text. Here, it is imperative, for a holistic engagement with the text, that TCs remove themselves from the center of the story and instead attempt first to understand the protagonist's life. Though TCs and students alike may eventually make meaningful connections based upon shared human experiences or emotions they believe to be shared between themselves and the characters they are getting to know, it is essential for a deep reading of the text to begin with garnering knowledge about Marji and her life—the world around her and how it drives her

experiences, opinions, actions, and understandings—without forcing oversimplified, superficial, and unjust in claiming to fully understand the character's life but dismissing her reality.

Similarly to Henry, though, Hazel views her inability to relate as a learning opportunity, becoming more invested in the reading experience by taking a learner's stance, guided by the protagonist through unfamiliar content. In both these cases, the TCs position their lack of familiarity in a way that motivates their learning, positioning their texts and characters as guides and resources. Hazel, despite the rich learning potential afforded by reading the text, recognizes the limitations of sympathy and contends that while she is interested in the story and is actively learning by reading it, she remains unable to really know the experience of the character. Liza, conversely, argues that the interaction between reader and text has the capacity to develop sympathy into empathy. Liza explains that empathy is achieved in increased understanding, which is possible via reading. Later, though, she contradicts this notion, explaining that though readers may not be able to imagine the full scope of adolescence in Iran, they can connect with or relate to the human experience of unfair treatment and oppression that individuals experience in different contexts. Though in the book club conversation Hazel does not further pursue teasing out the sympathy/empathy distinction, she comes back to this tension in her reflective writing:

> The coming of age aspect of the text is something that I connected to, but what I really got from this book was learning about the history of Iran. I feel like as a student and teacher it would be extremely beneficial to read. I was able to feel sympathy for Marji, and there was actually a comment from Liza that I somewhat disagreed with. She mentioned us being able to feel empathy, and while she might

> personally I feel like I have never really experienced anything like Marji so it is hard for me to understand what she went through, but I still do feel bad and really I couldn't imagine what it was like to live her life at all. I like how we were prompted to choose two points we really wanted to discuss. That gave the conversation more structure which might be something I would use to incorporate critical conversation with my students. Not only did it give us structure but it allowed everyone to touch on what was important to them, so in that way it was satisfying. I think it would be important to start off with questions that the students can use the text to answer, and then move on to more philosophical conversation, and this would also depend on the age group but that strategy could apply to a broad age-range (Hazel, Reflective Writing 2, 2/13/2023)

Hazel and Noah commonly work to parse out, in their minds, what relating to a text truly means–does it mean relating to broader, more universal aspects of the text? Does it mean having knowledge versus understanding? Can it be achieved without relating to the text at all? To these questions, I add: does the natural or positively positioned tendency to relate to a text hinder the reader's ability to deeply understand a character's sociopolitical and socioemotional contexts by distracting away from the story and putting the reader's own experiences and identity at the center, instead? As Hazel writes toward the end of her reflection, might it exist on a spectrum from building knowledge using the text to seeking knowledge beyond? Here, Group 2 contributes to the conversation around relating to texts in nuancing such relationships, evaluating what kind of connections and to what extent their hypothetical future students might be able to engage.

Another group that discussed the complexities of choosing texts because students may or may not relate to them was Group 4 when discussing *PTI* (2007). Group 4's

conversation began with Erica expressing a lack of connection to the story on the basis of lacking a shared experience with the protagonist, a phenomenon similar to one TCs seem to wish to avoid with future students in heavily weighing the importance of students relating to provided texts. Erica begins by explaining that the only part of the book she enjoyed was when Junior looked back on his basketball team winning a pivotal game and reflected on his growth through adversity. Levi pursues her reasoning.

Levi: so you felt like overall it didn't have a lot of emotional resonance for you
you were just kind of neutral
Erica: well no
I've never lived on a reservation
I didn't lose anybody important at a young age
it was a nice window into his life
it was definitely not a mirror
Levi: interesting because I'm reading it and
a lot of the things I see him talking about
were kinds of mentalities
among his family members or people on the reservation
or things he noticed were things I hear from my own students
like when he fights the student at Reardan
that's something that happens everyday in my classroom
[...]
so it was interesting to see that commonality
I wonder if that's maybe part of the reasons that
it's a recommended book was like
it had some of those themes that kids would connect to
even if they're not from the same background as the author of the book
Erica: everybody had a coming of age
everybody has a moment when they
have that period where
you walk into that lunch room for the first time
in sixth grade or ninth grade
and you're looking around for somebody to sit with
everybody has that moment
so if you're looking for the themes in the book
then they transcend this story
because everybody has a coming of age

Levi's talk in asking Erica to explain her thought process prompts her to clarify her stance, but in choosing to use the word "neutral"–a word lacking positive or negative

connotation–his language welcomes Erica's perspective without accusing her of taking any pointed stance. In response, Erica elaborates. In repeating "I've never" to emphasize the lack of resonance of the book with her, she leans into her original establishment of the text as irrelevant to her. She explains that the text was a "nice" window into the character's life, despite the devastating themes of the text, seeming to suggest that while the text did an effective job of offering a window into the protagonist's experience, it fell short of providing a mirror reflection into her own. For this reason, Erica is hesitant about discussing the book further. In response, Levi offers his contrasting perspective in an agreeable way, saying that while Erica's take was interesting, his "reading" of the text differed, shifting the focus away from his own opinions–and Erica's–and focusing instead on the experience of reading itself, and further, the lessons that emerged from that reading.

His own reactions to the text aside, Levi connects the story to the lived experiences of the students in his classroom as a residency TC, those of whom are inservice and teachers of record in their placement. Here, Levi makes a similar observation as Tim and Noah in noting that despite differences in background, the story has merit in that it lands with a wide audience of adolescents through its exploration of bullying, fighting, unspoken social codes, pride, and isolation. In response, Erica quickly pivots her stance, explaining that the story's depiction of middle school and the challenges that accompany adolescence are accurate representations–or mirrors, even–of what is experienced during that transition into young adulthood, experiences which "transcend" the text itself and reveal quintessential parts of the human experience.

As the conversation continues, George complicates the notion of relatability being only a positive outcome for readers in sharing his experiences actually teaching *PTI* (2007) to the students in his residency placement.

George: my thing is like
[I'm teaching] this book tomorrow
[and I'm like] we're going to read a bunch of like fucked up stuff in this book
which will trigger some of the students in the class for sure
just based on what I know they have shared with me
a lot of stuff they write about
so I don't just want to be like
here's trauma
and then look
it's in this book we're reading
and then they're like man here's my trauma
and then we just don't talk about it
but I also don't want to be like
what's your trauma
and get it out of them
Erica: you don't wanna not talk about it
George: right you can't not talk about it

In this segment of the conversation, George thinks and talks critically about students relating to texts, problematizing connecting to a story as a chief or sole consideration when choosing the texts to curate for students. At the same time, George and Erica consider Discourses of neutrality in education, weighing the implications of choosing silence or side-stepping a conversation that applies directly to how students will respond to the text at hand. In this tension, George considers the message he sends to students when determining which texts and conversations are "allowed" in the classroom, a theme that emerges across the study's data. On one hand, discussing traumatic aspects that will deeply resonate—so much so that it might be damaging, painful, or harmful—may make students feel seen in the curriculum, positioning their lived experiences as assets in the learning process that have a deserved "place" in the classroom. On the other hand, opting for neutrality, George realizes, does still send a message: that students' experiences that

are violent are not allowed, and therefore, not valued or validated in the classroom. George argues that "you can't not talk about it," ultimately deciding that it is his responsibility as a teacher to address head-on classroom discussions that matter to students, despite the potential discomfort he may feel in not knowing how such discussions will be received.

Here, Group 4 grapples with the notion of balance, between choosing texts that resonate with students and with considering when reminders of familiar experiences might result in additional trauma in asking students to be vulnerable in revisiting and even sharing painful personal stories. George critically approaches the notion of "get[ting] it out of them," referring to the potentially compromising position in which he might place students unintentionally by asking them to recollect or disclose personal, vulnerable, or traumatizing connections to texts. The weight of such a decision is compounded and complicated exponentially by the established power structure of teacher/student and the completion of such discussion or writing when tied to an evaluative grade.

The decisions of TCs discussed here reflect the scope and dimension of critical questions asked when choosing which topics and texts to incorporate into classroom curriculum, especially when TCs know well their students and their circumstances. Again, TC talk, in a different context for Group 4, reflects the intricacies and tensions tied up in a commonly accepted value of students "relating" to a text—one that is perhaps too readily accepted and not critically examined enough.

TCs Positioned Adolescent Maturity through Asset and Deficit Perspectives

How TCs imagine the resonance of various texts for 5-9 students is not unrelated to how TCs, in this study, conceptualized adolescents through their co-constructed talk.

They took pedagogical stances and imagined their instructional decisions around whether or not they pictured students relating to texts but also around their perceptions of current and hypothetical student academic capabilities, student maturity in responding to issues within the text, and student ability to sustain critical conversation.

Early in the semester, we–the Methods co-instructors–began to introduce the critical underpinnings of the course by having TCs read and respond to a chapter from Paulo Freire's (2020) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Instructors and TCs discussed, in particular, the "banking" model of education (Freire, 1968) and leveraged the Reading/Writing Workshop Model to disrupt transactional teaching, as it positions students as agents of their learning via co-investigation with classroom teachers. As the Methods course progressed, new instructional approaches added each week, TCs echoed back to the banking model to contextualize and rationalize new learning. In week three of the course, I noted two TCs' talk around conceptualizations of adolescents. Both TCs were residency TCs and were reflecting upon their first six months in the classroom to inform their stances on whether or not a student-directed instructional model would be viable in their classrooms. Cindy explained, "My kids would never be able to use this. It would be a nightmare" (TRD Research Journal; Week 3). While Cindy shared this sentiment with a peer residency TC as I silently observed, Levi, in the same class session shared his conceptions of students with the class. Here, Levi's teaching aligns with the banking model, as he explains how dialogic teaching would fall short in his classroom due to students' lack discussion skills outside the I-R-E talk pattern (Cazden, 2001), in which the teacher initiates a question, the student(s) respond(s), and the teacher evaluates. He explained:

> I tried using something other than I-R-E, like open-ended questions, but the kids

> don't have the basic literacy skills to even know what's going on. My kids can't even use punctuation accurately. How are they supposed to discuss something higher level? (TRD Research Journal; Week 3).

In these two brief utterances, Cindy and Levi reflect a shared stance that after getting to know their students for half an academic year, they would not respond well to a non-banking model, or a different model that would require the teacher to relinquish control. A more democratic teaching model could give way to exploration and even risk-taking, which Cindy and Levi do not believe their students could handle. Cindy uses the word "never" as an absolute to show the extent to which her students need teacher-guided structure. She uses "nightmare" as a blanket term to describe any classroom discord, from behavior issues or a lack of productivity. Essentially, she has determined that her students need a teacher-directed learning environment, rather than a student-directed learning environment. Such an absolute reaction reflects the current perception of her students and their needs—that they would not, in any way, be able to "handle" agency in the classroom. On the other hand, Levi grounds his students' capabilities, or lack thereof, to engage with a more discoursally democratic pedagogy by using the meter stick of basic punctuation. Here, I use democratic pedagogy to describe an approach to teaching that is more dialogic in nature, and one that distributes talk—and, therefore, agency and power—more evenly between teacher and students. This type of teaching pushes back against more traditional teaching structures that persist into the 2000s and even present-day classrooms, which feature teacher dominance via lecture, recitation, and seatwork (Applebee et al., 2003; Nystrand et al., 1997).

In this instance, Levi measures his students' ability to engage with higher level thinking and talk skills based upon their writing conventions. Levi's talk creates a binary

of thinking skills, with basic written communication on one end and idea-level talk on the other. He also marries the notions of conversation structures–either narrow and formulaic like the I-R-E pattern or broad and inquiry-based like a non-banking approach such as Workshop–with student academic ability. In other words, if student ability is low, measured for Levi by a lack of basic punctuation, I-R-E is the most suitable mode of talk. If student academic ability is high, they might be ready for a talk structure that is less controlled and more talk focused. Caughlan and Juzwik (2015) explain, though, that a more reciprocal dialogic talk structure in the classroom is not only helpful for but necessary in engaging in critical conversations. Dialogic, or reciprocal, talk believes that subsequent discussion is shaped by previous talk, as the speaker prepares to add to the conversation (Schieble et al., 2020). Such conversation helps students develop complex, higher-order thinking skills about the content at hand, as well as equips speakers to engage in an agile way with the spontaneously co-constructed and even risk-taking talk involved in critical discussions (Schieble et al., 2020).

Illustrating the spectrum of viewpoints TCs held about adolescents early on in the semester, after the first book club meeting, Tiffany (Group 3) and Tim (Group 2) reflected upon the complex identities of adolescents, which adults may overlook or underestimate. In the first book club meeting, Tiffany explained to group members:

Tiffany: everyone's experience is different
a lot of us teachers have to realize
kids are complex
they have different ideas
and we're seeing that movement
cultures are crossing
like Black kids watching anime
White kids are listening to rap
we can't so easily label kids anymore
which used to be easy
and it was convenient
but now we have to do more work to learn about their interests

and what makes them different

In mentioning that teachers have yet to realize the complexity of adolescent experiences and identities, Tiffany nods to a perceived disconnect between teachers' conceptions of youth and the multidimensional adolescent identities that are the reality in 5-12 classrooms. Such a disconnect fosters stereotypical or unrealistic notions about students. Though Tiffany might enact the behavior she critiques by labeling students as "kids" or "Black kids" and "White kids," she articulates a few examples that disrupt stereotypical views of student interests based upon race. Tiffany's talk–specifically explaining a shift in how teachers need to strive to understand all aspects of their students' identities, experiences, and interests–highlights an issue she believes to be present in schools now more than ever: that teachers previously have not worked hard enough to know and value their students' intersectional identities and need to begin putting in more effort to do so.

In his first book club written reflection, Tim also echoes a call for teacher accountability in understanding multidimensional adolescents:

> It was reaffirmed to me that students are usually more cognizant of the circumstances of their life situations than they are given credit for and it is crucial for educators to treat them as developing people rather than kids in their classroom. Closely analyzing Mr. P's position showed me that sometimes even when you want the absolute best for your students, you can only do as much as you can. We are superhumans but not superheroes and are limited in what we are able to do just like everybody else. This doesn't at all mean that students should be thought of as lost causes! Rather, we have to be realistic and intentional with our actions in the classroom to help point students in the right direction. We will have as many stories as we possibly can but if something doesn't work out as

> planned due to outside forces, we can't lose our drive to help students succeed and we absolutely cannot give up on anyone. Our presence in the classroom and in students' lives impacts them in ways that are not always explicit. (Tim, Reflective Writing 1, 2/6/2023)

Whether due to accessing an adolescent's viewpoint via the first book club novel's protagonist or due to discussing with fellow TCs, Tim begins by arguing the expansive capacity of young people to notice and understand mature, complex ideas–a capacity that Tim feels is underestimated by educators. He uses the term "developing people" as a more dignified way of addressing "kids," a word which works to give credit to adolescents who experience life themselves, communicating the Discourse that adolescents are only developed enough to be passive observers or onlookers in an adult-dominated world. In his writing, Tim refers to Mr. P, a character in *PTI* (2007) who plays an instrumental role in helping the protagonist realize the limitations of his current situation and pushes him to fulfill his potential by leaving the Native American reservation and school. Tim, as an emerging educator, seems to identify with Mr. P's situation; he wants the best for his students but realizes his limitations in supporting each and every student toward their goals.

Here, Tim uses his connection with Mr. P to consider the implications for his own teaching practice. He links the reality of Mr. P's limitations to his perceived notion that teachers are meant to be superheroes, able to do many jobs at the same time, differentiate for every student, and provide emotional support in addition to content-area instruction. Such a tall order, as Tim explains in his writing, might result in a feeling of overwhelm, as teachers might become exhausted or daunted in supporting each student, resulting in giving up on students entirely or in establishing deficit viewpoints of certain students as

"lost causes." He reflects that the best way forward is to be purposeful but realistic in un-learning that teachers are superheroes who must "save" each and every student. Rather, he qualifies his best practices moving forward as incorporating into the classroom widely diverse texts with diverse identity representations so that some text, in some way resonates with each student–even if that impact isn't visible.

For other groups, the conceptions of adolescents to inform their hypothetical instructional decisions–of which texts they would or wouldn't use, of which topics they would or wouldn't discuss–had less to do with student academic ability and more to do with perceived levels of adolescent maturity. Group 1, in their first book club meeting, discussed the narrator's conception of racism as a middle-school boy, considering how they may or may not discuss racism with 5-12 students on the basis of perceived maturity.

Hazel: it says
I used to think that the world was broken down by tribes
by Black and White
by Indian and White
but I know that that isn't true
the world is only broken into two tribes
the people who are assholes and the people who are not
what did you guys think about that quote
Noah: I liked that a lot
I liked that a lot
I like that a lot
I don't really know if it's that simple
but it is it when you really break it down
like racism isn't a thing
racism is a social construct
Hazel: right
Noah: racism is totally made up right
Liza & Hazel: *affirmative cross-talk*
Noah: if we're [using] that term
assholes right
Hazel: assholes right
Liza: *affirmative cross-talk*
Noah: by that definition
maybe it is that simple

Hazel: yeah I feel like coming from like a student's perspective
we're more like mature and can think deeper about those things
or we have a variety of opinions
and reasons to why we think racism is a thing
students at that age probably still do
but if I was a student in like middle or high school reading that
I would like laugh and be like
okay well this is in simple terms
this is something I can understand
and I think it's something that you can't really argue with either
but also this quote isn't [fully] an indication of how he thinks about race
in a way
it is opposite of what the book stands for
because many of the characters are really hurtful
and they do bad things to Jr.
but they also show signs of being a good person or being a good friend
so it's kind of like double sided in that sense

This exchange shows Group 1, particularly Hazel and Noah, considering the capacity of adolescents to engage with the big idea of racism in the text, on the basis of maturity. Though this is the question the group pursues, the speakers themselves wrestle with how they, as readers, respond to the narrator's definition of racism and its operation in the world around them. Hazel begins by appreciating the narrator's simplified view of racism, equating racists to assholes, saying she liked that passage from the text a lot. Noah then agrees, repeating "I like that a lot" three times. Then, Noah talks himself out of and back into the view that racism is so simple–that racists are assholes–beginning to note the nuances of racism as understood by adults but ultimately, especially after affirmative cross-talk from Hazel and Liza, contending that perhaps racism is, in fact, so simple.

Hazel then engages in her own back-and-forth, but this time regarding whether or not students might take up such a definition of racists. She suggests that as adults, she and her peers are able to consider racism more deeply or in a more nuanced way, especially in having considered various points of input and varied opinions on such a broad, complex

topic. She hints at these larger Discourses about racism, summarizing them with the colloquialism "yada yada yada" to indicate that race and one's opinion on racism are tied to other ideas; however, she does not wish to, or does not know how to, articulate them. Rather, she then seems to talk through a tug-of-war around believing that middle and high school students are capable of "thinking deeper" about race and also imagining that they will readily accept the essentialism of racists as assholes, ultimately deciding that the narrator's phrasing would be effective for adolescents–that understanding racists as "assholes" does a satisfactory job of boiling down what students can take away from the Discourses in the text, saying that the narrator's logic can't really be argued with.

Hazel and Noah similarly use their talk to parse out their stances on critical topics in the text, from racism to how students will understand the concept of racism, as presented by the story's protagonist. In both turns at talk, Noah and Hazel navigate a spectrum of simple to nuanced in how they work through their own ideas and the potential ideas of the students they teach. In this excerpt, Group 1's talk complicates the notion that adolescents are too immature or incapable of understanding and talking about complex systems and ideas such as racism. In turn, TCs themselves wrestle with determining whether racism is complicated or simple, showing that assumptions about how adolescents might digest such topics are insufficient. Rather, talking critically about a topic as multidimensional as racism is allowed also to be messy. Students, however, are indeed capable, as Hazel explains in contending that adolescents do, probably, "think deeper" about such realities.

Hazel continues this pattern in problematizing non-nuanced, good/bad binaries of characters in the text, explaining that dismissing certain characters as "bad" based solely upon their actions and without taking into consideration their contexts is too simple. She

explains that the author's move of positioning characters who do "bad" things as people who can still be "good" juxtaposes the narrator's blanket label of racists as "assholes" seen earlier in the text. Here, Hazel again uses the word "simple" to evaluate ideas in the novel–racism, if characters are "good" people–to measure her own reading experience and to articulate her responses to the motifs in the story. While she uses her own reading experience to inform how her hypothetical students might transact with similar ideas, she continuously demonstrates criticality in practicing social perspective taking (Pytash & Hylton, 2021) in educational contexts; however, she sits in the tensions of complicating her initial viewpoints in considering big ideas on a "simple"/ "not so simple" spectrum.

Finally, Group 4 talked through George's experience of using *PTI* (2007) in his classroom. George shared with group members a very critical conversation that students had, which led to TCs relating to similar tensions as those discussed by George's eighth graders.

George: so one of the interesting things that came up in class discussion
is when he writes about his crush on Penelope
one of my students was like
isn't it kind of messed up that a adult wrote a book
sexually about this teenage girl
and I was like
yeah you know this is kind of a weird view
and then we talked about the ethics of
can you separate art and artists
can we just read it by itself
[because] I know who wrote it
Erica: is it really so problematic
George: that's what I said
Levi: yeah I think there's levels to it
George: you know he was also a weird ass
like during the Sherman Alexie 2020 "Me Too" stuff
he definitely was inappropriate with a bunch of different women
George: right but if like you got students that are Googling about
and they're like
why are you having read this book by this by this creep ass
it's a valid question
[...]

so then we had a conversation about
can you separate art and artists
which is a relevant conversation
Erica: yeah I still listen to R Kelly
George: but then I have like students who are like fuck R Kelly
there was a big argument about Michael Jackson
so it was an interesting conversation
they were interested in it
and they looked it up
that's thinking critically about a book
for eighth graders
Levi: that's way more advanced than anything I'd expect of my
well AP would get there

In this conversation, George explains the extremely critical talk of his students questioning who created the text at hand and how that impacts their reading, especially around issues of the author's age, the narrator's age, and the narrator's sexuality toward another character of that age. Students question how a commonly told narrative–a middle school boy being attracted to a middle school girl–is colored when written by an adult man, reflecting on his adolescence. Then, students continue this critical inquiry by broadening their talk to explore the conversation of weighing the value of art by a problematic artist. Students problematize trusting a problematic author, yet, debate whether or not there is still truth and value in the art made by a problematic social figure. Further, students make connections to other scenarios that beg similar questions, such as the music made by Michael Jackson. TCs themselves continue to make connections from the critical discussion of students, relating such a dilemma to R Kelly.

Eventually, students also question George's intentions, as their teacher, in presenting them with a text written by a known problematic figure. This passage illustrates a phenomenon that TCs throughout the study allow to guide their instructional decision making—they hesitate to pull texts into their classroom that address content that might be perceived as inappropriate by students and external forces alike (i.e. parents and

administrators). While being perceived as a teacher who utilizes texts that feature "inappropriate" content to various stakeholders is discussed more thoroughly in the next thematic finding, George here faces what TCs demonstrate to avoid: students feeling as though a teacher, through offering a text selection, is condoning seemingly inappropriate content. Though George's students are not accusing him of promoting each and every aspect of the text from which he chooses to teach, TCs make decisions according to this notion of students or parents holding up a microscope to each aspect of books they teach. Instead, George disrupts this fear by talking critically with his students about *PTI* (2007). He allows his students to ask critical questions of the text and decide for themselves if it has value beyond or in addition to considering its problematic creator. He helps students avoid good/bad binaries of dismissing or accepting entirely the work, considering its real-world contexts. He encourages them to keep digging, using research and discussion to determine their own stances around the work, rather than convincing them of the text's merit. He does not ask them to overlook the reality of the author's bad behavior. This is the powerful work that is possible when TCs are prepared to challenge students to engage critically with a text—work that TCs and 5-12 students may miss out on if the fear of the "inappropriate" or the underestimation of adolescents wins out.

As George explains the offshoots of the original conversation that students pursued, Erica and Levi agree that the conversation is both interesting for students and requires much critical learning. As George describes how students then continued their inquiry by turning to further research before solidifying their opinions on the conversation, Levi noted the advanced level of critical thought, seeming impressed by the capacity of adolescents to engage in such a critical and complex conversation. His talk, however, concludes with a maintained view of adolescent limitation in such advanced

discussion, saying that he wouldn't expect his own students to be able to accomplish sustained critical conversation; though, it may be possible that his advanced placement students could interact with such complex topics.

Overall, inservice teachers, in particular, were quick to position adolescents and their maturity through deficit lenses. In touching back in with the research questions, some TCs generalized about their students' maturity levels and used their perception of student maturity to estimate that they could not, behaviorally or academically, engage in successful critical conversations. Levi extended his estimation of student ability beyond behavior and into perceived academic ability, positioning critical conversations as accessible only for honors or gifted students. George's example pushes back on such deficit views, explaining the students' increased engagement when they were invited to interrogate a complicated text by a problematic author. While George was clearly open to facilitating such critical talk with his students, the majority of other TCs shied away, wondering if student maturity or capacity to understand complex systems would sustain them in critical discussion.

TCs Considered Sexual Content with Extreme Caution

Tied up in how TCs weigh instructional choices, in addition to who TCs believe adolescents to be, is what TCs believe to be "best" for adolescents, not only in how they will relate to course content but also in terms of what is appropriate for the adolescent learner within the context of a 5-12 classroom. Across book club conversations and reflective writing, TCs considered critical topics and texts–whether they would introduce or facilitate discussion around them–and discussed whether they believed they deserved a place in the ELA curriculum. Conversations like those illustrated below are co-constructed by TCs attempting to form their own opinions about what is appropriate to

teach; however, these decisions are equally influenced by structural sociopolitical forces outside of the TCs themselves. In this section, they specifically mention the influences of society and parents on their decision making, and they reckon with where their own opinions converge or diverge with the forces they perceive to be present in their decision making process.

The first recurring conversation around the notion of "appropriateness" occurred during the first book club conversation about *PTI* (2007). Group 1 grappled with a scene in which the protagonist, a middle-school boy, joked about masturbating and sexuality.

Noah: I was looking at banned books
and I saw this is on a lot of banned books and challenged books [lists]
and it was because of a passage about masturbation
and it's really just silly
but if you're you know looking to challenge and ban a book
it definitely stands out
so it's just silly nonsense talked by young adults
[but are] the masturbation passages reasons to ban a book
or would you consider that reasons why a book should be read
especially by young adults or teenagers
Hazel: depending on the grade level
like middle school
maybe that is a reason to hold off
I don't think it's a reason to ban the book
but maybe hold off
but honestly personally
in high school I think it's like relatable
I feel like people would laugh at that
and maybe not agree but just get it
I was more taken aback by other things in the book
like the amount of violence

Noah begins his turn to talk by describing the protagonist's discussion of sexuality and sexual content as important, particularly within the context of his prior knowledge of the book's inclusion on various banned book lists. Immediately, Noah connects "banned" with Junior's jokes about masturbation, which the character himself utilizes to talk about the value of drawing and reading. First, Noah dismisses Junior's joke about literary

excitement as “silly” but then explains that because he knew the book was banned, he read with such knowledge in mind and flagged this passage as a potential reason for its challenged or banned status. Noah continues to characterize the passage as “silly nonsense” that young adults talk about, labeling the text’s characters and readership as “young adults” or “teenagers.”

Hazel then responds by teasing out to whom she might or might not introduce this text, considering first a middle school or high school designation, despite middle schoolers and high schoolers both falling under Noah’s umbrella labels of young adults or teenagers. Hazel’s talk then begins to push and pull as she navigates the tensions of whether or not to teach a text with teenage sexuality mentioned. She begins by stating she would “hold off” on teaching the text to middle schoolers versus high schoolers, but then she states firmly that she doesn’t think this scene is a reason to ban the book. As she continues to consider her stance, she returns to the phrase “hold off”, calling for a line between designating the text for an older audience versus eliminating the text from the curriculum entirely. She repeats “but” at the beginning of two consecutive sentences, showing her navigation of both perceived sides of the argument. When she puts the decision within the context of her own opinion, versus outside opinions, she says that for her personally, the text, despite its sexual content, is relatable for high school students. She indicates shame, contending that it might be “gross” or inappropriate to say, within the context of a graded book club discussion for a course, that sexual content is relatable, but she concludes by ultimately arguing that the text’s sexual content would mostly serve as comedic relief for high school readers. She continues to explain that even if readers didn’t relate to this aspect of the text themselves, they would still be capable of understanding it. Finally, Hazel broadens the perspective of the conversation by

introducing systemic Discourses such as violence in the text. While she alludes to a bigger discussion of violence on Native American reservations, she concludes her turn to talk by saying that she did not like reading about the violence in the novel. After offering many critical topics of conversation to pursue such as Discourses about adolescent sexuality, notions of separating a character's humor from larger talk in the text, what determining factors influence what teachers decide is appropriate for students to learn, and adolescent reader capacity to level issues discussed in the text, Hazel then second guesses her ability to make an informed decision about whether she'd introduce the text to students by saying, "but that's me personally, so I don't know." Noah takes up Hazel's point about larger societal Discourses to inform his conclusions about the text's appropriateness.

Noah: oh yeah
the violence was more
I totally agree there's things in this book
way more heavy than masturbation and boners
[...]
Liza: I don't feel like it's enough to ban a book
because we learned what happens to knowledge deferred
they know about this kind of stuff
they're probably doing it
Hazel: but it's also weird because
do you say that about teens
like last semester in our class
the youth lens thing
are we allowed to say middle and high schoolers are just [doing that]
that's that's not necessarily right to say
Liza: right it's not good to assume
[...]
I just feel like the book was bigger than that
the message that the book was trying to convey to readers
was way deeper than the discussion of masturbation
and I can understand
it will be alarming to the parents or to students
but more books are like this
this is a really good book

In response to Hazel, Liza questions, “What happens to knowledge deferred?” In weighing how to determine what is appropriate/inappropriate for adolescent readers, Liza references the concept of knowledge deferred by denying students from reading about certain aspects of the human experience deemed appropriate or not by teachers. Liza explains the natural element of the sexual content in the text, arguing that adolescents not only have knowledge of the sexual content but, normally and healthily, experience it themselves. Hazel takes up the notion that deferring knowledge as an active choice, questioning how such a decision might essentialize young people and make difficult decisions for them regarding what they’re “ready for.” Remembering back to a discussion in a prior course taken by all three Group 1 members about the youth lens, Hazel problematizes making blanket statements about teens, middle schoolers, and high schoolers. Liza agrees that essentializing young people leads to assumptions, concluding that she felt the text’s messages and perspectives were much “bigger” or more important than the passages that discussed sexuality. Liza does complicate this stance, though, by considering the perspective of parents or students who may feel offended or uncomfortable by the sexual jokes of the narrator; however, she ultimately deems the novel a “really good book,” despite the conflicting reactions of readers she can imagine or predict. Finally, Noah builds upon the group’s talk to make broader claims about the importance of including even seemingly inappropriate content in one’s curriculum in the service of honoring student experiences.

Noah: I think it is really important
to talk about
you know see
I want to say serious things
it's not serious
but because our society is so weird like that
it kind of is a serious thing that [students] might not get to talk about
I like books that people can relate to

even if they're not like actually doing it
because we shouldn't just assume that
because you're a teenager
you're horny and you're masturbating and you get boners all the time
but I feel like
no matter what you're gonna know about it
and you're gonna have your opinions about it
and we don't have to throw out big opinions
but just showing them this can just say
that's fine
that's healthy you know
because by not talking about it
kids are gonna feel weird about themselves possibly
[...]
you just want kids to feel like they're valid and normal
and not weird for doing what they do
that's the intention
but if you say that and
you're [accused of] putting something in their head
that their families don't believe in
are you crossing a line

Noah here circles back to the notion of pinpointing what is really important about the text. He explains the importance of discussing "serious" things, which is a word he is dissatisfied with–he doesn't actually feel the topic of masturbation or boners should be serious; however, he believes that society places too much value on trivializing something that is instead innately human. He says that the consequence of this phenomenon is that conversations won't be had that might have related to and resonated with adolescent audiences. He nuances his stance, clarifying that he wishes not to essentialize young people as overly sexual; however, the role of the teacher, discussed further in later findings, is to expose students to texts that might resonate or disconnect with them and then to, further, discuss with them their reactions and opinions, regardless of what those opinions might be. He argues that in avoiding topics or texts, as well as choosing silence in banning texts from the classroom, could send a message to students that their experiences are "weird" or unaccepted in classroom settings. Noah then

concludes by recognizing the complexity of talking through topics related to sexuality in the classroom with students because, despite good intentions of the teacher of wanting students to feel valid and normal, some may argue that teachers are then pushing their own agenda onto students that conflicts with those of their families, a related topic discussed more in depth later on. Ultimately, Hazel rounds out the discussion on this issue raised initially by Noah, questioning how parents and schools might take issue with the sexual content in the text, expressed in a few isolated passages and jokes, over the systemic, "heavier" topics such as racism. The TCs agree, in the end, that they "never know."

Noah and Hazel continued to wrestle with the idea of weighing what is appropriate to teach, in reflection on their first book club conversation, in their writing. Hazel explained:

> Noah also brought up the slightly sexual content of the text, which I had not thought a lot of, because it is not necessarily explicit (in my opinion) but who is to say it is or is not appropriate… and for which age group. I think we spent a little too much time debating that in our 20 minutes, but then again it is an important conversation for educators to have. I think everyone had brought a new topic to the conversation which kept it moving. At times there were little pauses but when looking through the teacher's lens I found it is important to simply ask for clarification, because that helps all members feel comfortable and that way everyone is on the same page. I think it would be important to ask students about the people Junior is surrounded with, and how that affects his life. I think it would also be useful to mention books where we have seen stereotypes. At first I thought stereotypes might be a reason to not introduce a text, but my opinion is

> shifting to we should dissect the stereotypes, and everything is "political" to a certain extent anyway. (Hazel, Reflective Writing 1, 2/6/2023)

Here, Hazel reiterates the major tensions in her group's book club discussion–whether or not the sexual jokes in the text are explicit and who determines if a text is appropriate or not. At the end of her reflection, though, Hazel talks about stereotypes, perhaps continuing to think around the idea discussed throughout the book club conversation on making assumptions of young people and the weighty responsibility of making decisions for a group of readers based upon those assumptions. Rather than ignoring stereotypes or aspects of texts that might be deemed problematic, Hazel discusses her shifted perspective from avoiding stereotypes and instead dissecting them critically with students, as any text might be perceived as political, anyway.

In his reflective writing, Noah discusses how the sexual content, though not a deterrent for him originally, was more difficult than expected to discuss with peers:

> Now looking through the teacher lens, I realized just how difficult it can be to have a mature conversation with students about a controversial topic. I had a hard time discussing it with my two adult friends, so whenever the time comes for that in the classroom I am going to have to be far more prepared. A challenge that was raised in the discussion would be how do you explain and defend this book to a student or parent who dislikes it or doesn't resonate with it, and that could go for any book. But similarly a great success might be that a student REALLY connects with this text and it can redefine their reading or change how they view things. (Noah, Reflective Writing 1, 2/6/2023)

Noah now seems to view the topic as muddier than when he began his book club conversation. Originally, he described the language as silly or nonsense, but after talking

with colleagues, he describes it as difficult and controversial. TC discussion reflects here that the notion of appropriateness is vast—that any topic can be pertinent to learning, if approached maturely and critically. In dismissing the sexual language in the text as silly, Noah chooses not to give it an overwhelming weight, especially not so much so that he would make decisions about a text as a whole based upon a few seemingly harmless jokes. This decision also reflects Noah's estimation of 5-12 students, that they might laugh at the sexual jokes but that they are ultimately capable of seeing through them to focus on more important, integral topics within the text. How TCs conceptualize appropriateness through the eyes of society and parents, though, is different. Through these lenses, TCs begin to second-guess themselves and their authority as teachers to choose a text that, despite a few sexual or, arguably to some, "inappropriate" jokes, possesses the power to humanize various aspects of the human experience that is relevant to and beneficial for their students.

Though the talk in the book club recording seemed collegial and featured much affirmative talk from peers, Noah described it as challenging, explaining that he now feels the need to be much more prepared to navigate the topic of sexuality with students. Still, Noah maintains that with any book, not all students or parents will relate to or appreciate the text; however, offering texts with diverse human experiences can be incredibly validating for students who do have shared experiences with characters in YAL or who are forming and developing opinions on aspects of the human experience. Overall, Group 1 began and ended the conversation with clear convictions about teaching the text to 5-12 students. They dismissed the text's sexual content as the joking tone of the narrator, a teenage boy, experiencing normal aspects of growing up and exploring his sexuality. Ultimately, they talked around how the sexual jokes weren't for the sake of

delving deeply into the topic of sexuality at all; rather, the protagonist used them to talk about the excitement he feels when he reads a good book. Eventually, though, external influences held power over the discussion. TCs started to consider, despite their clear and informed opinions on the text, what parents or society might think about a text that features sexual jokes. As Noah mentioned, the text at hand appears both on the local district's curriculum and banned book lists throughout the country. Though TCs may have taught the text confidently solely due to its presence in the curriculum, they still lacked confidence in incorporating it and facilitating discussion around it because society positions sexuality as taboo, outlawing sexual content from the classroom, despite it being a "normal" part of the human experience. In concluding that they can "never know" about whether or not to teach a text like *PTI* (2007), TC talk reveals uncertainty in teaching a text they deem valuable and humanizing, based upon their conceptions of parent opinions and societal definitions of appropriateness, even when they contrast with those of the TCs. As a result, their authority is undermined in making decisions they feel are best for students, and they land feeling uncertain about ideas they previously held to with conviction.

Group 3 also talked through the notion of appropriateness in their third book club discussion about *The Poet X* (2018). For these group members, they considered the mention and exploration of the protagonist's sexuality through gendered lenses.

Ellie: I also wouldn't teach *The Poet X* in the classroom either
because my male students wouldn't connect with it
Cindy & Tiffany: mhm
Ellie: because there is a lot of sexuality in it as well
I'm pretty sure there is a poem about masturbation too
Tiffany: and her constantly being sexualized
that is a thing that a unfortunately a lot of young girls go through
Cindy: yeah definitely
Tiffany: but some of that stuff is very heavy
like do I have the capabilities in my short class time

to really process through those
[and] feel confident that
they leave knowing
that they feel good about that
no
in my personal opinion
because a lot of these heavier topics
I don't want to start a conversation
Cindy: our male students wouldn't necessarily connect with this
I think that's where if you have the privilege
of working at an all boys school
you can maybe more easily teach [*PTI*]
[or] if you worked in all girls school
I wouldn't have as much problem teaching this
Ellie: nope
Cindy: but I don't want to do it in a mix
Ellie: absolutely not
Cindy: because I'm not the parent
it's not my place to go through this stuff
and to teach this stuff
Ellie: and unfortunately it's not just a little thing you can look over

In this part of the discussion, TCs list several reasons for why they would not teach *The Poet X* (2018): because male students wouldn't connect with it, because there is sexual content, because the female protagonist is sexualized, because young girls would/could connect to the protagonist being sexualized, because sexual content is "heavy," because class time is too short to confidently navigate sexual content with students, because they don't want to start a conversation about sexual content without knowing where it would lead, because they don't have the "privilege" of working in an all boys/girls school, because they would not teach sexual content in a co-ed classroom, and because they are not the students' parents, so teaching a text with sexual content is not their "place." Ellie makes a definite decision that she would not teach *The Poet X* (2018) based upon a factor discussed in an earlier thematic finding–its lack of imagined resonance of the text for adolescent readers.

Ellie's decision is compounded with her perception of a lack of resonance based upon gender, specifically of her male students. This reasoning contrasts from that of other TCs earlier in the semester who dismissed the protagonist's sexual jokes in *PTI* (2007) because he was simply talking like a middle school boy might. Ellie's reasoning is that the sexual content of the book, particularly the sexuality of the female protagonist, would disconnect a male readership from valuing the text. Tiffany, on the other hand, fears her female students could relate too much to the experience of the protagonist, which could be too "heavy." Again, TCs talk about the notion of relating to a text in an opposite approach than in other contexts; while relating to a text, in some scenarios, is seen as good, here, it is seen as bad. Group 3 also layers in a consideration of gender as an added lens to making decisions about appropriateness and sexuality. TCs constantly cross-talk in this passage to affirm that sexual content in YA novels would be appropriate to teach if students were separated by gender. While TCs then venture into talking about logistical considerations like how much time they perceive it will take to teach "heavy" or critical topics, as well as how they imagine parents will respond to their decisions to teach such a text, Group 3 continues to discuss gender and sexuality. They critique the imbalanced expectations regarding sex and sexuality for men versus women in society.

Tiffany: I think everything everything that naturally occurs to her
it was demonized
your period naturally comes
it's demonized
you start having feelings toward a boy
it's demonized
Ellie: and she doesn't really understand what's going on with her body
because no one's taught her that
Tiffany: but that's such a normal thing
Cindy: exactly
Tiffany: like when you're young and
you have a crush on a guy
Cindy: but she's like
oh what if my mom finds out

Ellie: it's all about guilt
Tiffany: these conversations about sexism
it's different with girls
like that's a lot of mental load
it's like losing favor within society
Cindy: if you come from a religious background or not
[...]
Ellie: I think the idea of purity is different for genders
Tiffany: I think it's expected
it's like that too in this book
for a woman she has to stay pure

At this point in the conversation, TCs talk critically about the problematic standards society holds when discussing sexuality for women versus men. Tiffany argues that society demonizes natural phenomena for women, explaining that part of the issue at hand is that women are not taught about sexuality and its naturality. In the same turn, TCs perpetuate the very Discourses they initially wanted to disrupt, explaining that they would not teach the text due to the sexual exploration of a woman or that they would only teach the text to a group of boys versus girls. Ellie in particular reifies social hierarchy in privileging the perceived preferences and learning experiences of her male students in claiming that they would not, specifically, find resonance in a story that explores a woman's sexuality. TCs here fall victim to valuing what society privileges over problematizing the very demonization of the female sexuality they earlier condemned. They conclude that for these same reasons, they themselves should not teach the text; that in the context of the book, treating sexuality differently because the protagonist is female and critiquing how she is not taught about this part of growing up, they then decide to treat sexuality differently by gender, saying they will teach the text only to female or male students and, in effect, withholding the knowledge and teaching around this topic they simultaneously argue adolescents deserve.

Generally, sexual content weighed heavily on TC talk when deciding whether or

not to incorporate YAL into their classrooms. An interesting phenomenon occurred, in which some TCs, in small-group discussion, seemed fine with planning to use YAL that featured sexual content; however, in full-class forums, they changed their minds. This section illustrated particularly the influences of today's sociopolitical landscape in education, as it trickled down into TC talk. From fearing upset parents to deferring sexual content to content-area teachers outside ELA, TCs were fairly scattered, in terms of whether or not they would firmly commit to using YAL that featured sexual content. Ultimately, preservice teachers, despite disagreeing, gave much consideration to the firmer stances of in-service teachers, allowing their status as only part-time classroom observers–not teachers of record–to undermine their original opinions on incorporating the YAL into their practice.

TCs Conceptualized the Teacher as "The Expert," but One Without Authority

Intertwined in the notion of what is "appropriate" when making instructional choices as a teacher is the perceived role of the classroom teacher, which in this study's case informed how TCs deemed material as appropriate or inappropriate. In this section, TC talk works to determine the "role" of the classroom teacher, particularly in terms of 1) what content is "allowed" versus off-limits to teach; 2) who has the authority over making such decisions; 3) what content falls under the expertise or purview of the classroom teacher versus the parent or other content area teachers; and 4) what the implicit and explicit responsibilities of the teacher are when selecting texts and learning experiences for students.

Early in the semester, residency TCs, in particular, voiced opinions on how they perceived their freedoms, or lack thereof, as emerging teachers. During Week 1, George talked with the course co-instructor about the appeal of critical pedagogy and disrupting

the banking model of education (Freire, 2020) he saw in local district classrooms but expressed that the classroom management and curricular decisions of teachers he observed in his department worked antithetically to a critically oriented education for students. He discussed the issue of understanding critical approaches but perceived a chasm between theoretical orientations and praxis (TRD Research Journal, Week 1). In Week 3, Levi echoed a perceived disconnect between critical theory and practical enactment in explaining that the Methods course final project–a year-long instructional skeleton and a detailed unit-long instructional plan–wouldn't "make sense" because:

> We have to teach what [School District Name] says we have to teach. My PLC lead sucks and wants to move slow and doesn't want kids to do the interesting things. We have to hit a standard, so we're going to teach the same two-stanza poem for a month. We're still in our introduction unit, and it's the end of January. (TRD Research Journal, Week 3)

Erica, the following week, expressed similar frustrations, explaining, "You're teaching this critical stuff, but [the school district] tells us they directly disagree with what you're saying" (TRD Research Journal, Week 4).

Such concerns formed a baseline of initial curiosity about how TCs perceived their role in the classroom, particularly around making instructional decisions and the authority (or lack thereof) they felt to do so. As TCs talked throughout the semester, they navigated tensions and established stances around a recurring rhetorical question: What is my job, as a teacher?

Group 4 discussed, in Book Club 1 and 2, their hesitations around teaching certain aspects of the YA texts read and discussed in their book club meetings. In Book Club 2,

such aspects included the historical and sociopolitical context of *Persepolis* (2007), as well as the nature of the text's medium–a graphic novel.

Erica: I struggle with how I can fully engage
and have my scholars engage
in non Western literature
we are not aware of the cultural nuances that we're reading
I can read this story and say oh yeah that's sad
but how many things [I would] miss
Levi: I was thinking that like
even just the basic things
like the references to landmarks or dialectal material is
Erica: like that requires a whole perfect opportunity
to [give] an additional assignment
[...]
Levi: but not even the specific events
for example
they talk about Iraq versus Iran
it's a rivalry that goes back centuries
and culturally embedded in their cultural narrative
about the tension between these countries
and I'm not super knowledgeable on the intricacies in Middle Eastern politics
[...]
I think the other thing about graphic novels is
to really teach to read them
you're not just teaching the language
you also have to teach how to read art to an artistic expression
like how are they drawing the people
and the positioning
and all the things that an art major would be able to look at
George: I was [just] going off vibe
Erica: I feel like I did a disservice reading this
I can't get past that I need to do more research
every time every time I got to something I didn't know
I needed to Google
George: that's that's a conflict I feel as because
I'm not a social studies teacher
and like our social studies teacher quit
so you're telling me like with *The Absolutely True Diary*
I'm supposed to about to teach about Native American genocide
and responsibly teach that history
knowing that they may not be getting it elsewhere
but I think that the point of a book like this is to spark curiosity

In this conversation, Erica introduces two interconnected ideas–one is that she is grappling with the concept of teaching something she dislikes, and another is that she

dislikes the text at hand due to her unfamiliarity with the historical and sociopolitical landscape surrounding the text's protagonist. Because of this, Erica feels as though she's not able to read herself, much less teach effectively, the text at hand. Beyond this text in particular, Erica extends such thinking to any non "Western" literature, feeling disconnected from the cultural nuances and only feeling able to transact with the text in what she perceives to be a surface-level engagement characterized by sympathy ("oh yeah, that's sad"). Levi echoed this discomfort in lacking knowledge of the text's references to what he imagines are relative common-sense "landmarks." While Erica begins to consider supplementary research opportunities that might support her students in building a broader sense of foundational historical context for the book, Levi returns to his insecurities about not being "super knowledgeable" on Middle Eastern politics. Levi extends this notion of discomfort in introducing texts from diverse cultural and sociopolitical landscapes in his classroom to unfamiliar text genres or mediums. Levi struggles with the responsibility of layering instruction about artistic expression onto teaching about the language and themes of the text, explaining that he is not an "art major."

George then links to Levi's idea about not being able to fulfill the role of an art major and English teacher, explaining that in regard to the context of both *Persepolis* (2007) and *PTI* (2007), he is not "a social studies teacher." He explains that his perceived lack of knowledge creates tension for him in wanting to "responsibly" teach the history behind the texts he introduces to students in the classroom. In each of these examples, TCs grapple with the role of the classroom teacher as the "expert," not saying absolutely that they would refuse to introduce the YA texts to their students but explaining how texts about characters from experiences, roles, and identities diverse from

their own creates a disinterest or discomfort for their practice. George also concludes his thought by rationalizing the pressure he puts on himself to "responsibly" teach about history with the compounded, realistic knowledge that his school did not have a history teacher at the time. Feeling that he was the sole contributor for his students' historical content knowledge, his sense of responsibility to offer a comprehensive and just history felt more dire.

Another consideration TCs made when attempting to carve out the roles and responsibilities of the classroom teacher in selecting instructional materials and learning experiences for students links back to the prior thematic finding of determining what is "appropriate" for student learning through the lens of how TCs conceptualized the role of the classroom teacher versus the role of parents, other content area teachers, and legislation. For some TCs, they discussed non-negotiable values and responsibilities they tied to their roles that were intrinsic, and for others, they determined their role and place based upon the expectations of curricular documents. Group 3, in discussing *Persepolis* (2007), talked about the tension in the text that grew between parents and teachers; the teachers wanted to instruct students through the lens of religion, and the parents sought what they perceived to be a more transferable educational approach to life outside of religion. TCs discussed the complexity of pushing back against standards that feel constricting and that diminish the classroom teacher's freedom and expertise in choosing texts and facilitating conversations that are critical in nature; however, they also admitted wanting to fall back on these same standards when justifying what to teach and how to teach it, especially when under the watch of parents and administrators.

Cindy: but you're only teaching them like these religious side of things
you're not actually teaching them what they do for life
and you can see the parents starting to get frustrated
Tiffany: do you connect with that

as a teacher in our system
Cindy: yeah because I feel like
what am I actually preparing [students for]
am I helping them or making life harder for them
I don't have an answer for that
[...]
and then we still have standards
we have to meet for the state
[...]
Tiffany: we still crave standards
looking at what's happening with the curriculum in Texas
[that prohibits discussion or instruction around certain critical issues such as slavery,
LGBTQIA+ identities, and gender in the classroom]
[...]
but then we talk about how much you hate standards

When Cindy questions, "Am I helping them, or making life harder for them?" she is referring to a discussion of critical conversations that emerged earlier in Group 3's conversation. In discussing how critical discussions over *Persepolis* (2007) might be relevant to her students due to its discussion of religious freedom, Cindy then second-guesses whether or not a critical conversation about her students' stances on religion would be appropriate. On one hand, it could resonate with them, but on the other, she questions if offering such consideration is making life harder for them by stirring up emotions or possible discomfort. She then extends her line of inquiry to examine what her role is in offering critical discussion topics, as the classroom teacher. She wonders if giving students "room" to make personal connections to texts and to critically consider their stances and opinions detracts from the state standards students are supposed to be demonstrating. Tiffany later returns to this idea, introducing Discourses of teacher surveillance around teaching critical topics, which she connects to recent legislation in Texas that prohibits discussion or instruction around certain critical issues such as slavery, LGBTQIA+ identities, and gender in the classroom. While Tiffany, on one hand, pushes back on the notion of inhibiting a teacher's role of being an authority when

choosing generative texts and talk for students, on the other hand, she contends that teachers crave standards as affirmation when making instructional choices that might otherwise be questioned by students, parents, administrators, and legislators.

Further debate about the teacher's role and authority in curricular decision making arose in a full-class discussion that seemed to impact TC talk throughout the remainder of the semester. In a class period dedicated to identifying critical talk moves that sustained critical conversation, a lecture guided by the critical talk moves outlined in Schieble et al. (2020), the course co-instructors played a portion of Group 1's first book club meeting, positioning the featured talk as an exemplar of critical talk moves. The instructors provided TCs with a transcript of the book club conversation and encouraged them to mark when they saw a critical talk move employed by one of the speakers. After listening twice to the book club conversation, TCs noted where they believed participant talk to be sustaining and critical in nature, as outlined by Schieble et al. Several TCs responded with examples that were evaluated by course instructors. As discussion progressed, TCs turned to discussing the content of the book club conversation, beyond the talk itself. As the whole class responded to Group 1's discussion of how they would teach *PTI* (2007) based upon appropriateness, the course co-instructor took teaching journal notes.

Quickly, the inservice teachers dominated the conversation, as the undergraduate and MAT students listened intently. Inservice teachers considered stakeholders who might push back on the idea of discussing sexuality in the classroom. Some worried about administrators and parents, and others claimed that sexuality had no place in the ELA classroom at all; rather, topics like sexuality should be reserved for sexual health lessons in health or gym classes.

Tiffany: but shouldn't we only learn sexuality in bio?
George: no because sexuality is part of the human experience

Erica: listen literature is the perfect place to teach about sexuality via inferences
our job is to create critical thinkers
Ellie: I'm here to teach standards
I'm not here to teach sex
This group-wide conversation is one that was often referred to by TCs as

"heated." While most of the TCs articulated a difference between teaching a text that mentions sex as a part of the human experience and teaching explicitly about the biology of sex itself, Ellie and Tiffany stood firmly in the belief that sexual content and anything thereto related should fall under the role of the science or sexual education teacher, rather than the ELA teacher. For Ellie, this talk signaled a shift from her stance in the first book club conversation over *PTI* (2007):

Ellie: I feel a big aspect of this was not just racial
but also with age
that's a 14 year old boy
it's very real
it's very raw
and this book is actually banned in some states
Tiffany: I can see that yes
Ellie: but that's why I think it's really cool
and it's really great that we could totally take this book
and put it through the [school district equity promotion] tool
But we need to make sure we're teaching it with a lens of non biases
and also kind of give your kids a head up
about hey there's trigger warnings for us

In this part of the book club discussion, Ellie considers the difficult or critical aspects of the text that might challenge adolescents, exercising the previously mentioned themes of conceptualizing adolescents, considering what is appropriate to teach adolescents, and imagining if and how adolescents will relate to this text. In these considerations, Ellie mentions first the systemic racism explored in the text before mentioning the "realness" and "rawness" of a teenage boy and his speech. In her initial reactions, though, Ellie talks positively about the book's content, calling it "really cool" and even discussing its alignment with the local district's tool for measuring a text's promotion of racial equity.

Though she mentions some stipulations regarding how she'd introduce the text–that she'd give students a trigger warning and that she would attempt to mask any biases she felt toward the issues expressed in the text–Ellie shows a stark contrast in her stance toward the text as an instructional tool from the first book club conversation to the whole-class discussion. In her first book club reflective writing, she states:

> As a teacher I would use this book in a 9th grade English Class to discuss the ideas of identity, assimilation, and culture. The topic of identity can be a challenge for many students. I may feel it's important to ask about how someone feels comfortable being themself or the idea that we should not let others influence us. (Ellie, Reflective Writing 1, 2/6/2023)

Here, Ellie makes it known that despite the discussion about sexual exploration or jokes about sexual content from the narrator, she views the text as a productive vehicle for exploring Discourses about identity, assimilation, culture, and racism. She also states that such Discourses would be relevant to her students and that the text offers affirmation of the "challenging" identity formation her students are undergoing as adolescents. After the "heated" class discussion, class members both from within Ellie's book club group and outside the group recalled and reflected upon the conversation in semi-structured interviews at the end of the semester.

Cindy: I think it's a shame
I mean, looking at that conversation
and looking at some of the conversations we got into later in the classroom
we were a little more I think broad minded in [the Book Club 1 conversation]
because we were thinking more of just approaching it from an outside perspective
but that's interesting to me
how our thought process changed through that last [book club conversation]
[...]
I think we got caught in a narrow window
of just seeing the book in one perspective
just looking at the sexual issues in the book
instead of looking at the story as a whole

and what the kids could learn from it

Here, Cindy describes a narrow-mindedness or narrow perspective that her group shifted into when viewing texts against the notion of appropriateness and considering how parents might react to such content being explored in classrooms, an instructional decision outcome that drastically contrasts with Ellie's and Group 3's initial impression of the text as a vehicle for validating, humanizing, and critical conversations that would relate to student experiences. In response, Ellie defers to standards to establish the bounds of her authority, rather than her own purview. Tiffany agrees, falling back on standards–the boundaries she craves–as the compass for what she is "allowed" to teach. Noteworthy, in this scenario, is that *PTI* (2007) is a text included on the local district curriculum, which TCs acknowledged in their initial book club conversation. Nonetheless, they shifted their positions when talking with the full class, taking a hard stance against the book. In the end of semester interview, Cindy mentioned that *PTI* (2007) would, in fact, align with the criteria for the school district's racial equity tool to promote racial inclusion and representation of characters, authors, and experiences in classroom texts, she added:

Cindy: it's a racial equity [tool]
in PLC
if it's a new text or something like that
they'll ask us to put it through this tool
and we have to ask questions about it
[and ask ourselves] how would you address these issues in this text
[...]
they're looking for racially diverse texts
they're also looking to make sure that
we're approaching the text from a non bias standpoint as well
and that we have ways that we can teach it in an unbiased way

In this segment of the interview, Cindy leans on the district's racial equity tool to justify the instructional decision to use a text like *PTI* (2007). Though the Group 3 TCs utilize

district-wide structures, such as standards and equity tools, as supports for their authority in instructional decision making, Cindy's perception of the equity tool itself is two-fold: on one hand, it promotes diversity, and on the other, it supports teachers in being unbiased when teaching diverse texts. Cindy's talk here links the notion of diversity with that of bias, another check and balance of teacher authority when choosing literature for their classrooms. Moreover, Cindy's talk indicates a larger Discourse within the school district of encouraging its teachers to incorporate a diverse text set while anticipating that such diversity could give way to seemingly political conversations in classrooms. As Cindy perceives it, the tool is meant to encourage classroom libraries and instructional texts to feature a wider and more diverse representation of various human identities and experiences. She pairs with this, as a result of her own thinking or as a result of the messaging of the district, that while this is true, she is still not "allowed" to teach content that is not "neutral" on the part of the teacher. Here, Cindy's talk nods to larger societal Discourses that believe even the inclusion of human experiences and identities that are not White, heteronormative, abled, and gender-binary is, therefore, pushing a liberal agenda. To temper this potential, the tool gives teachers a sense of authority in selecting voices and stories to explore in their classrooms; however, such autonomy is superficial, as it exists within the confines of neutrality. Arguably, the conversation of diversity and inclusion and, on the other hand, neutrality, is incongruent at best—one is only associated with the other when outside Discourses are at play. Returning to Tiffany's notion of "craving" standards, such a feeling for TCs makes sense; if their authority in decision-making is so limited and their fear of satisfying external forces so great, they cling to standards and approved texts as a set of rules, even at the cost of compromising what they personally feel should be taught in classrooms.

TCs outside Group 3 also talked about this whole-class discussion of *PTI* (2007) in their interviews.

Liza: I feel like all of us were quiet
because the classmates' opinions are very strong
and the conversation got intense
I wanna say that I could understand where they were coming from
I wouldn't say that I agree
but I understand
and I respected it for sure
but I didn't think that the conversation would get as heated
and I feel like since me and my colleagues in my book club
were not actual teachers yet
we don't really know
how it feels to be in the classroom all day with students
or like actually assign students books
or receive feedback from their parents
or just have somebody challenge a book
we just only learned about it
and read about it in class
[...]
I feel like actually hearing that from actual teachers just made me think
like maybe we need to think about it more
but I still feel like that inappropriateness was for humor reasons
and not to take away from the message
I feel like there was much more important things going on in the book
like violence and such

In her interview, Liza practices criticality in attempting to understand varying perspectives, particularly in considering the positionalities of her group members and those of Group 3. An influence on Liza's perception of the conversation is that Ellie and Tiffany were resident teachers and were teachers of record for their classrooms. Because of the knowledge that Liza tied to their experienced status, she recognized the limitations of the opinions of her and her group members, as they could only imagine how students and parents would react to texts hypothetically. Liza here considers Discourses that "new" teachers face when questioning their authority due to a lack of experience and, therefore, a lack of knowledge of "actual" teachers. Still, though she contends that perhaps more consideration on the issue would be helpful, she maintains that she could

position the novel's sexual content as trivial humor, focusing instead with students on critical issues such as violence within the book.

Noah, another TC in Group 1, explained that only teaching what is in a prescriptive curriculum and limiting a teacher's authority in such concrete ways–for example, to say that sexual jokes in a novel only fall under the jurisdiction of a biology teacher–is "too robotic."

Noah: what we really meant was
how would you react to this
and get over it
I wanted to promote a bit of sexual positivity
I guess
and I I wanted to ask how would we normalize this in a way
I I guess

Noah's talk features many false starts as he talks around his book club's questions that previously sparked such a "heated" conversation. He explains that beyond helping students to minimize the sexual content in the book as merely the quirky, comical voice of the adolescent narrator, he considered it originally as an opportunity to validate sexual exploration or curiosity in adolescence, imagining that his students may experience similar questions and wishing to use the text as a vehicle for humanizing a natural part of coming of age. He predicts that adolescent readers might laugh at the sexual jokes but saw the conversation as generative in assuring students that their experiences with growing up are "normal." Noah imagines critical conversations around the sexual jokes–he pictures not just glossing over or "skipping" the sexual talk but using it as an opportunity to serve as a counter narrative to social Discourses that assert that there is no room for talk of sex in schools or no place for the text in "appropriate" spaces like the classroom. To Noah, this message says to adolescents that their experiences are abnormal. Still, Noah's false starts and repetition of "I guess" indicate an uncertainty in

his stance; he knows why he thought what he did, but he seems unsure of whether those thoughts and beliefs persist. Noah, like Liza, also questions his authority as a new teacher against the experience of his peers.

Noah: that entire conversation I just stayed to myself
I could tell it was going in a completely opposite directions
so I I just stayed quiet
I do remember the student who was already a teacher
and already had an established classroom
I I I I always take things to heart
from people who are more experienced and events than me
and so I I thought about that and
I definitely see the merit in that [teacher's stance]
I can absolutely understand it
[...]
you know we're definitely there to educate our kids
that's obviously the goal
and why we're teachers
and so it's very important to teach curriculum
but I think it's important for a lot of kids to hear a message about sexual positivity
[...]
I was not planning on teaching a lesson about sexual health
[I just thought] that even a passing comment on it
could make someone feel so much better
and normalize an aspect of their life
that they might be feeling strange about
I'm here to teach curriculum just sounds so cold and calculated
it sounds like something one would say
if they just don't really care

George weighed in on the full-class discussion later, in his interview, agreeing with Liza and Noah's stances.

George: I was super frustrated by that conversation
but also was trying to be mindful as like a you know
a heterosexual White guy
not over trying to assert dominance over a conversation about like sexuality
it felt like very weird
I just couldn't imagine someone
teaching in public school who took that position
I think primarily because it seemed like they were
coming from like a more religious [perspective]
which I have a broad knowledge and understanding of American Christianity
so I know exactly where they come from
but I remember realizing that I was not on the same page as them at all

and not really knowing how to like bridge that distance
because my assumption is that as a public school teacher
we have to be able to support all students
and part of that would include helping students navigate sexuality in a healthy way
reading literature and talking about it in a healthy way
is one of the best ways to model that
[...]
literature is one of the primary ways that we can have an entry point
discussing what it means to be human
debating [topics in literature] can be a healthy and useful way
to talk about human identity and mine experience

In his interview, George discussed tempering his initial frustration with critically examining his identity, in relation to the conversation and his own opinions. He explains not wanting to be outwardly domineering in a conversation about sexuality as a White male, which nods to Discourses about power and sexuality within dominant social roles, particularly the intersection of Whiteness and identifying as male. George continues by identifying what he perceives to be as American Christian undercurrents to Ellie and Tiffany's stances on sexual content in the novel. He believes it unjust for public school teachers to allow their own stances and decision making, which directly influences the learning experience of students, to be informed by religious Discourses. George believes that ultimately, ELA teachers have the platform to teach students about many facets of the human experience in ways that normalize growing up in a "healthy" way. He indicates his surprise in the residency TCs' stances based upon boiling their positions down to a debate on whether or not literature can be "a healthy and useful way to talk about human identity and mine experience." In this statement, George argues that Tiffany and Ellie, in essence, are pushing back against a truth he perceived to be universal across ELA educators in a way that, to him, will have consequences for students who are invalidated by hearing and seeing that their "healthy" and "normal" experiences are either isolated and unusual or have no place in the public school classroom.

In this section, both preservice and inservice TC talk indicated that their authority in making decisions had been, in some way, undermined as they discussed instructional choices–from feeling uncertain about leading conversations when they were not the experiential, content-specific, or cultural expert to anchoring their instructional decision-making power to the confines of curricular standards. Conversations about perceived authority when choosing topics and texts that included sexual content in YAL seeped into this section's talk, as well. TCs considered their role in what conversations were designated under their purview versus that of classroom parents. A theme that is particularly poignant in this section is that of TCs wavering on instructional choices that ultimately enact their philosophical and foundational stances as educators. This pattern surfaced in Noah's talk. While initially taking the stance that he would welcome conversations about sexuality in his classroom with the intention of validating and affirming student identities and experiences, he left the Methods course unsure of whether making instructional choices based upon this charge would be realistic. Liza came into the semester identifying as a Black educator and claiming this identity as central to her practice. At the end of the semester, she explained that her plans of living and teaching in Texas would obstruct her from discussing race in the classroom.

In concluding the study's Findings, I return to my research questions: What discourse moves do TCs make in order to sustain or evade sociopolitical talk during conversations around critical topics? How do TCs talk about enacting critical conversations in future classroom instruction? The data showed that in some instances, TCs evaded sociopolitical discussion when their peers resisted to uptake and sustain it. This happened as a result of their lack of personal connections to the experience at hand, which ultimately thwarted criticality. Social co-construction of talk and meaning

influenced other TC stances, as they espoused certain opinions in small groups but pivoted entirely when challenged in a whole-class forum.

Regarding instructional choices, some TCs, mostly in-service teachers, initially chose and maintained certain instructional stances, even if they did concede it could lose them their jobs. In the instance of this study, though, these stances were taken by in-service teachers who were, as teachers of record, used to the authority of making decisions in the classroom spaces. Most TCs, though, were able to express clear opinions on what they, as humans, felt comfortable reading and discussing. Making decisions about what texts and topics they'd usher into the classroom and, particularly, how they might do so, resulted in muddier results. Largely, TC talk about making decisions was punctuated with second-guessing and fear about external consequences of and for their choices. TCs thought about how parents, administrators, school boards, and legislators would view their instructional moves. Rarely, though, were they able to privilege with certainty the interest of students and what they would take away from discussions about critical topics and texts. The biggest gap in their talk, I argue, stems from overlooking students as stakeholders in their learning experience, as concerns about parents eclipsed the grim consequences for student learning that occur out of eliminating critical talk and texts in ELA curriculum.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The discussion and implications chapter revisits each vignette in the findings, arguing its significance for teacher educators and putting the observations back into conversation with those of researchers in the field. Though I originally intended to study TC talk with the hopes of drilling down into what was most prominently keeping TCs from facilitating critical talk in their observation, student teaching, or early career classroom contexts, I learned that I needed to do much more thinking around TC talk in the Methods course first. The research problem for this study is, in reality, much more complex than I imagined. Tied up in the disconnect between critical literacy in teacher preparation and praxis are intersecting forces that impact TC talk in the early formation of instructional stances, long before TCs enter their own first classrooms. Some of these forces include the persistence of Whiteness in post-secondary learning spaces, pervasive dominant narratives about youth, emotionality and vulnerability when talking critically about a text, and sociopolitical pressures that seep into how TCs imagine they will or won't uptake topics, texts, and tools introduced in preparation programs. Then, when new teachers step into their first classrooms, they experience compounded sociopolitical pressures of parents, administration, and legislation. So, it was easy for me to prematurely think I might leave this project with a clearer set of solutions of action steps. In reality, this discussion continues to develop just how complex TC projected instructional decisions are, as they were moved, shaped, and molded in the Methods course, long before TCs step into their first classrooms. When analyzing the data explored in the findings, I realized the myriad factors influencing my own students' thinking and conversation, all of which came to bear on how they discussed which topics

and texts they felt comfortable or uncomfortable integrating into their early teaching practices. The discussion foregrounds implications, both theoretical and practical, for teacher educators with such complications in mind.

Discussion

Relatability versus Relevance

Across the review of literature and the study's findings alike, TCs used projections of who their current or future students were/would be, and they used these projections as a compass when taking stances about what they would teach, one day, in their independent classrooms. Here, I use "independent" classrooms to describe the first classroom settings TCs step into post-training or education. Though the Alt Cert teachers in the Methods course were teachers of record in their classrooms, they were still engaging in training. So, all the Methods TCs were, in some way, in the process of "becoming" teachers. Teacher preparation and the topics discussed therein are essential, then, in these formative stages of becoming. The ideas, stances, and decisions TCs develop—or don't develop—have the potential to undergird their instructional stances throughout the entirety of their careers. So, the patterns that bubble up in these moments are crucial to understanding how instructional approaches make their way into and are sustained in classroom contexts for years beyond training programs. Such patterns, further, address the practical knowledge gap (Robinson et al., 2011) discussed in the study's Research Gap section. I position the following topics—how TCs navigate adolescents/ce, emotions, and sociopolitics, all within the context of Whiteness—as contributors to the gap between critical literacy exercise in teacher preparation coursework and its enactment in early career classrooms.

The first and most persistent consideration of TCs, when reading and discussing YAL, was relatability. In TC talk at the beginning of the semester and all the way through to the end, TCs used relatability as a quasi-north star when deciding if they should use a text or topic in their teaching practice. The tension, though, in a finding like this, lies in the fraught nature of projecting what adolescents will "relate to," based upon who they are or will be. When teachers assume what students relate to, with the motivation that if they relate to a text they will like it and engage with it, such assumptions lend themselves to perpetuating dominant narratives or positioning of youth. This is not to say that wanting one's students to enjoy books and feel validated in seeing their experience shared or represented by a character in literature—especially literature leveraged as a learning asset in classroom contexts—is bad practice. Teachers generally want to choose texts that will resonate with their students and offer them access points into the stories of others and in the world around them; however, choosing texts based upon hypothetical adolescents or based upon perceptions of adolescents laced with dominant social ideology is problematic and should be complicated in methods courses.

Though relatability was not explicitly prompted in any of the book club written reflection questions (both connection and disconnection were encouraged), when asked about their instructional stances through the "Teacher Lens" questions (see Appendix B-D), nearly every TC mentioned relatability across all three book club reflections. It is interesting to consider, then, why this happened. Perhaps, this is how TCs were taught to engage with texts in their own k-12 schooling experiences. Perhaps, TCs are taught in preparation programs that relating to a text is the primary vehicle for establishing resonance between the text and student readers. Often, teacher educators ask questions that inadvertently guide TCs in this direction. Sulzer and Thein (2016) explain:

> [We believe that] questions about what "adolescents are likely to see as relevant" already establishes the rhetorical groundwork for essentializing youths. In our courses on YAL, we no longer ask preservice teachers to speculate about the responses of adolescent readers. Instead, we have moved to questions that ask preservice teachers to evaluate YAL based on the complexity with which the author mobilizes and/or critiques adolescence as a social construct and depicts intersectionalities within youth experiences (p. 169)

The authors critique the pervasive practice of deciding what students will want to read about because such assumptions are based upon inherently essentialized constructions of who adolescent readers will be. Rather than assigning merit to texts that will "land" with imagined adolescent audiences, Sulzer and Thein (2016) challenge TCs to place value in the ways in which authors disrupt essentialized depictions of adolescents—depictions that are handed down from deep-seeded, oversimplified narratives of who young people are. Beyond overt stereotypes of young people (Lesko, 1996; Petrone & Lewis, 2012; Sarigianides, 2012), more covert views of youth persist in these moments that "flatten and obscure" (Sulzer & Thein, 2016, p. 163). Unintentionally, adolescent identities are positioned as monolithic rather than intersectional and are often represented as such in YAL. These issues, if left unchecked, seep into how TCs perceive what students will be interested in, what they will care about, and what they will be willing to learn about.

When analyzing TC talk, I also noticed TCs conflating the notion of relatability with that of relevance. Further, TCs viewed relevance as dependent on relatability or as a guaranteed outcome of relatability. For this reason, they often assumed that students would find, more likely, texts they could relate to as most relevant to them, personally. As I revisit the vignettes from the findings, I consider: Don't we want TCs and k-12

students alike to care about issues, identities, and experiences of humans in the world– even those beyond their own? Though the notion of wanting texts to resonate with students is one well intended, doesn't this coupling of relatability with relevance inherently position students only to care or to care more so if a text relates to them? If they can see themselves in that text? These questions feel important in considering how best to conduct critical conversations with TCs about their projected instructional stances. Other relevant wonderings include how, if ever, teachers unintentionally reinforce the notion that if a student can't relate to a text, it doesn't matter for them to read it. Instead, I wonder how teacher educators can best support TCs in honoring the stories and experiences of others as learning assets, even if they don't look like our own. If we, as teachers, don't establish this stance with our students, what will we say if we're met with the question: "What's in it for me?" This question reflects a mirror-oriented reading stance. The discussion and implications work to drill down into how teachers might position students to crave a balanced reading diet of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Though this goal is well intended, I also consider my positionality as a White individual, in moments where I challenge White audiences to actively identify and disrupt their complicity in systems of power. Whiteness has become so deeply engrained in our social practices and is being made to look increasingly covert as those in power fight to stay there. For White individuals, even those attempting to locate and interrupt their roles in oppressive systems, there are inevitable elisions that will go undetected. Similarly, there will be countless shortcomings in the implications around Whiteness I offer the field and in the ways in which I attempt to disrupt Whiteness in future teaching and research. Still, it is essential particularly for White teachers, researchers, and teacher

researchers to remain vigilant in locating how replications of Whiteness are constantly adapting and shifting to maintain White supremacy in education and beyond.

In the first vignette in the findings–when Tim asks his group members about switching schools–he indeed makes a rich connection to the text in identifying with the protagonist's, Junior's, coping mechanism of masking painful moments with humor. Though not necessarily critical in nature, Tim finds a substantial relatability to both the protagonist's characterization and the author's voice through the main character–one that might teach his group members and himself a bit more about how he similarly copes via levity. Tim also begins discussing the social aspects of grief or storying trauma, hypothesizing that sharing with peers about painful experiences can land flat, resulting in unwanted sympathy or a disconnection from listeners, if they lack similar experiences of their own. In this moment, Tim experiences the very phenomenon he is describing; his peers' affirmative cross-talk and uptake–whether due to this same disconnection or due to wanting to yield the floor out of respect for Tim–results in him changing the subject to something he perceives will land more universally. In this instance, power shifts away from talk around systems of oppression and privileges the comfort of group members in their ability to conduct "good" reading by relating to the text, even if the connections are surface-level.

Dutro (2013) describes the complexities of sharing, in the context of literacy and classroom discourse, the unfathomable–the intersection of what we need and want to understand, yet, that we cannot. She maintains, though, that in such a space, students have the opportunity to inch closer to understanding one another as readers more deeply navigate their own experiences with others. Beyond his own processing of traumatic experiences with addiction, there is certainly much conversation that might have been

sparked through Tim's vulnerable sharing—talk about traumatic events, what it says about a person/character who copes via humor, how grief might look different cross-contextually, and how the author utilizes his craft to accomplish this aspect of the character's voice. Further, the group might have begun to look outward and upward at larger systems of oppression that set Junior's experiences apart from Tim's. They might have used Tim's connection to the story as a springboard into talking through how Junior's experience with addiction is entirely unique from Tim's due to his identity as a Native American and his story's context within and outside a Native American reservation. They might have pursued critical questions about the author's positionality and how much of the text is fictionalized versus autobiographical, the protagonist's choice to leave the reservation given his sociopolitical contexts, why alcoholism and other types of addiction such as gambling is historically tied to Native identities, how this association is stereotypical, how there is no such thing as the singular "Native" voice or experience (Ford, 2014) and countless more (Chisholm & Whitmore, 2018; Crandall, 2009; Talbert, 2012).

Tim's reading and connection-making in this exchange is a good start in engaging with the text and one that is reflective of how young readers might also respond. Bishop (1990) explains that young adults naturally seek to see themselves reflected in books as a form of validation of self and one's experience, which proves particularly important when the identities of the reader are historically oppressed and excluded from narrative texts entirely. Westby (2022) echoes the affordances of mirror texts as opportunities to learn about the multifaceted identities of students and the stories they value when they are asked to connect with and reflect upon familiar stories and experiences. So, the connective work that Tim begins here is generative and has much potential for group

members to link their talk and share similarly worthwhile connections to the story. My purpose here is not to discount or discredit the benefits for readers of mirror texts and connecting thereto. Instead, I aim to pinpoint a moment where critical talk was positioned to take off but fell short, and the reasons why TCs evaded critical talk are couched within larger Discourses.

In their demographic surveys, each member of Tim's Book Club group identified as White. Beyond what we know about education as a White space—designed around White conventions for teaching, learning, and expression of texts created by White authors and that position White experiences as the norm (Jupp et al., 2016; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Nayak, 2007)—the context of this exchange between all White participants is consequential. In this sense, while group members might have been able to relate to Tim's experiences, they could not relate to those of Junior's, at least not within the context of Junior's identity as a Native American. Further, because they had, in their Intersectional Identity Maps, identified their identities and experiences as privileged, or as Tim later describes in his reflective writing as a life with "little to no turbulence," critical conversation was thwarted. This stand-still in the conversation matters through both the lenses of relatability and Whiteness. When Tim's group members could not relate to either Tim's traumatic experiences with addiction or Junior's experiences with addiction within the broader context of oppression, they were silent. To maintain their comfort, Tim pivoted topics, rather than pressing on more critical ones. As a result, White comfort and relatability were privileged. So, I return to the problem of conflating relatability with relevance. Whether or not they realize it, Tim and his group members participated in systems and structures of Whiteness and White supremacy—structures within which they move through and contribute to, resulting in privilege they benefit

from, every day. Without disruption, oppression is maintained. So, while group members could not relate to Tim's story or Junior's story, they are still very much implicated in talking and caring about the systems of power explored in *PTI* (2007) and the world around them. Though relatability is limited, the issues in the text are still very much relevant to the group members, as they engage with them daily. This is the essentially critical aspect of the conversation that is missing, and without digging into hegemonic systems at play in the story and their society—and their role within those systems—Whiteness and the comfort of White participants to talk about topics more relatable and, in this case privileged, were maintained.

Returning to the notion that TCs considered heavily how relatable YAL texts would be for their imagined future students, I wonder about the fears TCs forecast, should students be unable to relate to a text. As discussed in the literature and throughout the findings, TCs make decisions based upon what texts they imagine students will be able to relate to; however, do TCs, then, believe that if students cannot relate to a text, they will be unwilling to read it? Will they view the story as devoid of learning opportunities if it does not mirror themselves, in some way? If teacher preparation encourages making connections while reading a text or choosing texts for students that are "relatable" (Lesko, 1996), teachers may, as a result, hope to avoid losing the engagement of readers who cannot connect with the text and, therefore, feel alienated. In response to Tim's talk above, Henry makes an interesting move—perhaps one that challenges what might be expected of a participant who acknowledges their privilege and recognizes a lack of shared experiences with a story's protagonist. As Henry talks back to Tim, though, he discusses feeling disconnected from the text only when he he felt he could not participate in the early conversations of the novel. So, in the development of

Junior's characterization and the exposition of the novel, Henry felt limited. He didn't share any similarities with Junior. Once the story progressed, though, Henry identified himself as the audience of the book. Once he could decipher Alexie's message for White readers and felt, as he described, "called out" by Junior, he actually felt drawn into the story as an active participant in the discourse. Jones and Clarke (2007) discuss this type of disconnection–that of Henry disconnecting with Junior's experiences but leveraging Junior's/Alexie's message to continue his own process of learning–as a way to validate readers' initial understandings yet continue to build richer and deeper knowledge about texts, the human experience, themselves, and the surrounding world. In this way, Henry is a good example of a reader who experienced limited relatability to the text but, despite this, felt the story to be especially relevant to his understanding of the world around him and the systems through which he moves day to day. Through this lens, Henry felt the story certainly had something "to do" with him—it mattered to him what Alexie's message was for White audiences and considered the implications, for his own life, of Alexie's work.

Jones & Clarke (2007) support Henry's line of thinking here, criticizing the practice of only or mainly making connections between texts and lived experiences, a popular strategy taught to TCs in preparation programs and students in k-12 settings alike. Disconnecting from a text affords readers the opportunity to dig more deeply into how new knowledge fits in with or complicates existing perceptions and opinions. It also affords them, if they encounter a character whose depiction of identity or experience seems oversimplified/stereotypical/essentialized, a space to push back on what they read and to disrupt stories we live by about young people (Schieble et al., 2020). They critique connection-making with texts that are problematic; when readers connect with texts laced

with ideology, they stop short of questioning larger hegemonic structures and systems (Bean & Stevens, 2007; Haddix, 2010; Jones & Clarke, 2007; Luke, 2012; Luke & Woods, 2009). Further, for readers of dominant social groups–White, middle class, and of a traditional family structure (Srklac Lo, 2019)–requiring connection leads readers to find parallels or similarities with a text, even ones that are superficial, in order to perform reading "well" (Jones & Clarke, 2007). This phenomenon describes Tim's discursive shift from addiction to moving schools. Bishop (1990) does not condemn, of course, the sense of belonging a reader feels when reading a mirror text; however, a strategy of disconnecting, instead, from a text can be more generative in practicing critical literacy. Scholars explain that when readers make disconnections, they're able to assume the biased or positioned nature of texts, more readily interrogating, deconstructing, or critiquing them (Jones & Clarke, 2007). This repositioning of connection to disconnection, then, affords TCs who lack experiential knowledge to still critique dominant narratives and to disrupt how one thinks about systems of power. In fact, those who do not fit into identities which have been historically marginalized and oppressed have more to learn and, therefore, must engage just as deeply in conversations that challenge handed down ideologies and taken-for-granted privileges. Henry affirms the potential book club talk to establish a community of readers who share a collective commitment to justice; even for readers who enjoy privilege and, perhaps, disconnect from storylines, experiences, and identities expressed in curricular texts, have implications for allyship and action, as they participate in and move through systems of oppression, knowingly or not.

Noah's talk explores different aspects of relatability. In feeling an emotional connection to the story, Noah believes that he relates to the protagonist of *Persepolis*

(2007) because her story, like many young adult literature storylines, is about growing up. Because of Noah's own experiences with coming of age, he feels he understands the protagonist, despite the sociopolitical and socioemotional contexts of war. He posits, aligning with the stance that connecting to texts is mostly positive and commonly encouraged, that his future students will be able to do the same–to relate to and understand Marji and her struggles because they, too, have struggled in various ways. In reality, though, considering Marji's struggles through the lens of her unique contexts, changes the reading of her struggles entirely. Petrone and Lewis (2012) argue that no universal adolescent truths actually exist; rather, such common or dominant social narratives can even work to "sensationalize, uncritically celebrate, tokenize, or romanticize adolescence and adolescents" (p. 258). Still, Noah's talk supports that while, in many ways, it is impossible for readers to fully understand Marji's story, seeking to broaden and garner knowledge about the lived experiences of others is a desirable reading outcome—just one that should be pursued more critically.

Along the same vein, Liza later feels she experiences empathy for Marji, a phenomenon described by Westby (2022) that occurs when readers experience window texts; they feel a sense of participation in the human experience and, therefore, make connections even to unfamiliar content. Chisholm et al. (2017) describe this phenomenon as emotive empathy, through which readers apply their own experiences and beliefs to unfamiliar contexts as a way of caring about them. Hazel pushes back on this talk, though, saying that only sympathy can be achieved in learning about another's experience; however, true empathy comes from experience–the marriage of knowledge and understanding (Miller & Silfkin, 2010). Jones and Clarke (2007) argue that in this instance, disconnection-making instead could foster a more nuanced reading, whereas

connection-making alone gives way to superficial readings that hinder critical talk. This said, social perspective-taking, defined by Gehlbach et al. (2012) as "the process through which a perceiver discerns the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of one or more targets" (p. 2), is a widely encouraged practice in teacher preparation and k-12 schools alike. Social perspective-taking promotes appreciating diverse perspectives and imagining how others might perceive information uniquely, much like the TCs in this study did when imagining their future instructional decisions and when considering how to anticipate the needs of their future students. Westby (2022) connects the notion of social perspective-taking to the metaphor of books as "sliding glass doors," explaining that when students encounter diverse books, they are able to step into lives unlike their own, encountering new cultures, values, practices, experiences, and embodying the perspective of others. This practice, Westby (2022) explains, helps readers problematize which perspectives are privileged in literature.

Warren and Hotchkins (2014) call for caution when dealing with empathy, though (McCausland, 2020). They say it is essential for someone practicing empathy to distinguish their own feelings from those of the individual who actually had the experience. Failing to do so, they explain, can lead to an outcome they conceptualized as false consciousness, which undermines authenticity and can result in the listener's–the person attempting to exercise empathy–egotism as they assume knowledge about one's experiences, particularly those of people who have been historically marginalized or oppressed (Miller & Tanner, 2018; Rogers & Mosley, 2008). In this case, the person attempting to exercise empathy can center themselves and their needs upon hearing the speaker's or sharer's narrative. Warren and Hotchkins (2014) situate this phenomenon within critical pedagogy by explaining that when false empathy occurs, despite positive

intentions of helping, dominant voices are uplifted and marginalized voices are minimized. Warren and Hotchkins (2014) call this the Whiteness of good intentions, which reinforces saviorism, particularly in regard to adolescents essentialized as at-risk (Jupp et al., 2016; Matias & Mackey, 2016).

False consciousness (Warren & Hotchkins, 2014) is exceedingly more likely in contexts of Whiteness. Practicing empathy and connection to a text without recognizing the White spaces within which such conversations are taking place fails to sufficiently exercise critical literacy. In Tim's book club, for example, he abandons potential critical discussion in favor of a topic that would be more universal to the speakers in his group. The assumed universality, though, is a vehicle for Whiteness. Readers of socially dominant identities are used to seeing their identities, stories, and experiences represented in literature and popular culture. Such historically maintained representation contributes to an assumption, of members of dominant identity groups, that the experiences associated with dominant identities are a universal meter stick or norm—that they're the set of issues everyone experiences. That those issues, experiences, relationships, and feelings are, then, "normal." Further, this cycle of representation contributes to a belief that identities and experiences which fall outside those maintained as dominant are deviants from the "norm." So, when readers talk about standardized or normed experiences like adolescence, they are referring to a specific version of adolescence—one rooted in Whiteness. Since the representation of adolescence in media, in this case literature, have so long replicated the story of growing up through the lens of what it means to grow up White, non-White experiences have been systemically silenced. Beyond missing an opportunity to discuss, for example, how Junior's experience of adolescence offers a counter narrative, Tim privileged his White peers' sense of access to

the conversation by way of personal experience, which preserved their comfort in evading critical talk about experiences they couldn't personally relate to or understand. This move also relieved his White group members of the potential discomfort that accompanied being the target audience of a text about systemic racism and oppression. It alleviated them of questioning their role in oppressive systems and their responsibilities in acting.

In Noah's case, he referenced the universality of a coming of age—an experience many believe to be shared by all adolescents alike. Beyond lending itself to an essentialized portrayal of adolescence shared by society at large, this stance also ignores the omnipresent context of Whiteness. When TCs talk about universality of adolescence or coming of age, certainly there exist physical and social changes young people experience that are shared by others. The notion of universality needs complication, though. The version of the "coming of age" that most refer to is based upon standards, experiences, and patterns of White individuals. In other words, experiences in growing up White versus growing up non-White could look quite different; therefore, when readers encounter adolescent characters and engage with their adolescence, they cannot do so critically, if they strip away the complexities of characters growing up in non-dominant positionalities. Identities that deviate from White norms and standards (Nayak, 2007) are already suppressed in a lack of curricular representation in k-12 classrooms. Further, the voices that express non-normative experiences about growing up have always been silenced but are being increasingly repressed in public school curricula at present, due to the many active sociopolitical factors impacting teachers and students today.

Emotions and Vulnerability

Other factors that informed my reading and interpretation of TC talk stemmed from the presence and influence of emotion and vulnerability in TC discussions. While the review of literature discussed that sometimes, emotions can surface in TC talk via silence due to discomfort (Diaz et al., 2021) or wanting to maintain professional niceness (Bissonnette, 2016), Schieble et al. (2020) link emotionality and vulnerability with silence when TCs feel unsure of how to progress the conversation forward or as a protective maneuver. Returning to Tim's book club, it is also possible that emotion and vulnerability were factors in his peers choosing silence. Perhaps, for example, Tim opted to pivot the conversation from alcoholism to transferring schools also to maintain the emotional comfort of his peers. Schieble et al. (2020) explain that students often "conflat[e] safety with comfort and retrea[t] from challenges that [arise] in discussion" (p. 20). Scholars (Dunn, 2022; Thein et al., 2015; Zembylas, 2002) explain that similarly to talk, emotions are also co-constructed socially and culturally (Rose-Dougherty et al., 2024). Because speakers across contexts develop an understanding of cultural norms within them—from broad, like education to narrow, like a book club conversation—emotional rules begin to form for how speakers perceive they should behave (Zembylas, 2002). Dutro (2013) explains that in a classroom settings, students receive messaging about cultural norms that mark some sharing—of personal experiences and emotions—as sanctioned and others banned. So, in the contexts of a book club conversation between TCs in a methods course, it is possible that Tim's group members felt the emotional rules of a professional environment prohibited them from responding emotionally or being overtly vulnerable when personal topics like addiction and grief surfaced. Dutro (2013) characterizes this phenomenon as disequilibrium, or the disruption of balance experienced when someone discloses personal and painful information. "We should,"

she explains, “be knocked off balance, sense the room tipping, by stories of loss, pain, absence” (p. 309). Beyond discomfort, of the sharer or the listener(s), though, Dutro (2013) maintains the potential-packed moment in literacy learning when trauma is explored and the individual who experienced it, with peers as a sounding board, can rewrite traumatic storylines in one’s own life.

Emotions and vulnerability also surfaced in the Methods course as TCs considered the needs of their current students. George, a teacher of record, worried that the traumatic plot points in *PTI* (2007) could compound the daily lived trauma his students had previously written about to him about in their Writer’s Notebooks. He felt a sense of responsibility when carefully weighing his instructional choices, particularly around asking his students to engage with emotional or vulnerable talk and writing prompts. Having been privy to his students’ accounts of trauma, he felt ethically conflicted when prompting them to continue digging into their trauma within the classroom contexts of power. For example, he as the teacher has inherent power, as established by social positioning of teachers versus students (Freire, 1968), in that he can choose the talk and writing prompts his students will engage with. He has social capital in being “in charge,” and perhaps, even if they didn’t feel comfortable, his students might disclose their traumatic experiences to satisfy his expectations. He also possesses power in tying grades to student participation and engagement with talk and writing prompts about trauma. With these considerations in mind, he questioned the ethics of asking students to talk about their trauma and be vulnerable with peers in doing so.

Simultaneously, George wanted to resist stepping into the problematic role of the teacher counselor/therapist, observed by Petrone and Lewis (2012), which operates on the view of adolescents as directionless, lacking in problem-solving skills, devoid of

emotional intelligence, and in need of saving by an adult. In the context of talk and writing responses to prompts in ELA, Tayles (2021) describes how an on-demand recount of traumatic experiences can turn into a confession of trauma, which can result in chronic stress for students. Though connecting with a text is generally positioned as positive, the type of connection and the complicated nature of such connections can, potentially, make seeing oneself in the text a painful experience. Schieble et al. (2020) explain the damage that can be caused by seeing oneself, one's family, or one's community represented in traumatic or harmful ways in texts. Durand and Jiménez-García (2018) further critique damaging or problematic representations of identity groups in literature that reify social stereotypes and endorse dominant ideology. Another scenario in which mirror texts can cause pain for adolescent readers stems from reading about a character's shared traumatic experience, which can result in the unearthing of painful memories or shame.

Tayles (2021) synthesizes ideas of writing scholars across the field in defining trauma in the ELA classroom as "the acute traumatic experiences that some students confess or describe in their writings, such as a tragic car accident, the unexpected death of a friend or family member, or a heinous act of violence" (p. 101). As Tayles continues to nuance the definition of trauma against the evolving work of writing scholars, Dutro (2013) explains the presence of incomprehensibility explored by trauma scholars, which insists on the insufficiency of language to entirely convey the experience of trauma. Still, Dutro (2017) maintains that while perilous, the "potential of trauma" (p. 326) in literacy events lies in allowing readers to feel validated, connected to texts and the world around them, and connected to fellow students as the critical witnessing of one reader can inspire others to open up, work through, and experience growth from traumatic seeds (Dutro &

Cartun, 2015). Tayles (2021) compares the emotional responses to texts and the traumatic lived experiences of others as disequilibrium, harkening back to Dutro's (2013) work, which describes the sensation of wobbling; however, such wobble gives way to processing one's own narratives, challenging the narratives of trauma in literature, defying assumptions about the emotional capacities of young readers–and for young readers, defying assumptions held about themselves and their peers–and redefining what is deemed both accepted and valuable through the lens of learning.

Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen (2015) converse with Tayles's (2021) notion of wobbling by conceptualizing a "pose, wobble, flow" framework for teaching. While the authors (Garcia & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015) situate "wobble" within the context of culturally proactive teaching, I see a connection to talking about emotions, vulnerability, and trauma in literacy learning. Similarly, Fecho (2011) describes wobble as a natural occurrence that is a frequent and essential part of everyday life. Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen (2015) describe the concept of wobble, for teachers, via the metaphor of yoga: first, practitioners assume a certain pose, designed to strengthen or serve them. As they develop their practice, they move onto harder postures. Inevitably, in pursuing more difficult shapes, they experience "wobble" as "a guaranteed and necessary part of the growth process" (Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen, 2015, p. 3). When yogis persist through the wobble, they experience a satisfying flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), within which they focus so intently on their movement that time disappears. Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen (2015) extend the metaphor to teaching. Like yogis, teachers take up pose-like stances that fuel professional growth. This might look, for new teachers especially, like a student asking a surprising question, a student offering an unpredicted answer or opinion, a disagreement between students, or feeling unprepared in one's

teacher education program for the myriad of difficult teaching scenarios that daily arise. Inevitably, in teaching interactions or in reflecting upon their professional growth, teachers experience wobble that informs their journey and guides their steps toward a more balanced, composed flow.

Again, though Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen (2015), in their text, situate wobble within the context of culturally proactive teaching, I argue that readers, both TCs and 5-12 students, may experience a similar wobble when emotionally charged topics surface in texts. If they are able to tolerate the wobble long enough to make meaning—individually or through co-construction—garner information that validates their experiences, or discover new parts of how they process traumatic experiences, they can ultimately find a less painful and turbulent state of navigating trauma in texts and in their worlds. In Tim's case, if emotion and vulnerability were the cause of his peers' silence, they, as a group, did not withstand the wobble long enough for it to lead to more critical talk. On the other hand, viewing Tim's book club talk through the lens of Whiteness, the group might have benefitted greatly from the discomfort of wobble. Rather than jumping quickly to a conversation topic that was more easily relatable for group members or that evaded deeper critical conversation, what might have happened if Tim sat, for a bit, in the wobble? Where might the conversation have gone, had Henry felt able to contribute the ideas he described later, independently, in his written reflection about feeling called into the text as a member of the text's intended White audience? Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen (2015) describe the affordances of such moments—they highlight the messy realities of teaching and learning, they illustrate the non-linear and constant nature of growth, and they demystify future inevitable moments of wobble as they become easier and easier over time. Eventually, as comfort around critical topics is developed, practitioners not

only anticipate but welcome wobble (Garcia & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015) as an essential part of their teaching and continuous learning.

In George's case, he worried that the wobble would, for his students and based upon his knowledge of their proximity to trauma, reopen painful wounds that could do more harm than good. While scholars agree that inviting, in an intentional way, trauma into the ELA classroom holds potential for positive learning outcomes, George's hesitation stemmed from ideas that Tayles (2021) synthesizes as retraumatization. It is also noteworthy to consider the intersectional identities of TCs and k-12 students who are being asked to share about trauma. In George's classroom placement, 100% of his students are males who identify as Black. While his students may feel more comfortable sharing personal narratives with individuals with shared racial and, to some extent perhaps, cultural identities, often, in more heterogeneous student populations or student populations that are mostly White—as teacher preparation contexts often are—readers of certain identities may experience a higher risk or less ease in sharing their trauma. For example, if a reader is responding to traumatic representations of themselves, their families, or their communities in YAL, especially if they are of historically and socially oppressed groups, they inherently are more vulnerable in sharing experiences with those who may not understand or who may weaponize narratives of trauma to confirm racial or cultural stereotypes. In a classroom like George's, his students' identities make them vulnerable to other types of curricular violence (Jones, 2020) like the popular and pervasive portrayal of young, Black boys falling victim to police violence or committing crime in YAL. Mbalia (2021) insists on the importance of Black Boy Joy and its representation in classroom libraries as a counternarrative to those told time and time again in texts we hand young readers.

Tayles (2021) strikes balance for teachers between challenging students to explore potentially traumatic experiences and memories with avoiding the risk of retraumatization; the teacher should take on the role of the buffering adult. This approach positions classroom teachers not as therapists or saviors but, rather, as individuals with a nuanced awareness of how trauma shows up in student writing. This teacher is someone who maintains professional boundaries and someone who models how high-quality writing instruction can work to, though it may never achieve fully, name or give language to traumatic experiences, validate identities and experiences related to trauma, and provide outlets for processing through trauma via self-actualizing and healing-oriented writing. A certain shortcoming in this study—one I would center in future research around teachers facilitating critical talk in early career classrooms—stems from the lack of focus on emotion in teacher preparation programs (Rose-Dougherty et al., 2024). Scholars explain the agentive nature of emotion in co-constructed talk as TCs make sense of interactions with colleagues and students. I see a connection in this line of inquiry to how emotions weigh on how TCs talk about both texts and instructional choices they feel comfortable or uncomfortable making as new teachers, particularly in the wake of recent legislation limiting what teachers can talk about with students—some decisions, of which, directly undermine the very reasons TCs set out to be educators in the first place. This connection makes me think back to Liza and her identity map. She said that being a Black educator was at the heart of who she was. This aspect of her identity was central to why she wanted to teach and who she hoped to reach, in terms of her future students. Hearing her, then, pivot at the end of the semester when talking about wanting to teach in Texas and deciding that meant she couldn't talk at all about race in the classroom felt like a sticking point.

In future projects, I'd like to drill down into how Liza felt about a pivot like this. It is understandable, for example, that she and other educators may have to make concessions about what they teach and how, in light of their sociopolitical perceptions; however, to shift stances on such foundational aspects of identity, to me, warrants further investigation into what TCs experience emotionally when making these decisions. Additionally, Liza's talk ushers in an additional topic of discussion—the pervasiveness of sociopolitics, disussed in the next section. Overall, talking about emotional or vulnerable topics, though it can be generative in the reading process, is messy and complicated for TCs and students alike. As mentioned in this section, scholars support the capacity of emotions to directly impact how TCs talk about critical topics; however, existing research on how emotions impact TC talk across teacher preparation contexts is underdeveloped. In this study, emotions weighed on TC talk, as did the looming pressures of sociopolitical forces, discussed more thoroughly in the following section.

The Pervasiveness of Sociopolitics

In situating the study, I overviewed the unique sociopolitical context within which the study took place—one that establishes the relevance of a study on teacher talk and critical conversations as legislation actively threatens to remove them. In the study's findings, I illustrated TC perceptions of that landscape. Whether or not TC perceptions accurately matched the legislation in process or passed for what they are and are not allowed to discuss with students in their classrooms, their perceptions certainly colored the ways in which they talked about taking up, or not, critical conversations in their classrooms. Perhaps the most stark example of TC perceptions of sociopolitics seeping into their talk and instructional stances was the whole-class conversation about the sexual content in *PTI* (2007). In this whole-class forum, critical talk was thwarted as TCs

volleyed turns to talk. Discursively, many factors influenced the exchange—from emotions, to identities, to posturing talk moves—but the stakes of the conversation, the pressure on TC talk that drove out nuance and pushed TCs into stark, divided stances, resulted from uncertainty around TCs' rights, freedoms, and very roles as educators.

On one hand, Levi's stance lacked criticality in arguing to entirely disregard parents as stakeholders in students' education. This stance is not only unrealistic in that the parents or guardians will always play a role in their students' education and will be, therefore consequential to teachers, but further, Levi's positionality as a full-time teacher of record certainly informed this stance. In having nearly a year of experience as a classroom teacher by the time this conversation took place, Levi did have lived experience in the teaching force. Though one year is not a lengthy amount of time, he was able to make more definitive and confident claims than, for example, the undergraduate students in the course who had taught maximally two lessons under the supervision of a host teacher by this point in the Methods course. Many TCs reflected that his stance did seem unrealistic and oversimplified; however, undergraduate and MAT TCs throughout the semester positioned in-service teachers as "real" teachers and considered their seemingly seasoned opinions with more weight, because of this.

On the other hand, Ellie's stance, also lacking nuance, seemed to get stronger and stronger as opposing voices committed to their claims. Interestingly enough, though, when reflecting without the gaze and co-construction of peers, Ellie wrote that she appreciated the text's themes about identity and imagined she would use it in her future classroom, as it would humanize the experience of adolescence and resonate with her students. Whatever caused Ellie to pivot so drastically in her stance, this conversation impacted the reflective writing and talk of the other TCs in the course throughout the

remainder of the semester, as well. The TCs who were not teaching full-time began to second-guess their stances to welcome critical texts and topics into the classroom, since the full-time teachers likely knew best, being in classrooms all day long. Throughout the semester, undergraduate and MAT students referred to the in-service teachers as "actual" teachers. In her interview with me at the end of the semester, Cindy called the conversation a shame, as it became too narrowly about winning a debate, versus admitting the merit of the text beyond the sexual content. Similarly, in his interview, George critiqued the Discourses of American Christianity that had crept, unchecked, into the conversation and that advocated a harmful abstinence-only ideology–one that is not only damaging to adolescents but that has no place in secular school settings (Hadley, 2022). Another interesting lens to hold up to the talk that emerged from the whole-class conversation is that of TC identity and which identities may enjoy more ease of talking about topics like sexuality in whole-class forums, as well as teaching about sexuality in k-12 settings. For example, in the whole-class discussion, George had no problem pushing back on Ellie's ideas. Further, he had little reservation about teaching *PTI* (2007) to students due to its sexual content (he was, in fact, teaching this text to his students during the study but, again, hesitated for the traumatic nature of the story, rather than the sexual content). Later, in his interview, George passionately expressed his disdain toward the progression of Ellie's ideas. Despite this strong stance, though, he conceded that he should have refrained from too strongly attempting to steer a conversation about sexuality in his position as a White male. Here, George recognized his positionality in regard to his ease of participating in the conversation, discussing how his views might have looked different, had he been a member of an identity group historically and socially repressed in terms of exploring and voicing their sexuality.

In the whole-class debate, Book Club 3's interaction was more complicated. All three members of Group 3—Cindy, Ellie, and Tiffany—identified as women. While Ellie's stances were the strongest, Tiffany often interjected to signal her agreement with Ellie, again, contrasting with stances Group 3 had taken in the small-group book club. Cindy, who was mostly silent during the whole-class talk, later reflected that the conversation was a runaway, straying from the group's original opinions. There is something to be said, though, for an all-female group of teachers feeling heightened conflict in adopting curricular materials that feature sexual content. Engebretson (2016) and Montecinos & Neilson (2004) explain that TCs predict adolescents will interact with and respond to them based upon gender. Robinson (2000) explains the legitimacy of TCs who identify as female feeling unsure of how to approach sexual content in the classroom, and it stems from a long-standing tradition of male colleagues, administrators, and even students sexualizing women in secondary schools handed down through "dominant modern Western discourse[s] of authority" (p. 76), which are based upon White masculine behaviors and values. Robinson (2000) exposes a pervasive treatment of women in educational spaces, despite the fact that women have always comprised the majority of the teaching force, that undermines their authority and silences their reports of being objectified by males in the workplace, all of which may well persist in the decision making of teachers who identify as women as they imagine introducing sexual topics to adolescent male students.

Another important observation in noting the polarizing stances taken up by TCs in the whole-class discussion—particularly with Ellie, in pivoting entirely away from stances in her individual writing and small-group talk versus her talk whole-class talk—is the different contexts within which the talk occurred. For example, when in front of a

class and experiencing push-back from other TCs, Ellie dug in her heels on her stance, even though it had migrated far from her original opinion. In Book Club 1, she felt *PTI* (2007) would be identity affirming for her students, and in Book Club 3, she felt she could teach *The Poet X* (2007) with a simple warning to students about sexual content. In the full-class discussion, though, she used sexual content as the primary meter stick for outlawing texts she'd use in her instructional canon. In Cindy's and George's cases, they had no problem stating bluntly both their opinions on *PTI* (2007) and on how the whole-class discussion progressed. Certainly, these different forums acted upon TC talk. Harkening back to Johnstone's (2018) heuristic, participants impacted other participants (and vice versa) both in this conversation and in discussions afterward, as preservice teachers who self-identified as not "actual" teachers felt their opinions became muddied. Further, TCs' willingness to speak candidly in smaller, perhaps lower-risk scenarios is reflective of the study's limitations. Beyond observing the discoursal shifts across talk contexts and theorizing why they occurred, the data collection methods did not account for the possibility that TC stances might obscure my understanding of how they actually felt and what they actually thought. Doubtlessly, though, TC talk in this whole-class conversation showed their clear consideration of where they, as educators, fit into the current sociopolitical landscape. TCs specifically mentioned parents and their involvement in curricular decisions (Koganzon, 2023; Rehn, 2023), demonstrating their awareness of heightened teacher surveillance (Brass, 2015; Sotirovska & Vaughn, 2023). These pressures came to bear on how TCs perceived their authority, stripping down the sexual humor of *PTI*'s (2007) protagonist and assigning such teaching under the purview of a biology teacher. Overall, I argue TC perceptions of impending scrutiny acted in their

position-taking in this conversation more so than it would have if such sociopolitical tensions did not exist.

As TCs teased out the texts and topics that would be relevant or relatable for who they believed their future students to be, a common meter stick in deciding which texts, in particular, to adopt became the notion of what was "appropriate" for middle and high school students. In today's sociopolitical climate, who determines what is "appropriate" for students to learn now involves, more than ever, parents and lawmakers (Appleman, 2022; Koganzon, 2023). Because of this sociopolitical shift, what was "appropriate" or not added a complicating factor for TCs, especially around sexuality explored in YAL. Some argued that YAL texts read in book clubs, despite containing sexual content, were still appropriate for classroom use because the book focused more, overall, on important systemic issues for readers and held value beyond tangential sexual content. They positioned sexuality as a normal part of adolescence and a common feature of YAL novels. On the other hand, some argued that books containing any sexual content were unfit for classroom use, on the basis of inappropriateness.

Many of the conversations TCs had about sexuality stemmed from reading *PTI* (2007). When sexuality arose in conversation, TCs nearly immediately began trying on different ways of determining if the sexuality at hand was allowable, not just by their own standards but in consideration of parents, administrators, and legislators. In Noah's book club conversation, he brought up the topic of masturbation, joked about by the book's protagonist. While Noah dismissed sexual jokes of the narrator as "silly," he turned to the status of a banned book to measure what makes a book banned or challenged, if a banned book is off-limits in the classroom, and if a book's presence on the banned books list undermines the book's overall merits. Hazel, instead, turned to measuring the sexual

content against grade levels, arguing that perhaps it would be appropriate in high school versus middle school. Hazel continued measuring, talking through the disproportionality or weight of the issues in the book; sexuality measured much less important, focal, or impactful than the text's bigger issues like violence or racism. Immediately, her group members took up this idea and concluded that they would teach the text to students. *PTI* (2007) is currently #8 on the "Top 13 Most Challenged Books of 2022" list—a list that features over 2,500 book titles—on the "Banned and Challenged Books" page of the *American Library Association's* website (American Library Association) for profanity and claims of sexually explicit content. Such claims, however, do not come from the American Library Association (ALA) itself; rather, ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom annually compiles data on book challenge reports in libraries nationally. In 2022 alone, ALA documented 1,269 requests to censor library books, an all-time record and nearly double the amount of requests made the previous year (American Library Association). Dallacqua (2022) explains that many of these requests come from parents and parent groups who do have material influence over teachers, administrators, districts, and communities, even sometimes garnering funding and support of political leaders and organizations. Despite its inclusion on the list, *PTI* (2007) is suggested for use in the local school district's curriculum as an anchor text for ninth grade ELA, to the surprise of TCs in the Methods course. This school district is the community partner within which Methods undergraduate and MAT TCs conduct their observations and where residency and Alt Cert TCs teach full-time.

Aligning with Noah's observation–and the rationale for book banning on the ALA website–that the sexual content of the story earned more traction with objecting audiences than the larger issues of oppression, addiction, violence, and racism, Dallacqua

(2022) noted that most parental challenges of YA texts mention concerns around sexual content. Further, most challenges object to texts that feature characters or are written by authors of historically minoritized and oppressed identities (Dallacqua, 2022). Again, the context of Whiteness persists, as parents and legislators target any literature in classrooms that is non-normative and, therefore, non-White. In other words, normative, White voices have always been allowed in classrooms, so much so that White society has deemed them "traditional" or canonical. Not only does this position non-normative voices and stories as "other," but the call for outlawing such voices and stories positions them as taboo or controversial when, in reality, Whiteness is what we should be positioning as grotesque (Nayak, 2007). Regarding other non-normative identities, namely non-heterosexual or non-binary identities, Wesley White and Ali-Khan (2020) explain that because of a restrictive climate and unprecedented teacher scrutiny (Cook, 2021), many teachers feel uncomfortable broaching the topic of sexuality with students at all, ultimately choosing silence but inadvertently creating a void of information. In silencing honest or organic conversations about sexuality within the context of literature and within the norms of a classroom setting, teachers leave students with fewer or less quality resources from which to learn about sex and sexuality–popular culture, the internet, or other unregulated, unmediated forums (Wesley White & Ali-Khan, 2020).

Though conceding that he understood why the sexual content of the book was the reason it was on banned and challenged lists, Noah did clarify that he did not believe the sexuality in the book should disqualify it as a rich learning resource, particularly for its capacity to offer representation of experiences young people have and its ability to humanize and normalize parts of growing up, even if those parts include sexual exploration. In response, he and his peers talked critically through finding balance–on

one hand, they do not wish to essentialize adolescents by assuming that they are all experiencing sexual questions and wonderings, and on the other, they do believe their students to either have experienced sexual curiosity or, at the very least, have already had exposure to sexual content on social media, or in popular culture. Here, the group actively and critically pushed back on otherwise dominant social narratives that all teenagers are all rebellious, hormonal, and sex-driven (Sarigianides, 2012; Sulzer & Thein, 2016); yet, they attempted to build in space for considering the natural nature of sex as a part of growing up, for some. In her reflective writing, Hazel revealed an important shift in her thinking; while she used to believe that she should shield her students from texts that stereotyped adolescents, she realized that she could instead give them the tools to deconstruct those problematic depictions when they inevitably arose. Hazel called specifically on Elizabeth Bishop's (2014) argument that everything–reading, writing about, talking about–related to literature is and has always been political and that no curriculum is ever neutral. Through this lens, Hazel realized that to maintain silence around stereotypes, as well as conversations about sex, sends just as powerful a message as engaging with such ideas.

Hazel's talk here echoes back to comments made by TCs about their perceptions of the nested and layered sociopolitical contexts they would be stepping into as new teachers, all of which would influence their instructional decision making. Many TCs mentioned feeling pressured to remain apolitical or neutral in their classroom teaching. They also conflated being political with being partisan, feeling that taking a civic stance on issues of human rights would indoctrinate students by revealing their positions or would push a partisan agenda. Such conflations are undoubtedly the result of the increased scrutiny of teachers and teaching practices in recent years. Falter and Kerkhoff

(2018) explain that TCs are often made to feel as though neutrality means not taking a side on issues and maintaining the belief that all opinions are equally valid and right; however, it is the job of teacher educators to reframe for TCs the difference between partisan and political (Hess & McAvoy, 2015). For example, if a TC chooses not to discuss racism in fear this stance is political, then, conversely, not taking a stance on racism is political still in electing silence (Falter & Kerkhoff, 2018). Teacher educators, then, must empower TCs to determine what is partisan–how teachers should not tell students what to think in regard to partisan-affiliated stances–versus what is political–the civic responsibilities and universal truths the teacher and learning community live by, such as condemning racism or oppression via action or language of any identities of students in the learning space.

In imagining, critically or less so, who their future clientele would be and how to choose appropriate texts and topics that would be relatable for them, TCs couched many of their imagined instructional choices in what they conceptualized to be the "role" of the teacher, within the aforementioned sociopolitical scene. More specifically, TCs conceptualized this role based upon the authority, or lack thereof, they perceived of the classroom teacher. George, Levi, and Erica positioned the teacher as "expert" in various contexts when justifying texts they would or would not elect to teach in their classrooms. They mentioned feeling out of depth teaching the historical context of Persepolis (2007) because they were not history teachers, and they felt uncomfortable teaching a graphic novel because they hadn't been art majors. Though they did not reject teaching the text entirely, they felt intimidated by responsibly teaching the sociopolitical, sociocultural, and historical contexts without having cultural knowledge. Beyond the contexts of the story, they struggled to imagine feeling confident to teach the craft of the text as a

graphic novel, lacking expertise in terms of the artistry involved in a graphic novel. Tiffany, Cindy, and Ellie conceptualized the role of the teacher as someone who interprets but ultimately follows prescriptive district curriculum, especially in light of referenced legislation that forbids certain aspects of critical conversations in ELA classrooms. In whole-class discussions, preservice versus inservice teachers grappled with which conversations, in response to reading YAL, fell under the purview or authority of parents versus teachers or biology teachers versus ELA teachers, and in individual interviews at the close of the semester, TCs discussed the general areas of instructional decision making that developed clarity or muddiness over the semester.

In a growing culture of teacher surveillance (Cook, 2021; Kane & Staiger, 2008), it is logical that emerging teachers now, more than ever, are paying special attention to being able to justify the choices they make for topics and texts explored in their classroom, potentially against challenges from colleagues in Peer Learning Communities (PLCs), from parents, from administrators, and even from legislators. Of course, it is essential that TCs emerge from preparation programs having high content area knowledge and developed disciplinary literacy skills; however, the notion taken up by TCs to have to know every part of any sociopolitical, socioemotional, or historical context in order to incorporate a text into their classrooms is a direct consequence of society's growing practice of placing teachers under a microscope. Additionally, the expert teacher role subscribes closely to the banking model of education, which Freire (1968) describes as the inverse of critical, problem-posing education. Instead, problem-posing education would encourage teachers and students to be co-investigators of social, historical, and political information surrounding a story, seeking a diverse and well-rounded representation of sources and ideas as they engage deeply in disciplinary

literacy–in a reading experience that mirrors the responsible reading of critical consumers and readers in adulthood (Janks, 2014). With graphic novels, for example, though teachers might need to research genre and medium-specific craft moves to add to their students' vocabularies when discussing the text, Cook & Kirchoff (2017) highlight the familiar literacy skills that still apply to and are enhanced by graphic novel reading: analysis of "complex literary themes, sophisticated metaphors, dynamic characterization, and commentary on social, cultural, and historical issues" (p. 76).

To limit students to the exploration only of narratives, characters, identities, and experiences that align with the expertise of any one teacher is a serious injustice to students in ELA classrooms. Diaz et al. (2021) theorize that feeling unprepared, attempting to appear the expert, or feeling uncomfortable or fearful in facilitating critical conversations cause new teachers especially to choose silence, which in many cases functions to perpetuate normative values in the classroom. Diaz et al. (2022) refer to "unregulated moments" (p. 331), within which teachers may be unsure of how to respond–in this case, for example, the imagined moment where a student asks a contextual question the teacher may be unable to answer (Ellis & Goering, 2023). Silence may seem, in some scenarios, like side-stepping questions or conversation that could lead to discomfort or disagreement, or it could, in other scenarios, take the form of evading such discomfort by excluding text selections entirely. Intimidating as such moments may seem, a truly prepared educator is not one that is able to predict and answer every question raised by students; rather, a prepared educator is one who can teach students how to, eventually, seek answers on their own and, further, view those answers through a critical and empowering lens.

In a similar way to how TCs were inclined to "sort" responsibilities into role-based categories–some content was designated for the history teacher, some for the art major–this notion of teasing out the ELA teacher's role and accompanying authority to make classroom decisions or broach certain topics continued. As Levi mentioned previously, his authority as the ELA teacher was equated to the prescriptive curriculum and how his PLC members wanted to teach it. As a new teacher especially, he was not going to push back against these established norms and ways of teaching. Cindy and Tiffany talked about other perceived restraints on their instructional decision making, including parents (in response to conversations about religion in *Persepolis,* 2007) and constraining legislation that forbids critical conversations in classrooms. In reflecting upon the many perceived obstacles in choosing topics and texts for students that would evade pushback from school, community, and government stakeholders, Tiffany admitted to actually craving standards, using them as backing or support for her instructional decision making when inevitably questioned, rather than her authority or expertise as the classroom teacher. In light of and due to the fear of the scrutiny Tiffany anticipated, she felt she needed to adhere strictly to standards in direct opposition to Appleman's (2022) discussion of good teaching, which requires a science and art of teaching beyond the sterilized and flattened approach of standards. Across these examples, TCs illustrate their perception of a new teacher's power and authority–it exists at the hands of colleagues, parents, and laws. Costigan (2017) explains the sociopolitical forces that thwart the enactment of criticality in ELA classrooms, from mandates created by non-teacher authorities who lack experiential knowledge of what happens and what is needed in classrooms; to mandate language that is confusing, in how it is written, meant to be interpreted, and expected to be enacted; to scruitny of what and how teachers should

instruct (Baker et al., 2010; Kane & Cantrell, 2010), undermining their knowledge and craft; to demands that are impossible to implement "as given the actual ecology of the ELA classroom" (p. 222).

Costigan (2017) points out the troubling direction that English teaching, as a field, is taking. He points out the nature of ELA curricular evolution and its increasingly "strange, counterintuitive, confusing, disheartening, and ineffective" (p. 223) reading and writing tasks that fail to mirror the literacy skills students will need in the "real" world (Costigan, 2017). Curricular evolution, stemming from a heightened focus on an alleged college and career readiness, has created a sense of objectivity in the ELA curriculum that fails to account for the multidimensional, intersectional, and increasingly complex identities of the human beings it claims to serve (Costigan, 2017). Such failures undermine the true purpose of ELA, which exists to "enhanc[e] student engagement with the artistic creations of literature, [to] enhanc[e] the imaginative expressions of writing, and with the development of critical perspectives about the ethical issues of our time" (Costigan, 2017, p. 224). Committing what Baker-Bell et al. (2017) termed symbolic linguistic and curricular violence–an allegiance to curricular documents over the needs of students as human beings–also disproportionately harms non-White students who are already systematically excluded from canonical texts and normative skillsets expressed in traditional curricular materials (Ellis & Goering, 2023; Jupp et al., 2016). Similarly, drawing attention to the systemic and intentional exclusion of non-White students in pedagogical decisions, McCausland (2020) calls a curriculum that accounts only for normative students as the White property of teacher education.

Implications

Schieble et al. (2020) synthesize questions of TCs in the field that both fueled the study's research questions and persisted in TC talk through the conclusion of the project:

> What if the school or community where I teach is unsupportive of talking about difficult topics such as racism? What if I misspeak, or am told I am trying to push my own political agenda? How do I facilitate constructive discussion of heated ideas amongst students? How do I create a space for students who are reluctant speakers or feel silenced? What do I do if students resist or get defensive? How do I make sure many voices are heard? (p. 1)

These questions illustrate the precarious position new teachers find themselves in, one that extends beyond text selection and instructional design. Now, TCs also have to consider the pushback they may receive simply by doing their jobs—introducing students to topics they feel, as trained professionals, are essential to student learning. The questions above were consistent with those discussed by TCs in the study, some uncertain of whether they could legally talk about systems of oppression, some unsure of whether or not they were expected to maintain neutrality, some arguing that apolitical teaching is impossible, and some unsure of how to reconcile who they wanted to or should be, as a teacher, with what they would be required to teach. TCs also revealed inconsistency in their positioning of young people—their current and future students. They wrestled with which topics and texts they believed adolescent readers would want to or had the capacity to tackle in the classroom. Overall, TCs in the study seemed to share the feeling Noah expressed in his end-of-semester interview, in regard to facilitating critical conversations: "I'm going to have to be far more prepared."

Noah's statement encompasses the connective tissue between the study's findings, as well as foregrounds the implications of the study, which are offered for teacher

educators. Broadly, there is more work to be done in preparing TCs to facilitate critical conversations in their teacher preparation coursework. More specifically, there exists a need for more intentionally studying and responding to TC talk as they engage in critical literacy events themselves. As I reflected previously, I anticipated the study's implications to revolve around action. I believed that the study's findings would point to where and why the critical literacy learning to praxis gap for new teachers occurred and how it might be fixed. In reality, though, when TCs engaged as students—reading and talking about YAL and how their instructional stances formed—their talk revealed an over reliance on relatability when endorsing texts, perpetuated deficit perspectives of adolescents, evaded opportunities for critical talk, and sometimes even contradicted itself as TCs pivoted opinions across diverse talk structures.

The study's implications put the findings and discussion back into conversation with the work of teacher educators in the field. I synthesize some concrete, practical approaches of teacher researchers that, were I to teach the Methods course again, I and others might rely upon to achieve what I believe to be a major takeaway from this project: a more intentional focus on critical TC talk. In discussing some concrete questions and activities offered by teacher researchers, I sprinkle throughout more broad foci that I believe teacher educators might consider theoretically when designing critical talk opportunities for TCs in methods courses, as well. Though these considerations come from a more aerial, rather than practical or concrete, perspective for teacher educators, I believe they are generative in framing how teacher educators may design critical talk exercises for TCs, both in how they model critical conversation facilitation and in how they ask TCs to reflect upon how they might facilitate similar discussions in their own future classrooms. These theoretical avenues locate where I believe additional or future

research, of my own and of others in the field, to be both hopeful and necessary as teacher researchers continue to drill down into how TC talk shows up in methods coursework.

Complicating TC Talk about Youth in Methods Courses

The Conceptualized "Adolescent." A major through-line in the study's findings was that TCs themselves adopted oversimplified views of future adolescent students, many of which subscribed to problematic social narratives that call for disruption. Such oversimplification revolved around the construction of the "adolescent" in TCs' minds, as well as the topics such adolescents were capable of conceptualizing and discussing with one another. As mentioned in the discussion, constructing adolescents and adolescence is fraught with un-critical missteps that can be disrupted in methods courses. In educational contexts where there is growing scrutiny around teachers' instructional decisions, TC talk around the choices they plan to make as new teachers is more crucial than ever; however, built in moments to practice criticality around these choices is essential. Implications for teacher educators lie in developing moments of reflexivity for TCs that might support them in identifying when they are perpetuating generalized stances that can trickle down into their teaching dispositions, policies, and practices. Sulzer and Thein (2019) highlight that one vehicle for challenging TCs to reflect upon their own positionalities, in relation to positioning adolescents and their capabilities to engage critically with texts, is giving TCs the tools to evaluate the literature they offer to students to begin with. Much can be learned, discussed, and interrogated when considering how the literature itself positions adolescents and to consider how one's personal beliefs about young readers align with or diverge from such depictions. Prompts for teacher preparation contexts include:

To what extent do portrayals of adolescence/ts in the story align with common

> understandings about adolescents' needs, desires, and abilities? To what extent do the portrayals of adolescence/ts raise questions about what is "normal" in adolescence? In what ways do young people's intersectional identities inform the progression of the story? How do these intersectional identities complicate common understandings about how youths fit into society? What situations, actions, or pieces of dialogue does the author use to mark a character as being an adolescent? How is adolescence as a social construct leveraged in these textual elements? In what ways does the narrative voice evoke ideas of adolescence/ts? How is this voice in conversation with various beliefs about the place of youths in society? (Sulzer & Thein, 2019, p. 169)

In this line of inquiry, Sulzer & Thein (2019) make an important observation that oftentimes, in imagining the needs and interests of future hypothetical adolescents (Lesko, 1996), TCs may perpetuate stereotypes or essentialized stories about youth (Sarigianides, 2012) by choosing YAL texts that also subscribe to and reify problematic images of young people (Sulzer & Thein, 2019). To these questions, Schieble et al. (2020) add, "What do these representations say about youth?" and "What knowledge is presented as common sense or normal?" (p. 94). Schieble et al (2020) characterize these types of questions as "disruptive talk moves," which "specifically involve the ways teachers and students interrupt and challenge stereotypes [and] deficit thinking" (p. 94). Sulzer and Thein (2016) write that essentialized views of youth deny their roles as actors and agents in society; in reality, they are creative, consequential, and active consumers and producers of culture with multidimensional, complex identities that inform how such consumption and production occurs. Tiffany, in her first book club meeting, pushed back on so easily categorizing (Bean & Stevens, 2007) young people in observing their

"crossing," or the appreciation, consumption, and production of popular culture across racial groups (e.g. Black youth watching anime). Tim, in his first book club reflective writing, also pushed back on youth-directed stereotypes, claiming that young people deserve more credit than they're given, particularly in their abilities to be cognizant of the world around them. Tim's audience for this statement was educators, specifically, conveying his belief that teachers too quickly make assumptions of young adults. Tim then considered the implications of such thinking for himself and other teachers, reflecting that while students should not be considered "lost causes," teachers themselves can only do so much to help. Though he worked to give due credit to adolescents in this reflective work, Tim still fell victim to the dominant narrative that adolescents need saving and that adults, or teachers in this case, do the saving. His language– "[teachers] are superhumans but not superheroes" –subscribed to the positioning of adolescents as needing to be saved by more capable, able, and superior adults.

Layering on the lens of power, Aronson (2017) problematizes White teachers perpetuating tropes of saviorism similar to those seen in popular culture but replicated in teacher preparation. Embodying the superhero trope–or, as Rick Breault (2009) coins it, the "superteacher" (p. 309) –especially for White teachers serving Students of Color, reifies surface-level allyship that ultimately instills White values upon Students of Color and perpetuates the ideology that teachers are "chosen ones" (Aronson, 2017, p. 51) who can save adolescents via commitment to education's causes. Or, in more covert cases, the superhero trope can take the form of white teachers embodying "passive activism," (Cook, 2021, p. 541), or low-risk, hands-off approaches to justice-oriented learning outcomes.

With the goal of disrupting age-specific stereotypes, Lesko (1996) calls for a repositioning of how society views young adults–they are not coming of age but are actively transitioning into adulthood. By middle and secondary grades, young people's transition into adulthood has already begun; therefore, their abilities, experiences, and identities are already forming into the very qualities and roles inhabited by adults. Petrone and Lewis (2012) call this separation the "othering" of adolescents and adolescence (p. 274)–the act of drawing stark boundaries between adolescence and adulthood in a way that associates adults with intelligence and composure, and conversely, adolescents with drama and instability. Instead of positioning adolescents as lacking wisdom and experience, Petrone and Lewis (2012) suggest re-envisioning them as in process of developing such adult-like skills and knowledge.

From a more theoretical perspective, several related lines in inquiry need further attention and exploration when studying TC talk in methods courses. The first is critiquing commonly adopted teaching stances and strategies. Similarly to how Sulzer and Thein (2016) shifted how TCs evaluate YAL—instead of asking TCs in their courses to project which topics and texts their hypothetical students would relate to or enjoy, they instead prompted them to evaluate authors' representation of adolescence/ts—a shift is necessary in the pervasive tendency of TCs to evaluate YAL based upon what is relatable. Certainly, Bishop's (1990) discussion of window and sliding glass door texts and Jones and Clarke's (2007) argument for the value of disconnection have long established a critical approach to reading via connection alone; however, I believe there is more work to be done here for teacher educators. Beyond destabilizing connection and relatability as accurate measures of a text's validity, TCs must contextualize such decisions within Whiteness. Certainly, reflection around TC positionality is happening in

methods coursework—TCs are often asked to consider their identities and how they interface with their instructional choices. Such reflection occurred in this study through the Intersectional Identity Maps. What warrants more investigation, I argue, is how teacher educators and TCs talk about the omnipresent context of Whiteness of education and how Whiteness reproduces via TC discussions. When forecasting what students will enjoy, how they will respond to texts, how they will learn, what they will care about, etc., TCs are often projecting normed, and therefore White, needs and preferences. Inadvertently, they may silence or repress the needs of students who do not fit the White normative mold. So, in the specific example of relating to texts, we need to press on which students we are imagining accommodating and advocating for, and which students we are leaving out. These are important conversations that I believe are still in progress in teacher education. Beyond asking TCs to consider their identities or, for many, their Whiteness, methods courses must address education as a White space and challenge TCs to consider how their own talk and instructional decisions uphold interests, comfort, and preference of White teachers and students alike.

The "Adolescent" Capacity to Talk about Sex and Sexuality. Deficit-based views of adolescents also persisted in the study in how TCs measured which reading and conversation topics their students would be able to "handle." The topics TCs identified feeling unprepared to discuss with students ranged from sexuality to systemic oppression to the behavior of problematic public figures. Throughout the course, choosing texts that featured sexual content cause pause for many TCs. Rather than talking critically through the affordances and drawbacks of incorporating such texts in classroom libraries, TCs often settled on avoiding such texts when planning for future instruction. Dallacqua (2019) offers teacher educators both valuable considerations and practical tools when

coaching TCs to take more nuanced, critical stances against texts that feature sexual content, particularly when that sexual content is the primary basis for a text to be challenged by parents or included on a banned and challenged text list.

First, it is essential to decenter the teacher's perspective as the only valuable one related to instructional decision making. Certainly, the teacher's comfort should be a considerable element in making decisions for one's current or future classroom; however, Dallacqua (2019) calls for collaborative decision making, which involves TCs digging more deeply into the concerns, priorities, and stances of student identities, school policies (i.e. legislation and handbooks), and community values to avoid omitting literature that disconnects from the teacher's identity, perhaps, but that might be humanizing for other stakeholders in the educational process. Teacher educators might also guide TCs toward concrete tools that can support them in a more critical decision making process–either toward or against texts that feature sexual content–such as the National Education Association (NEA) that can support teachers who facilitate critical discussions, the International Literacy Association (ILA) which has issued statements that support teachers providing texts to students that feature critical topics, and other educational organizations that have condemned censorship in classroom library selections, issuing statements that support teachers choosing what is appropriate to read in their classrooms (Dallacqua, 2019). One such statement is "The Students' Right to Read," published by the National Council of Teachers of English (National Council of Teachers of English). Teacher educators might utilize this statement not only to name the behavior displayed in TC talk above as censorship but, additionally, to empower TCs to include diverse literature in their classroom libraries. The statement takes a distinct stance on censorship. First, it argues that any text is vulnerable to criticism from various audiences and for

various reasons. Further, it explains that "classics traditionally used in English classrooms have been accused of containing obscene, heretical, or subversive elements" (National Council of Teachers of English) for years and continue to be used in the classroom, based upon their merit for exercising curricular skills. Facilitating opportunities for TCs to read such resources, respond via talk with peers in classrooms full-time, and write reflectively around ideas like censorship, sexuality in YAL, and book banning is a generative way for teacher educators to inform TC stances on topics and texts deemed "taboo" by various sociopolitical influences, as well as to support them in stepping into their own agency and authority in decision making, equipping them with intentional reasoning and support for if/when others challenge their choices in the classroom.

Related to the absolute stances taken by TCs in response to the sexual content in *PTI* (2007), Wesley White and Ali-Kahn (2020) problematize the minimal critical discussion adolescents in schools receive around sex and sexuality. They point out that federal education programs since the 1980s have espoused the abstinence-oriented, fear-based approach that George tied to religious motivations and critiqued in his semester interview. Wesley White and Ali-Kahn (2020) add that in the wake of such problematic stances like the absolute ones seen in the conversation about Alexie's novel, deeply heteronormative values on sex, romantic relationships, family structures, and self-expression are perpetuated, all in the name of abstinence-oriented initiatives that lack empirical evidence of efficacy. Linked to earlier and interconnected topics explored in the study's discussion, scholars equate an abstinence-only stance or an entire evasion of texts that mention or explore sex and sexuality with "structural silencing" (Wesley White & Ali-Kahn, 2020) that undermine honest and healthy discourses from which adolescent

students can benefit. Wesley White and Ali-Kahn (2020) offer considerations for teacher educators in conversations like these, arguing that most teachers, even those who consider themselves relatively progressive in the conversations they are willing to facilitate in the classroom, are rarely taught how to guide students through conversations about sex and sexuality that inevitably arise, in response to literature. The consequences of this lack of preparation surface in the form of fumbled responses that often reinforce heteronormative ideologies (Jupp et al., 2016; Nayak, 2007). To avoid this, teacher educators can model for TCs how to facilitate critical conversations around sex, offer external resources regarding how to navigate such conversations, and assign reflective writing that challenges TCs to think more deeply about how they might react or respond to students who introduce sexual content in response to texts in ELA (Wesley White & Ali-Khan, 2020).

The "Adolescent" Capacity to Confront Problematic Texts. TCs in the Methods course also perpetuated deficit perspectives of adolescents in measuring what topics they could handle, either on the basis of cognitive ability or behavioral maturity. For example, TCs discussed Sherman Alexie's involvement in the #MeToo movement, as he was accused of various accounts of sexual assault. On one hand, George reported his students were capable of asking critical questions about the creator and what that meant for their reading of the novel. On the other, Levi measured that only his honors or advanced students could engage with such complex, critical topics. Similarly to the TCs in this study, those in Cook et al.'s (2022a) work opted out of including *PTI* (2007) in their classroom materials, explaining they did not believe students would feel interested or prepared to broach the content matter of the novel. Such deficit positioning of students, Cook et al. (2022a) explain, excludes them from being treated as participants in a

democratic classroom (Applebee et al., 2003; Nystrand et al., 1997) that mirrors (Bishop, 1990) the topics and discussions they will doubtlessly encounter in society–discussions they must be prepared for, in order to make informed contributions and decisions regarding ethical implications and their own participation in oppressive systems (Lewison et al., 2002; Luke, 1995).

Deborah Appleman (2022) agrees, questioning, "Who are we punishing by withholding [Alexie's] work?" (p. 23). Appleman (2022) believes that her students, ones who would have benefitted by seeing their cultures represented in classroom texts, would have been the ones who ultimately missed out. Appleman (2022) adds to what she believes is the classroom teacher's role when choosing classroom texts, even those that are flawed: "we [...] need to think about the differences between simply excluding a potentially troublesome text from the curriculum and thinking about how it can be taught, troubled, and even disrupted" (p. 14). Supporting Cook et al.'s (2022a) stance that sheltering readers from challenging texts is impossible, Appleman believes in teachers and their abilities to equip their students to read texts critically–not if but when they encounter troubling or problematic texts. Some practical alternatives to avoiding flawed texts altogether include explaining to students why teachers choose not to teach them, offering alternative texts to complicate the narratives expressed in a problematic text (Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Warren & Hotchkins, 2015), teaching texts from theoretical perspectives, or challenging the notion of canceling texts and authors in the first place (Appleman, 2022). From a more theoretical perspective, these conversations also offer avenues for teacher researchers to pursue in future discussions. Harkening back to Garcia and O'Donnell-Allen's (2015) concept of wobble, it is important to continue not only studying TC wobble in talking through challenging topics—a few of which include

navigating YAL that features sexual content or YAL written by a controversial author—but additionally exploring, with TCs, the notion of wobble for students. Appleman (2022) basically explains wobble when she explains that adolescent readers will inevitably encounter texts that make them uncomfortable or knock them off balance. This wobble can be leveraged for learning, though. The decisions student readers make in moments of wobble is formative for how they develop critical literacy skills and stances toward what they read. Similarly, when TCs talk through the myriad factors that complicate their instructional choices, teacher educators can leverage the wobble, normalizing uncertainty or potential discomfort and drawing TC awareness to how their practice develops, as a result.

Though complex texts may knock readers off-kilter, Cook et al. (2022b) argue that a critical literacy toolkit is what helps students progress through challenging readings, equipping them to interrogate power, especially against individuals who enjoy the privileges of powerful social platforms (Janks, 1010; 2013). Cook et al. (2022b) offer practical questions that teacher educators and classroom teachers might ask readers:

> What, for example, happens when an author beloved by many, whose work is a curricular fixture, does terrible things? Were teachers continuing to teach Alexie? Were they discussing the uncomfortable truths about Alexie's life with students? Were they instead removing Alexie from the curriculum altogether? What other commitments – to believing women, to diverse curricula – were meditating factors? (p. 351).

When TCs are prompted to disrupt problematic depictions of young people in the word, they can then then question their views about young people in contexts outside the literature—in their classrooms and in the world (Freire, 1968). Methods courses

shouldn't only offer TCs opportunities to read as students or to compose instructional materials; rather, they should challenge TCs to examine their choices critically, in order to see where dominant social ideology inevitably creeps in. Beyond developing instructional materials and planning lessons, TCs can critically examine which messages their text selections, topics, learning exercises, and grading policies send to young people and their families. Such questions might include, "Who determines whether languaging practices are right or wrong, standard or nonstandard, formal or informal? What purposes do these labels serve for families and local communities?" (Schieble et al., 2020, p. 95) or "What perspectives are being left out of the text and/or conversation? Why are they being left out? How might those perspectives be integrated into the text and/or conversation?" (Schieble et al., 2020, p. 95). Lesko (1996) explains that such inquiry works to challenge binaries that adults create to mentally or socially categorize youth: child versus adult, savage versus civilized, massed versus individual, culturally influenced versus reasonable, in-process versus whole, and, in summation of these, inferior versus superior. While these types of questions are just a few of many possible avenues for fostering critical reflection and conversation for TCs, they challenge TCs in methods courses to practice critical literacy not just in how they read literature but in how they read their future students. From such readings, they develop curriculum accordingly, and should pervasive ideologies about young people seep into their decision-making process, the methods course affords myriad opportunities to locate when biases occur and to develop possible course corrections, when necessary.

Overall, methods courses offer rich opportunities for teacher educators and TCs alike to make instructional decisions but then to evaluate them through critical lenses that pinpoint where such decisions need development. Scherff (2012) describes effective

teaching as contingent upon "the capacity, understanding, self-belief, and capability to generate change" (p. 203), rather than blindly accept passed down or status quo ways of teaching. When emerging teachers interrogate how they make choices and which students those choices benefit over others, they develop an important practice of reflexivity (Freire, 1968) that they hopefully carry with them throughout their careers. The ways in which we make decisions, as teachers, matter. Garcia (2021) argues that ELA teachers contribute to the state of the world by mobilizing curriculum in ways that disrupt the "acts of harm" (Diaz et al., 2021, p. 38) baked deeply into teaching and learning. Though it may take shape in ways that are nonlinear, messy, or the result of wobble, engaging TCs in conversations that challenge their views of young people and their capabilities is as hopeful as it is crucial.

Study Limitations and Future Research

This study also has many limitations. Several of the limitations revolve around the study's scale. While the study's data were rich, the number of participants (11) was extremely limited. Had the Methods course enrolled more than 12 (11 of which agreed to participate in the study) students during the semester I collected the data or had I been able to collect data in Methods courses over several semesters, I would have been able to see more clearly if the findings in the study were consistent across more TCs or sections of the course to reflect more representative trends in teacher preparation. With so few TCs enrolled in Methods came a limited amount of identities and voices represented in the study, as well. Other limitations stemmed from the contexts within which I conducted the study. Although TCs and I had established a classroom community that fostered honest talk, there still exists the reality that TC talk took place within a teacher preparation classroom, where their talk was evaluated for a grade. I tried, in assignment

and activity explanations and rubrics, to emphasize to TCs that their talk would not be graded based upon their stances but rather their thoughtfulness; however, I still wonder how the power dynamic of teacher/student might have come to bear on what TCs felt comfortable talking and writing (Smagorinsky et al., 2015). Another limitation of the study is that it did not grow with TCs into their first or second years in the classroom to see if the critical conversations we had during the course impacted, at all, their facilitations of critical talk in praxis.

After analyzing the data and writing the study's findings, I believe there are several opportunities for future research. First, this study became about studying TC talk as a teacher researcher. If I were to teach the Methods course and take data again, I would intentionally teach the course with many of the study's implications in mind, hoping to focus more thoroughly with TCs on analyzing their own talk in response to YAL. I believe studying talk in this way would fill a practical knowledge gap (Robinson et al., 2011) for teacher educators. Further, I hope to springboard off the many practical reflection questions and writing and talk prompts of scholars in the field explored in this study's implications; however, I hope to continue developing, enacting, and revising teaching methods at the post-secondary level that not only center critical TC talk but that invite TCs into the process of studying their own talk. If I can more effectively teach TCs about dominant narratives about adolescents, the roles of emotion in co-constructed talk, moves for sustaining critical conversation, protective discourse moves that show up in their own talk, they might be able to better understand their own instructional stances, as well as more precisely be able to detect when such phenomena surface in the talk of their students. They may even, eventually, know how to respond in a way that sustains critical talk, when this occurs. So, I hope ultimately to craft effective strategies and learning

experiences that might continue addressing the gap uncovered in the dissertation project in future methods courses.

After teaching the course in this way, I imagine longitudinal studies that follow TCs who participated in the Methods course, studying how they facilitate critical conversations each year for the first five years of their teaching careers. In coaching emerging teachers to facilitate critical conversations in 5-12 settings and studying the talk of middle and high school ELA students, I can continue to uncover the tensions experienced by early career teachers while examining the effects on learning of effectively exercising critical talk in middle and secondary classrooms.

Conclusions

Overall, this study is concerned with the many contexts and conditions of TC talk as they make meaning in teacher preparation coursework. More specifically, I explored how TCs engaged in critical conversations, or discussions about power in texts and the world beyond. Further, critical conversations challenged TCs to consider their roles in contexts of power as they read YAL and talked through implications for their teaching practice. Nested sociopolitical contexts also came to bear on these conversations. Ultimately, TC talk revealed the complexity of making instructional choices as a new teacher, perhaps now more than ever.

TCs talked both about YAL and about their future students, as they decided what texts and topics they would introduce to future students. TCs negotiated their choices, considering who their future students would be, how they would relate to the topics and texts at hand, and what they, as teachers, might do while facilitating critical conversations. Interpreting TC talk in this study called upon bodies of existing literature—both theoretical frames like critical consciousness, literacy, and pedagogy, as

well as empirical studies around conceptualizing adolescents, talk in methods coursework, and Whiteness in education—and also considered TC talk within the context of the current sociopolitical climate in education. In the past, TCs have discussed adolescents through deficit perspectives, positioning them as monolithic, immature, hormonal, emotional, and irrational. Though teacher educators and critical theory in teaching methods courses have worked to disrupt these problematic stances, remnants of adolescent stereotypes still surface in the talk of TCs today, particularly when imagining what texts and topics their hypothetical students will want to learn about. In recent moments, entirely separate forces came to bear on TC talk—those of the nested sociopolitical contexts at local, community, state, and national levels that shaped TC perceptions of what topics and texts they were allowed to teach, talk about, and explore openly and professionally with students. These factors interfaced uniquely with each TCs' multidimensional identities, certainly, but their influence gained particular traction with TCs in the methods course as emerging teachers. With this positionality in mind, TCs struggled to make choices about what they felt comfortable teaching, considering their perceived lack of experience and desire to avoid accusations of pushing a partisan agenda or introducing "inappropriate" content to students by parties external to the classroom.

Another important context for making sense of how TCs talk about adolescents was the ever-present context of Whiteness that persists across educational settings. When TCs talk about the trope of the "adolescent," they typically are referring to an identity and experience that has been mainstreamed in media, literature, and dominant society—they picture the learning needs and preferences of a normative hypothetical student, one who is inherently White. Whiteness also impacted how TCs themselves talked about literature.

Whether for fear of being vulnerable in conveying personal information, evading emotional topics, side-stepping difficult conversations, or feeling insecure about their own knowledge, TCs in the study opted for comfort and ease in talking critically about YAL, which sacrificed moments of critical inquiry. Returning to the persistent pressures of present sociopolitics, TCs felt the reach of mostly White parents, administrators, and legislators making decisions about what teachers can address with students. Literature has always featured the stories of normative identities—those which are White, cisgendered, and heterosexual. The pressures of individual schools, parent groups, and school boards presently seek to maintain White narratives via texts present in learning spaces and leveraged as learning assets. Current sociopolitics threaten to erase non-White stories and silence non-normative voices. As a result, heavier burdens befall the shoulders of new teachers who fundamentally believe that diverse stories and critical talk are essential to student learning and growth in the discipline of humanities and ELA. If TCs maintain their resolve to bring such topics and texts into their classrooms, they now face even more serious obstacles to enacting critical pedagogy than ever before.

Such fraught conditions for teaching emphasize the cruciality of talking critically in teacher preparation and in k-12 classrooms. Before expecting TCs to facilitate critical conversations on their own, especially in consideration of the many historical and current influences on and consequences for such talk, teacher educators must leverage methods course instruction to study the talk of TCs themselves, as it often reveals pervasive discourses from the past and provide a snapshot of the present. Such discourses seep into how TCs talk about instructing adolescents in the future. While it is certainly a goal that teacher educators can support TCs in effectively uptaking and enacting critical literacy in early career classrooms, this project makes clear the call for more reflective questions,

assignments, and conversations around TCs' own talk moves in response to YAL–moves that contradict what they say to be their beliefs, moves that undermine criticality, and moves that even disconnect them from the identities that they claim as individuals and teaching professionals.

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APPENDIX A

Middle and High School English Methods
3 Credit Hours

Taylor Rose-Dougherty (she/her); taylor.dougherty@louisville.edu
Office Hours: Microsoft Teams meetings available upon request via email

> *[Usually] we know how to ally only with the agreeable kids–the "good" ones, the ones who are most like us. How do we hear the kids who aren't? Teaching cannot work optimally if it is not rooted in this kind of community engagement. We are most powerful when we labor to understand young people and when we work alongside (not for) them. When our vision for kids and for classrooms is guided by a community's vision for their own children, our work becomes real to children and to parents. Relationships are appreciably challenging to maintain, but they become infinitely easier when they are grounded in a shared vision and genuine collaboration. Teaching without this kind of engagement is not teaching at all. It is colonization (Minor, 2019).*

Course Description
Prerequisite: Must be admitted to the Teacher Education Program. Application of methods and materials to teaching middle and high school English effectively.

The purpose of this course is to prepare preservice middle-level and secondary English language arts (ELA) teachers to create and enact standards-based instruction through the lens of critical literacy (Schieble et al., 2020). This ELA methods course takes place in the Phase 3: Pre-Clinical Experience stage of the teacher preparation program (see below).

In this course, preservice ELA teachers will (1) develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to inform their instructional choices through educational theory; (2) will practice reading and processing curricula of districts within which they will student teach; (3) will design content that will satisfy those curricula, and (4) will practice and implement instructional strategies that align with their educational philosophies. In addition to cultivating diverse teaching and assessment strategies, preservice teachers will practice evaluating their instructional materials and practices specifically through a critical lens via recursive cycles of revision to promote more equitable instruction. This course also affords preservice teachers field experience opportunities through which they can contextualize and apply their course learning in local classrooms.

Course Objectives
Candidates will design instruction and assessments that reflect the following in middle-level and secondary students' academic work:

- the application of rich conceptual understandings;
- the application of critical understandings;
- student-made decisions using higher order thinking;
- an authentic and culturally relevant context that actively engages students;
- multiple approaches to demonstrating understanding;
- authentic and meaningful work; and
- appropriate uses of technology.

Required Texts*

Acevedo, E. (2018). *The poet X.* Quill Tree Books.

Alexie, S. (2009). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian.* Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Gallagher, K., & Kittle, P. (2018). *180 days: Two teachers and the quest to engage and empower adolescents*. Heinemann.

Satrapi, M. (2007). *Persepolis: The story of a childhood.* Pantheon.

Teacher Performance Standards Addressed by Course

Standard	**Assignments**
Standard 1: Learner Development	Educator Identity Assignment Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Standards-based Unit of Study Book Club Discussion Reading Responses Year-Long Plan
Standard 2: Learner Differences	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Teaching Portfolio Standards-based Unit of Study Critical Revision Assignment Book Club Discussion
Standard 3: Learning Environment	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Practice Lesson Plans Standards-based Unit of Study Critical Revision Assignment Book Club Discussion Reading Responses
Standard 4: Content Knowledge	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Practice Lesson Plans Standards-based Unit of Study Reading Responses Unit Plan Rationale
Standard 5: Application of Content	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Standards-based Unit of Study Critical Revision Assignment Book Club Discussion Reading Responses

Standard 6: Assessment	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Standards-based Unit of Study Critical Revision Assignment
Standard 7: Planning for Instruction	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Standards-based Unit of Study Unit Plan Rationale Year-Long Plan
Standard 8: Instructional Strategies	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Standards-based Unit of Study Critical Revision Assignment Book Club Discussion Reading Responses
Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Educator Identity Assignment Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Standards-based Unit of Study Critical Revision Assignment Professional Disposition/Participation Book Club Discussion Reading Responses
Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration	Planning and teaching of ELA lessons Standards-based Unit of Study Professional Disposition/Participation Book Club Discussion Reading Responses

National Middle School Standards Met by this Course

NMSA Standard 1: Young Adolescent Development—Seminar discussions, readings and writing to learn assignments about the characteristics of young adolescents; relating concepts and theories of young adolescent development to student teaching experiences

NMSA Standard 2: Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization—Seminar discussions, readings and writing to learn assignments about the characteristics of young adolescents; relating concepts and theories of middle level organization and philosophy to student teaching experiences

NMSA Standard 3: Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment—The course HAT and field experience includes lessons and assessments designed for middle level learners.

NMSA Standard 4: Middle Level Teaching Fields—The course field log is based on student teaching experience in the content field.

NMSA Standard 5: Middle Level Instruction and Assessment—Candidates regularly give and receive feedback about the strategies they are observing and using in their student teaching placement to create a developmentally appropriate climate to meet the needs of young adolescents.

NMSA Standard 6: Family and Community Involvement—The HAT requires candidates to obtain and analyze contextual data for the community, the school, and the students that impact instruction and student achievement.

NMSA Standard 7: Middle Level Professional Roles—Candidates participate in regular discussions of the complexities of teaching young adolescents and the teacher behaviors that develop their competence.

Statement of Meeting the Kentucky Common Core Standards
Student work related to academic content for K-12 students is based on the Kentucky Core Academic Standards:
http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Pages/default.aspx

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Course Content and Requirements/Criteria for Determination of Grade

Assignment Name/Type	Description	Assessment
Field Work: University Supervisor Lesson Plans, Enactments, and Reflections	Field Work contributes to your overall grade for this course; however, additionally note that passing this course will not be possible without fulfilling all your required field work responsibilities. You will complete minimally 56 hours of field observations at your assigned field placement school/classroom. If you are seeking certification in two content areas (e.g., math and English), then you will complete 80 hours of field observations (40 in each content area) for this course. At four points throughout the semester, you will teach formal lessons and be observed by either your mentor teacher or your university supervisor (your mentor teacher will observe you twice and your university supervisor will observe you twice). Each time this occurs, you will communicate with your mentor teacher or your university supervisor to schedule your formal lesson and observation. 48 hours before this lesson/observation occurs, you will complete a lesson plan using the template shared in class and submit it to your mentor teacher or university supervisor. During and after each observation your mentor teacher or university supervisor will complete a rubric and offer feedback on your enacted lesson. After the formal lesson/observation, your mentor teacher or university supervisor will facilitate a debriefing meeting with you. Then, you will complete a formal lesson/observation reflection (template distributed in class), responding to critical prompts, and submit it to your university supervisor. If you do not complete your university supervisor-observed lessons by the deadlines designated by your university supervisor, a Communication of Concern meeting will be scheduled.	20% Completion

	All templates for lesson plans and reflections, as well as rubrics to evaluate lesson plans, enacted lessons, and reflections can be found online. You will submit all three components (lesson plan, observation feedback/rubric, and reflection) of each observed lesson to Blackboard.	
Professional Disposition/ Participation	You cannot learn to be a teacher by reading and observing alone. Rather, to become an effective English teacher, you must practice teaching firsthand, then strive for improvement by reflecting on your efforts, discussing issues with colleagues, and seeking out tips and the wisdom of others. This class is designed to provide you with such opportunities. The experiences each person brings to the class contribute to the body of knowledge learned. Therefore, your participation (and not merely your presence) in this class is vital to your professional development as a teacher. Participation involves a combination of regular and timely attendance, thoughtful and professional discussion, including active reflective listening, demonstration of understanding from assigned readings and discussions, timely completion of assignments, and actively contributing to the success of this class.	10% Professional Disposition/ Participation Rubric (see below)
Intersectional Identity Mapping & Educator Identity Assignment	This assignment asks you to reflect on the major philosophy and theory that has guided your practice thus far. Considering this foundation, it asks you to write about future goals and areas of growth that will support you in reaching those goals. You will then use Ch 1 ("Intersectional Identity Mapping") from Alice Ginsberg's (2022) *Transgressing Teacher Education: Strategies for Equity, Opportunity and Social Justice in Urban Teacher Preparation and Practice* to re-evaluate your response and guide additional goal-setting, considering your own intersectional identity and those of your future students. A detailed assignment sheet is forthcoming.	5% Rubric included in forthcoming assignment sheet
Weekly Reading Responses	On designated occasions, you will formally respond to assigned reading via a reading response. These responses will be concise and demand that you apply, extend, or synthesize what you read, rather than summarize. A detailed assignment sheet is forthcoming.	10% Rubric included in forthcoming assignment sheet
Practice Lesson Plans & Reflections	For each reading/writing genre we discuss in Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle's (2018) *180 Days,* you will craft a practice lesson plan with a learning target and mentor texts of your choosing, using the	10% Rubric included in forthcoming

	Reading/Writing Workshop model. To supplement your assignment, you will reflect upon successes and challenges in the lesson planning experience, as well as how you'd predict you might confer with students, how you might differentiate (both to enrich and remediate) for students, etc. A detailed assignment sheet is forthcoming.	assignment sheet
Young Adult Literature (YAL) Book Club Preparation & Reflections	You will participate in three book club discussions this semester. This experience will afford you opportunities to practice discussing lesson planning strategies with a common text and will additionally provide context within which to practice theoretical concepts around critical discourse authentically. After each book club discussion, you will write a brief reflection detailing how the critical discourse concepts were applied in "real-time" and how the experience informed how you might conduct classroom discourse in a critical way. A detailed assignment sheet is forthcoming.	10% Rubric included in forthcoming assignment sheet
HAT Project	See description below.	20% HAT Project Rubric (see below)
Year-long Plan	To practice reading and processing curricular documents and to situate your HAT project unit plan within a greater curricular context, you will develop a broad year-long plan for an ELA course of your choosing. Using authentic curricular materials, you will intentionally design a year of units, reflecting upon how the units work together to narrate the year-long instructional experience for the course.	5% Rubric included in forthcoming assignment sheet
Rationale	To illustrate and defend your HAT project unit plan, you will draft a rationale that describes and justifies your instructional choices for the focus unit. Note that a productive rationale does not need to only recount successes in designing the HAT project unit– discussing challenges or informed/revised approaches for the future, based upon learning throughout the HAT process, is also encouraged.	5% Rubric included in forthcoming assignment sheet

Professional Disposition/Participation Rubric

The Teaching Candidate…

Component	Exemplary Performance (10)	Satisfactory Performance (8)	Performance Needs Improvement (6)
Attendance	Does not miss a class/clinical session.	Misses one class/clinical session because of illness, emergency, or professional obligation. Notifies professor ahead of class missed.	Misses two or more class/clinical sessions and/or does not notify professor/university supervisor ahead of class(s)/session(s) missed.
Promptness	Attends each class/clinical session on time.	Is tardy for one class/clinical session because of emergency or professional obligation.	Is tardy for two or more classes/clinical sessions.
Participation	Reads assigned text each week and can discuss thoroughly. Shares relevant experiences with others in class. Adds to the overall quality of the learning environment by contributing thoughtful outside resources and information.	Reads assigned text each week and can discuss, but not in an in-depth fashion. Shares relevant experiences with others in class/clinical session.	Does not read assigned text. Does not participate or participates minimally. May check phone excessively, use laptop for purposes outside course purposes, and/or engage in side conversations at inappropriate times.
In-Class Activities	Consistently completes all in-class activities in a positive manner. Attends to the completion of assignments with purpose and a spirit of inquiry. Body language indicates a consistently positive attitude.	Completes most in-class activities, but may require prompting. Body language may indicate a negative attitude at times.	Does not complete in-class activities or presents barriers to others. May check phone excessively, use laptop for purposes outside course purposes, and/or engage in side conversations at inappropriate times.
Professionalism	Materials handed in on time and prepared with clarity, precision, and attention to detail. Team/group membership is positive and handled with a sense of responsibility.	Materials handed in on time. Team/group membership is positive.	Materials are not handed in on time and may or may not be clear. May check phone excessively, use laptop for purposes outside course purposes, and/or engage in side conversations at inappropriate times.

Hallmark Assessment Task: Standards-Based Integrated Literature/Writing Unit of Study

The primary project for the course is the development of a standards-based unit of study that focuses on teaching English/language arts content in alignment with the Kentucky Core

Academic Standards. Components of this unit will be completed and turned in throughout the semester. You are expected to respond to peer and instructor feedback by revising and developing your drafts further. Additional information is provided below (HAT Assignment).

Purpose

For this assignment, the candidate will complete a unit of study that demonstrates the candidate's ability to design and plan instruction based on sound content knowledge and the Kentucky and national content standards. The unit will include a variety of assessments. The lesson plans will incorporate a variety of strategies that meet the needs of diverse students. There will be evidence in the unit that the candidates have integrated technology, prior knowledge, and interdisciplinary connections where appropriate. The unit will demonstrate overall coherence and include evidence of the candidate's use of critical thinking (i.e., show a clear and relevant purpose, communicate key concepts, processes, and skills of the discipline, etc.). Candidates will be making their first attempt at creating an intentional and cohesive instructional plan that is standards-based and assessment-driven. The unit plan will reflect a commitment by the candidate to social justice and equity and the use of research-based teaching strategies. The unit plan must reflect instructional decisions rooted in critical literacy and critical theory that work to create an equitable learning experience for all students. The identification, description, and justification of these choices will be detailed in the candidate's unit plan rationale. A template guiding the construction of the rationale will be delivered in class.

Process

Candidates will select an area of focus (purpose) for the unit and develop appropriate and relevant standards-based learning objectives. Candidates will then design or select assessments to provide information about student learning and develop a logical sequence of instruction involving research-based strategies to help students master relevant concepts. Lessons should address fairness and perspective through the use of varied instructional techniques and plans for accommodations and adaptations in lessons and assessments as appropriate.

Product

Candidates will complete the unit of study and upload it to Foliotek. Candidates may also be required to self-assess the success of their unit design. The grade for the unit of study will be determined by the course instructor.

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APPENDIX B

Book Club 1 Assignment Sheet

Book Club 1

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

By: Sherman Alexie

Book Club Preparation

As you read the book club novel, you should do some thinking around what you'd like to discuss further when meeting with your club. Your real-time jotting should be personalized to your reading preferences, but once you've concluded the book, to synthesize your thoughts, additionally answer the following prompts. These ideas might prove generative in the conversation, or not–feel free, when the time comes, to allow the discussion to flow authentically!

- What is my impression of the main character's journey in the text?
- Have my life experiences mirrored/echoed those of the main character? What did I connect with in this story?
- Have my life experiences differed from those of the main character? What was entirely new or unfamiliar about this story for me?
- What emotions surfaced as I read this story? What, if anything, feels "sticky" or worth talking out in the book club meetings?
- What passages feel particularly important to bring to book club, and what questions do I want to ask my group members about those passages?
- What am I particularly excited or hesitant to talk through in this week's book club meeting?

Notes from During Club

Book Club Reflection

After concluding your book club conversation, answer the following reflection questions. If you have any additional thoughts or takeaways from your experience, include them here.

Student Lens (Schieble et al., 2020, p. 50)

- What new ideas/perspectives did you learn from what you read?
- What new questions/critiques do you have about the reading?
- What or who was left out of the reading?

Teacher Lens

- What about today's book club conversation illuminated how you might incorporate critical conversations into your future classroom?
- What challenges or successes might you encounter?
- What texts might work particularly well as vehicles for such conversations?
- What questions of students might you feel important to ask?

APPENDIX C

Book Club 2 Assignment Sheet

Book Club 2
Persepolis
By: Marjane Satrapi

Book Club Preparation
As you read the book club novel, you should do some thinking around what you'd like to discuss further when meeting with your club. Your real-time jotting should be personalized to your reading preferences, but once you've concluded the book, to synthesize your thoughts, additionally answer the following prompts. These ideas might prove generative in the conversation, or not–feel free, when the time comes, to allow the discussion to flow authentically!

- What is my impression of the main character's journey in the text?
- Have my life experiences mirrored/echoed those of the main character? What did I connect with in this story?
- Have my life experiences differed from those of the main character? What was entirely new or unfamiliar about this story for me?
- What emotions surfaced as I read this story? What, if anything, feels "sticky" or worth talking out in the book club meetings?
- What passages feel particularly important to bring to book club, and what questions do I want to ask my group members about those passages?
- What am I particularly excited or hesitant to talk through in this week's book club meeting?

Notes from During Club

Book Club Reflection
After concluding your book club conversation, answer the following reflection questions. If you have any additional thoughts or takeaways from your experience, include them here.

- Student Lens (Schieble et al., 2020, p. 59)
    - How does the experience of the protagonist in the text differ from my own?
    - What can I learn from listening in this moment?

    - What emotions am I experiencing as I listen?
    - How much do I know about this experience? What questions do I need to ask to learn more?
- Teacher Lens
    - What about today's book club conversation illuminated how you might incorporate critical conversations into your future classroom?
    - What challenges or successes might you encounter?
    - What texts might work particularly well as vehicles for such conversations?
    - What questions of students might you feel important to ask?

APPENDIX D

Book Club 3 Assignment Sheet

Book Club 3
The Poet X
By: Elizabeth Acevedo

Book Club Preparation
As you read the book club novel, you should do some thinking around what you'd like to discuss further when meeting with your club. Your real-time jotting should be personalized to your reading preferences, but once you've concluded the book, to synthesize your thoughts, additionally answer the following prompts. These ideas might prove generative in the conversation, or not–feel free, when the time comes, to allow the discussion to flow authentically!

- What is my impression of the main character's journey in the text?
- Have my life experiences mirrored/echoed those of the main character? What did I connect with in this story?
- Have my life experiences differed from those of the main character? What was entirely new or unfamiliar about this story for me?
- What emotions surfaced as I read this story? What, if anything, feels "sticky" or worth talking out in the book club meetings?
- What passages feel particularly important to bring to book club, and what questions do I want to ask my group members about those passages?
- What am I particularly excited or hesitant to talk through in this week's book club meeting?

Notes from During Club

Book Club Reflection
After concluding your book club conversation, answer the following reflection questions. If you have any additional thoughts or takeaways from your experience, include them here.

- Student Lens (adapted from Schieble et al., 2020, p. 38)
    - What is rewarding and/or challenging about listening, considering, and learning from others?

    - To what extent do you agree with the following statements, and how do they inform your consideration of book club conversation and topics? *An opinion is a belief that is based on a limited amount of evidence. Informed knowledge is supported by research from credible sources.*
    - What is rewarding and/or challenging about incorporating personal experiences into book club talk? When is sharing personal experiences most beneficial in a book club context, and when is it less helpful? How might we take note of broader social patterns, beyond personal experiences?
    - Did you ever feel defensive when engaging in book club talk? If so, reflect upon what bothered you, why it bothered you, and what emotions were evoked. Are these reflections gateways into deeper self-knowledge?
    - What social positionality (i.e. race, class, gender, sexuality, ability status) informs your perspectives and reactions to others in book club conversations? How might you confirm, validate, celebrate, extend, and sustain other individuals' languages, experiences, family structures, communities, etc. that are different from your own in these conversations?
- Teacher Lens
    - What about today's book club conversation illuminated how you might incorporate critical conversations into your future classroom?
    - What challenges or successes might you encounter?
    - What texts might work particularly well as vehicles for such conversations?
    - What questions of students might you feel important to ask?

APPENDIX E

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the experience of the book club conversation. This might include thoughts on preparation, reading, engaging in the conversation, or the reflective writing afterward.
2. What parts of the book club experience, if any, felt important to your learning from the student perspective? The teacher perspective?
3. What parts of the book club experience, if any, felt unimportant to your learning from the student perspective? The teacher perspective?
4. What, if any, emotions did you experience at any point in the book club preparation, conversation, or reflective writing?
5. *In reference to re-listening to segments of the book club audio recordings, if applicable:* After listening to the audio recording segment, tell me what about this moment, if anything, felt significant.
6. *In reference to re-listening to segments of the book club audio recordings, if applicable:* After listening to the audio recording segment, tell me more about what you meant, at this moment.
7. In reflecting upon your book club experience, how, if at all, has it shaped your views of teaching and facilitating discussions in your current/future classroom?
8. In reflecting upon your book club experience, how, if at all, do you feel you might be successful or might you experience challenges facilitating a similar conversation in your current/future classroom?

APPENDIX F

Participant Demographic Survey

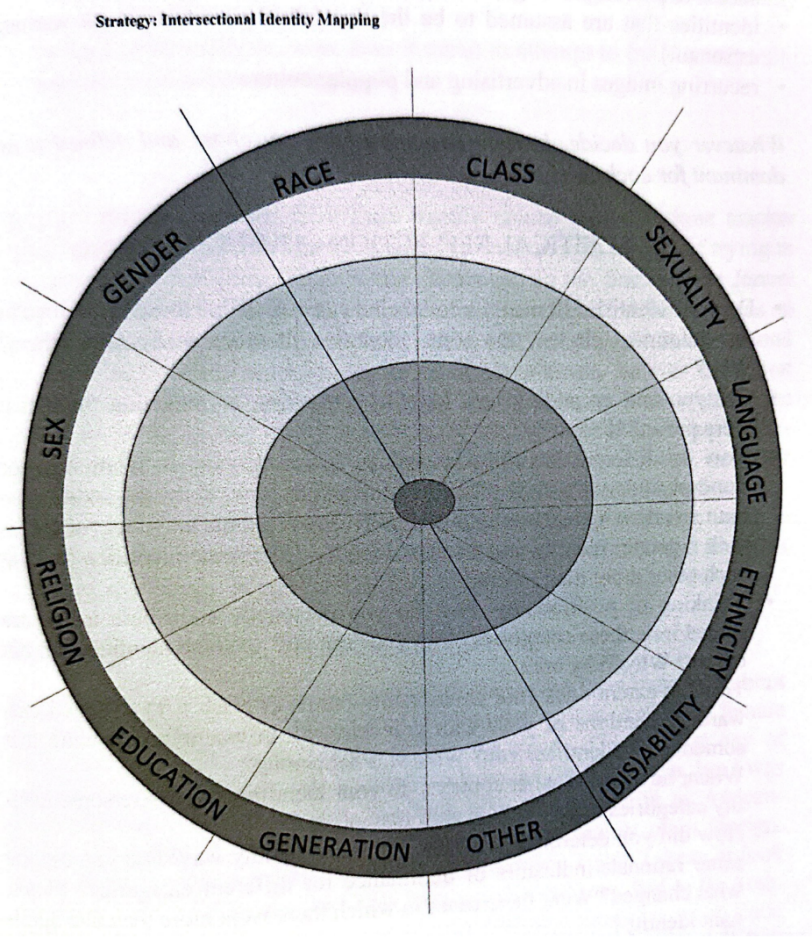
1. What name do you go by?
2. What pronouns do you use?
3. What is your academic status?
    a. Undergraduate
    b. MAT
    c. Alt Cert
    d. Teacher Residency
4. We'd like to get to know you based upon how you'd introduce and describe yourself. How would you describe your various identities? Some examples, though the list is not extensive, include: career identification, gender identification, racial identification, socioeconomic identification, etc. Whichever you include, explain briefly why such information is essential in getting to know you as a person.

APPENDIX G

Intersectional Identity Mapping Assignment

**Adapted from Alice Ginsberg's Transgressing Teacher Education; Strategies for Equity, Opportunity and Social Justice in Urban Teacher Preparation and Practice (2022)*

Context: "[This strategy] leads candidates through the process of generating a personal, multidimensional map of their intersecting *identities, positionalities,* and *representations.* A series of critical questions follows, designed to help candidates unpack and deconstruct the ways in which representation is a constant activity that is embedded in the flow of specific interactions" (p. 4).



Instructions for Filling Out an Identity Map:

Step One: The outermost circle represents different ways that people categorize or classify themselves and others. Feel free to add other categories that you feel are significant. Also, you may decide to change the wording of the categories but be sure to notate why.

Step Two: In the next layer, you should make notes as to how *you personally* identify within each category. For example, under the category of race, you might write: *Black, African American, person of color,* or all three. Also note that your response may be singular, or multiple, as people are bi-racial, bi-lingual, or have more than one religion. *If you are uncomfortable or resistant for any reason, you can leave any category blank but be sure to think about why you made this decision.*

Step Three: In the next layer, you should consider *your positionality* within each category. Positionality refers to a wide range of ways that we relate to and think about our different identities, such as:

- chosen/inherited
- visible/invisible
- comfortable/uncomfortable
- sure/unsure
- stagnant/shifting
- distinct/overlapping
- authentic/misperception
- proud/ashamed

**Note: There are many positions; these are just meant to get you started.*

Step Four: In the next layer, you will be reflecting on "representation." How does this identity exist in the "self/other" continuum? You should write down what you believe to be the "dominant" identity in each category in the United States. You can define "dominant" as you want, and you can use different measures for different identities. For example:

- demographic majority
- Access to power, privilege, and opportunity
- Identities that are assumed to be the "norm" (e.g., astronaut vs. woman astronaut)
- Recurring images in advertising and popular culture

**Note: Whatever you decide, be sure to notate how you chose and defined it as dominant for each category.*

Critical Reflection: After completing and digitally attaching your identity map, reflect by answering some of what you feel to be the most pertinent critical reflection questions. **Regardless of the questions that you choose to explore, your reflection should conclude with a "so what" discussion of the implications for your teaching practice that this activity has led you to consider.** Your response does not need to be formal but should be written in paragraph, narrative form and **should not exceed 500 words**.

- Do your identities fit neatly into labeled categories like those prescribed in the outermost circles? Do some identities fit more easily than others? Why?

- Did you end up adding new identity categories, or renaming those that were present? If so, why?
- How do different identities interrelate, intersect, exist in relation to, or stand at odds with each other? (For example, Jews may see Judaism as both an ethnicity and a religious identity. Some people may feel "queer" is both a gender identity and a sexual identity.) Did some identities "tug" at each other more than others?
- Thinking of positionality: how do you personally contribute to, or are forced into, these categories? Can you "opt out" of some identities but not others? Why/why not?
- To what extent does your positionality match or clash with assumed outward perceptions of you? Can you think of an example of a time that someone misidentified you? What was happening?
- When, how, and in what contexts do your identities shift? Are some identity categories more likely to shift than others?
- How did you determine what the dominant identity was? Did you use the same rationale/indicators of dominance for different categories? If not, what changed? Were there cases in which there were more than one dominant identity?
- What comforts and conflicts are associated with being or *not* being part of the dominant identity?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Taylor Rose-Dougherty
Ph.D., Curriculum & Instruction
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
College of Education and Human Development
University of Louisville
(314) 229-8597
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Utah State University 2024-present
Assistant Professor of English-English Education
Department of English
Logan, UT

University of Louisville 2020-2024
University Fellow
Adjunct Instructor; Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education (EMSTEd)
Graduate Assistant; EMSTEd
Editorial Assistant; *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*
Teaching Assistant; English as a Second Language (ESL) Endorsement

EDUCATION

Ph.D. **University of Louisville** 2024
Curriculum & Instruction

Dissertation Title: "I'm Going to Have to be Far More Prepared": A Critical Discourse Analysis of Teacher Candidate Discussion and Projected Teaching of Literature

Dissertation Committee:
James S. Chisholm, Ph.D; University of Louisville
Mike P. Cook, Ph.D; Auburn University
Sheron Mark, Ph. D; University of Louisville
Amy Seely-Flint, Ph.D; University of Louisville

M.Ed. **University of Missouri-Columbia** 2017
Learning, Teaching, & Curriculum with an Emphasis in English Education

B.S.Ed. **University of Missouri-Columbia** *(summa cum laude)* 2016

English Language Arts Education
English Minor
Multicultural Studies Certificate

PUBLICATIONS

Rose-Dougherty, T. (2024; published Online First). A critical analysis of course syllabi in teacher preparation: A systems-based approach. *Whiteness and Education.* https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2024.2305466

Rose-Dougherty, T., Cook, M. P., & Chisholm, J. S. (2024). Asset-and Deficit-Based Sociocultural Constructions of Adolescents: A Thematic Analysis of Two Teacher Candidates' Responses to Student Teaching Incidents. *The Teacher Educator*, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2024.2309538

Cook, M. P., Chisholm, J. S., & **Rose-Dougherty, T.** (2022). Preservice teachers and discursive shielding during critical conversations. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, *20*(4), 343-367. https://doi.org/10.1080/15505170.2022.2042878

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Haas, C., Kang, G., McGee, K., **Rose-Dougherty, T.**, Spinner, B. (July, 2023). *I'm a punk—I've always been into disruption: Leveraging preservice teacher (PST) identity to shape their justice-oriented teacher preparation.* National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) English Language Arts Teacher Educators (ELATE) Conference. Atlanta, Georgia.

Rose-Dougherty, T., Chisholm, J.S., & Cook, M.P. (November, 2022). *Preservice Teachers' Critical Emotional Responses to Student Teaching Incidents.* Literacy Research Association Annual Convention. Phoenix, Arizona.

Rose-Dougherty, T., Chisholm, J. S., & Cook, M. P. (2022, July). "I failed to reach them": Emotion and PSTs' reflections on critical incidents in student teaching. Paper presented at the meeting of the English Language Arts Teacher Educators, Louisville, KY.

Rose-Dougherty, T., Cook, M.P., & Chisholm, J.S. (December, 2021). *Preservice Teachers and Discursive Shielding during Critical Conversations.* Literacy Research Association Annual Convention. Atlanta, Georgia.

Rose, T. and Benmuvhar, A. (February, 2019). *Sharing stories: Reading and research*. Missouri Write to Learn Conference. St. Louis, Missouri.

Rose, T. and Benmuvhar, A. (September, 2018). *Sharing stories: Reading and research*. Gateway Writing Project. Osage Beach, Missouri.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

Dean's Citation Award Winner 2024
University of Louisville
College of Education and Human Development Honor & Scholarship Committee

Graduate Dean's Reception Honoree 2024
University of Louisville
Graduate School

Guy Stevenson Award Nominee 2024
University of Louisville
Graduate School Commencement Awards

Samuel Scholars Scholarship 2023
University of Louisville
College of Education and Human Development

University of Louisville University Fellowship 2020-2022

Publishing Academy Participant 2022
University of Louisville
Graduate Student Dean's Reception

Outstanding Doctoral Student Peer Reviewer; 2021
Literacy Research: Theory, Method, & Practice

University of Louisville Faculty Favorite Nominee 2021

Graduate Student Council Travel Award 2020, 2021, 2022
University of Louisville

MU Teaching Fellowship 2016-2017
University of Missouri

Parkway West High School Teacher of the Year Nominee 2020
Parkway West High School

Albert Award Winner for Excellence in Early Career Teaching 2019
Parkway School District

Parkway West High School National School of Character Writer 2018
Parkway West High School

Albert Award Nominee 2018

Parkway School District

St. Louis Alumnae Panhellenic Association Scholarship Recipient: Welsch Leadership Scholarship 2015
St. Louis, Missouri

University of Missouri Isabelle Wade Lyda Scholarship 2015
University of Missouri

University of Missouri Excellence Award Scholarship 2012-2016
University of Missouri

RESEARCH

Research Interests

- Preservice Teacher Education
  - Critical Literacy
  - Teacher Preparation (Middle/High School English Language Arts)
  - Critical Discourse Analysis
  - White Teacher Identity Studies
- Adolescent and Adult Literacy
- Young Adult Literature

L. Ramon Veal Research Seminar 2022
National Council of of Teachers of English
Invited Seminar Participant

Research Assistant

Chilton, E. H., & Chisholm, J. S. (in preparation). Language portraits: Multimodal representations of linguistic repertoires.

- Researched and created annotated bibliography for language portrait and teacher identity sections of manuscript

Spector, K., Chisholm, J. S., & Whitmore, K. F. (2024). *Learning and teaching literature with the arts for social justice.* Routledge.

- Garnered supplementary media copyright permissions for each book chapter
- Created QR codes for supplementary media embedded in each book chapter
- Wrote alt text for all book images to enhance reader accessibility
- Created Appendix A (teaching strategy explication) and Appendix B (multimedia text pairings and recommendations for instruction) for each book chapter
- Conducted an audit of each book chapter to determine diversity of text content and contributors

Chisholm, J. S., & Cook, M. P. (2021). Examining readers' critical literature circle

discussions of *Looking for Alaska*.. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *65*(2), 119-128.

- Researched and created annotated bibliography to guide revise and resubmit feedback for literature review

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UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor Spring, 2024; Spring, 2022
English Teaching Content Methods
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Adjunct Instructor; Graduate/Teaching Assistant Spring, 2024; Fall, 2023; Fall, 2022
Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Co-Instructor Spring, 2023
English Teaching Content Methods
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Graduate/Teaching Assistant Spring, 2023
World Englishes
English as a Second Language (ESL) Teaching Endorsement Program
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Graduate/Teaching Assistant Fall, 2022
Language, Society, and Power
English as a Second Language (ESL) Teaching Endorsement Program
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Adjunct Instructor Fall, 2021
English Teaching Capstone
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Teaching Assistant Spring, 2021
English Teaching Content Methods
Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Teacher Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

K-12 TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Secondary English Teacher 2017-2020
English 1; English 4; Summer School: English 1, 2, and Creative Writing
Parkway West High School
St. Louis, Missouri

Teaching Fellow 2016-2017
World Literature; Honors World Literature
University of Missouri-Columbia @ Muriel W. Battle High School
Columbia, Missouri

Teaching Assistant 2013-2015
Kindergarten Preparation (integrated early childhood); Applied Behavior Analysis (early childhood and elementary); Response to Intervention (early childhood and elementary); Response to Intervention (high school)
Action for Autism Academy
St. Louis, Missouri

K-12 SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP

Reading/Writing Workshop Model PLC Leader 2018-2020
Parkway West High School
St. Louis, Missouri

District Virtual Curriculum Project Coordinator 2020
Parkway School District
St. Louis, Missouri

K-12 PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Parkway School District
St. Louis, Missouri

- 2020 Facilitated three different formats of virtual book clubs for instructors (whole-class texts, small-group texts, individual thematic texts) and cooperated with teachers in transferring professional development learning to practice in virtual classrooms

- 2020 Presented at district-level professional development weekly sessions on facilitating virtual book clubs
- 2019 Presented at district-level professional development session on integration of new curriculum standards through graphic novel book club instruction
- 2019 Taught an online course on digital book club instruction for Parkway teachers' professional development
- 2019 Led a district-wide breakout session, district-wide two-day institutie, and district-wide learning lab covering Workshop style book club instruction
- 2018 Presented a Schoology Introduction and Overview Breakout Session at district-wide professional development
- 2018 Presented a Reading/Writing Workshop Introduction and Overview Breakout Session at district-wide professional development

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EDITORIAL

Literacy Research: Theory, Method, & Practice 2020-2024
Lead Editorial Assistant/Graduate Assistant (2022-2024)
Editorial Assistant (2020-2022)
Report Designer (2020)
Volumes 70-72

Literacy Research: Theory, Methods, and Practice 2021-present
Emerging Scholar Editorial Review Board

Middle Grades Research Journal 2022-present
Emerging Scholar Editorial Review Board

Spring 2021 Graduate School Publishing Academy 2021
Selected Participant

SERVICE

Literacy Research Association 2024
Annual Conference Proposal Reviewer

University of Louisville Athletic Department 2024
Instructional Coaching Session Facilitator
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Leukemia Lymphoma Society 2024
Registered Yoga Instructor

Local Women's Trauma Support Group (name confidential) 2024
Registered Yoga Instructor

College of Education and Human Development 2024
Student Representative
Student Academic Grievance Committee
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

Boys and Girls Club of Kentuckiana 2023
Registered Yoga Instructor

Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Education 2021
Student Representative
Department Chair Search Committee
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

University of Missouri-Columbia 2020
"Friendly Reviewer" for English Language Arts Writing Methods students submitting manuscripts to *English Journal* and *English Education*

Women of West Co-Sponsor 2018-2020
Parkway West High School
St. Louis, Missouri

Gateway 2 Change Co-Sponsor 2019-2020
Parkway West High School
St. Louis, Missouri

African-American Student Achievement Program Faculty Facilitator 2019-2020
Parkway West High School
St. Louis, Missouri

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organization	Role	Year(s)
Literacy Research Association	Approaches to Discourse Analysis Study Group; Member	2022-present
	Teacher Education Research Study Group; Member	2022-present

	Organization Member	2021-2023
	Annual Conference Attendee	2020-2022
	Annual Conference Presenter	2021, 2022
University of Louisville; Thomas R. Watson Conference	Conference Attendee; (Re)Building Connections and Collaborations across High School and College Writing Contexts	2024
	Conference Reporter; Breakout Room Moderator	2021
	Pre-Conference Graduate Student Workshops; Attendee	2021
National Council of Teachers of English	Organization Member	2020, 2021
	Annual Conference Attendee	2020, 2021
American Educational Research Association	Language and Social Processes Webinar Session Attendee: "Silenc(ing) across learning spaces: New considerations for educational research aims and rationale"	2022
University of Louisville Department of Sociology; Jon H. Rieger Speaker Series	Session Attendee: "Racialized Burdens: Applying Racialized Organization Theory to the Administrative State; Dr. Victor Ray	2022
University of Louisville; 14th Annual Graduate Student Regional Research Conference	Attendee	2021
University of Louisville; Discourse and Semiotics Series	Session Attendee: "Teacher as Facilitator of Classroom Research"	2020
Parkway School District	Parkway Collaborative Learning Institute; Attendee	2019
	Parkway Professional Learning Community Institute; PLC Leader	2018

	Parkway West Reading/Writing Workshop Cohort; Member Kagan Secondary Cooperative Learning Summer Institute; Attendee	2017, 2018 2017
Columbia University; Teachers College	Reading/Writing Project Book Club Institute; Attendee Writing Workshop Summer Institute; Attendee Reading Workshop Summer Institute; Attendee	2018 2018 2017
Solution Tree	PLCs at Work Institute; Attendee	2018
Columbia Public Schools	MNEA Technology Integration Seminar; Attendee	2017

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Literacy Research Association (LRA)
Approaches to Discourse Analysis Study Group (LRA)
Teacher Education Research Study Group (LRA; TERSG)
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
English Language Arts Teacher Educators (ELATE)
Yoga Alliance (Registered Yoga Teacher; 200 Hour)

REFERENCES

James S. Chisholm, Ph.D
University of Louisville
Dissertation Advisor
james.chisholm@louisville.edu
(502) 852-0791

Amy Seely Flint, Ph.D
University of Louisville
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Auburn University

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