

“I Do Want to Know”: Becoming an Effective Teacher of Students of Color

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Abstract

This action research study explores what aspects of the background, teacher training and life experience of four white teachers helped them to develop the skills and abilities necessary to successfully connect with and form positive working relationships with students of color. In semi-structured interviews and classroom observations of the research participants, the teachers shared and demonstrated their personal experiences, training and approaches to instructing and forming relationships with students of color. The researcher analyzed the data using a qualitative action research methodological approach. The data analysis revealed four themes for improving teacher practice: 1) classroom strategies, 2) work on self, 3) work on relationships with students, and 4) specific qualities to cultivate. Research participants shared suggestions and recommended resources to their faculty peers who want to better connect with and support the learning of students of color.

Keywords: Students of color, relationships, action research, high school

I Do Want to Know: Becoming an Effective Teacher of Students of Color

The majority of teachers at Conservatory Now!¹ (CN), an inner-city performing arts school, are white. (Conservatory Now!, 2017). Many white CN teachers have experienced difficulties forming positive and effective working relationships with students of color, and are unsure how to proceed. Parents of color have reported white teachers ignoring them at conferences or never responding to parent communication (personal communication, 2014-2016). Student of color have shared that one teacher advised students of color to drop her subject because “you will never go to college anyway” (personal communication with students, 2017). Students often ask faculty of color to advocate on their behalf with white teachers and help resolve interpersonal issues. At various times, white teachers have labeled students of color as “loud,” “difficult,” “pushy,” “arrogant and entitled,” “angry for no reason,” and “a little fool” (personal communication with various faculty members, 2014-2018). CN administration immediately investigates and responds to all allegations and complaints of teacher misconduct. However, even when administration decides to terminate the employment of a biased teacher, the problem is only eliminated for CN’s students. The terminated teacher will take their biased views with them to their next school.

A small number of white teachers at CN connect well with all the students in their classrooms. Some white teachers currently on faculty seem to need assistance, guidance and training in order to more effectively teach students of color. The purpose of this study is to examine how some white teachers at CN consistently and successfully connect with and form positive working relationships with students of color. What aspects of these teachers’

¹ The name of the school and teacher research participants have been changed to protect their identity.

background, teacher training, and/or life experiences have helped them to develop the skills and abilities necessary to successfully instruct and connect with students from diverse backgrounds?

Literature Review

“Educational spaces are saturated with ‘colorblind racism’.” (Chapman, 2013, p. 614). U.S. educational institutions both perpetuate and reinforce racist ideologies and social structures (Chapman, 2013; Henfield & Washington, 2012; and Soumah & Hoover, 2013). Students of color and poor students experience racism and discrimination in schools (Soumah & Hoover, 2013). In white majority high schools, the connections between colorblindness and white privilege, and the maintenance of white supremacy, pose significant challenges for students of color to overcome (Chapman, 2013).

Educators’ denial and dismissal of the daily reality of students of color leads to the continuation of the achievement gap. Recurrent themes in educational research include the need for improved teacher preparation, the inclusion of students’ voices and expertise in the classroom, and greater attention to nurturing authentic relationships between privileged white teachers and disadvantaged and/or marginalized students of color. These themes relate directly to the inquiry of this action research project.

Inadequate Teacher Preparation

“More than any other time in U.S. history, Black students are being educated by people who are not of their racial or cultural background” (Douglas et. al, 2008, p. 48). White and/or middle class teachers often lack life experience or personal knowledge about cultures other than their own (Henfield & Washington, 2012). Some teacher education programs are attempting to rectify this gap in white, middle-class teachers’ experience and knowledge of the cultural

backgrounds of their future students (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017). However, it is still common for teachers to leave school without acquiring the ability or knowledge to connect with and effectively teach students from a wide variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017, Henfield & Washington, 2012).

White teachers often hold a “deficit perspective,” which assumes students of color come from backgrounds that are lacking in comparison to the backgrounds of white students (Douglas et. al, 2008, p. 48). This perspective influences some teachers to make assumptions about the basic intelligence, potential, and abilities of students of color (Henfield & Washington, 2012). Teachers need detailed training and guidance on how to create and nurture student-teacher relationships (Phillippo, 2012). Without this training, white teachers will continue to duplicate the mistakes of the past and the students of color will continue to receive a different educational experience from their white peers.

Ignoring Student Voices & Expertise

White teachers can often be resistant to raising their consciousness about race, racism and privilege (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017). In order to positively impact all students’ educational experience, achievement and future outcomes, educators and researchers must actively listen to the voices students of color and students living in poverty (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017; Phillippo, 2012; Soumah & Hoover, 2013).

Nurturing Authentic Student-Teacher Relationships

Research supports teacher personalism as an effective means of improving student achievement (Phillippo, 2012). In teacher personalism, teachers consciously develop personal relationships to guide and support struggling students in success, both in and out of school

(Phillippo, 2012). Teacher efforts to engage with their students can promote students developing greater trust of teachers and schools, which in turn can influence greater student engagement, better behavior, and more motivation to succeed academically (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017; Phillippo, 2012, Soumah & Hoover, 2013). Effective teacher-student relationships must be founded on “teacher caring,” or goodwill and positive regard for students (Phillippo, 2012, p. 445). Teachers form better relationships with their students when they respect students’ unique viewpoints and expertise (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017).

Teacher “personalism works best when it acknowledges and engages students’ sociocultural and institutional contexts” (Phillippo, 2012, p. 462). Brown and Rodriguez (2017) stress the importance of teachers utilizing “critical consciousness,” or demonstrate an understanding of the ways social iniquities disproportionately affect communities of color and other marginalized communities, and a willingness to speak and act on this perspective. (pp. 88-89). Teachers must have honest conversations with students about race, racism, and social justice (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017). Students of color and students living in poverty benefit from exposure to white teachers who can address the deficiencies of the dominant culture and are aware of the benefits conferred on them by their white and/or middle class identity (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017). Phillippo (2012) likewise stresses that teachers must be aware of their own internalized racism, reflected in unexplored beliefs about students’ families, backgrounds, and communities. By addressing their own racism, teachers can lead their classrooms in a frank, open exploration of internalized racism and guide students in releasing harmful beliefs potentially impacting their motivation and dreams for the future (Soumah & Hoover, 2013).

Methods

The methodology used for this research project is qualitative research. The method is action research. Action research is well suited to the questions being investigated because, as Merriam and Tisdell (2017) write, “its purpose is to either solve this practical problem or at least to find a way to further enhance what is already positive in a practice situation; it is always focused on the improvement of practice” (p. 50). Studying the experiences and knowledge of successful teachers at CN will help CN teachers who are struggling to reach all the students in their classroom.

Participants

The faculty at Conservatory Now! (CN) is predominately white. Only 11% or eight teachers of the seventy-three person CN arts and academic faculty are people of color (Conservatory Now!, 2018). In contrast, approximately 35% or 190 of the 550-person CN student body come from communities of color. I selected these four teachers through purposeful sampling (Merriam and Tisdell, pp. 96). I canvassed among students, parents, faculty and administration for recommendations of white teachers who were successful in creating positive working relationships with students of color. These four teachers were each recommended by multiple people. I intentionally chose a male and a female academic teacher and a male and a female arts teacher. I contacted each teacher via email to inform them of my research project, to ask their permission to observe them teaching and to interview them after the observation. Each teacher extended a warm invitation to schedule observations and interviews.

The four teacher research participants included Sandy, full time faculty member in the Theatre Department; Miles, the Instrumental Music Department Chair; Darren, the Science

Department Chair, and Korley, a Spanish teacher in the World Languages Department. Korley is the youngest teacher, with five years of teaching experience. She is in the middle of her first year at CN, and taught for three years before joining the CN faculty, plus worked at Concordia Language Villages for one year in college. Darren has taught both modern dance and science at CN for nine years, with an additional five years of teaching experience. In addition to teaching at CN, Sandy is a freelance-director, a playwright, and co-Artistic Director of a local theater company. She has taught at CN since 2010, and has twenty years of total teaching experience, including theater residencies. Miles is a pianist, composer, studio faculty member at a local college, and an ensemble director. Miles taught for four years before joining CN in 2010. The four teacher research participants, like the majority of the CN faculty, are between the ages of 25 and 50 and come from a middle class income and lifestyle.

School, Observation and Interview Settings

Conservatory Now! (CN) is a Midwestern, inner city performing arts high school. CN offers a traditional high school academic education, alongside a rigorous artistic training in dance, music, and theater. CN's intention is to educate and train students for college and conservatory, and professional artistic careers. (Conservatory Now!, 2017, p. 4) "CN is a public charter school" (Conservatory Now!, 2017, p. 5) with students in grades 9-12. CN does not hold auditions. Instead, "CN commits to serve as many interested students as possible." (Conservatory Now!, 2017, p. 5) "A majority of students come to CN from home districts within the Twin Cities metro area." (Conservatory Now!, 2017, p. 6) The student body is 65% white and 35% of color: 17% Black, 11% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 2% American Indian (Conservatory Now!, 2017, p.6).

The setting for each observation was the teacher's classroom a building in CN's downtown campus. The four classrooms visited for observations include the second largest theater space on campus (Sandy); a chemistry classroom (Darren), a world language classroom (Korley), and the orchestra rehearsal room (Miles). I interviewed Miles and Sandy in my office, on the first floor of the main campus building. I interviewed Darren in his classroom, and Korley in a study hall classroom. Observations and interviews occurred during the school day.

Observation Procedures

I completed participant observations with field notes of four teachers at Conservatory Now! (CN). I observed the physical setting of the classrooms and the activities, interactions and conversations participants engaged in with students of various backgrounds (Mirriam & Tisdell, 2017, p. 141). I wrote notes of my observations and typed them up later, adding observations and fleshing out the shorthand writing. In a previous role at Conservatory Now!, students primarily saw me in classrooms in connections to my disciplinarian duties. As a result, students often both consciously and unconsciously altered their behavior when I was in the classroom. For this reason, during classroom observations I made efforts to keep my participation and conversations with students to a minimum, and showed through my body language that I was there to silently observe the teacher, not the class. All four teachers allowed me to sit in a corner of the room to take notes. As far as I know, only one teacher, Sandy, explained my presence to her class.

Interview Procedures

My choice to conduct semi-structured interviews with the four research participants ensured collection of specific demographic information from all participants, while allowing

participants to share their unique experiences and viewpoints on relevant topics. (Merriam and Tisdell, pp. 110-111). Teacher research participants answered seventeen questions. Each interview lasted 30-40 minutes. The first ten were mainly demographic questions (Merriam and Tisdell, p. 118) that queried participants about their racial or ethnic identity, family of origin, background and life experiences. The next seven questions asked participants to describe how their teacher training and prior life experiences prepared them to teach at CN, how students' voices inform their teaching and how they develop and negotiate relationships with students who have a cultural background different from their own. Participants offered recommendations and suggested resources for peers who are struggling to connect to students of color in their classroom.

Each participants gave their permission for me to record their interview. I used the Voice Memo application on my cell phone while taking handwritten notes. Later, I transferred the Voice Memo recordings to VoiceRecorder, an application, which transcribes audio to text. I then copied the VoiceRecorder transcription to a Google Doc and used the "Voice Typing" feature on Google Docs to correct all VoiceRecorder transcription errors. All student names were changed in the interview transcriptions.

Biases and Triangulation

At the time of the study, I was a member of the Conservatory Now! community, having worked at the school for four years as both a department chair and a dean-counselor. The four research participants were colleagues and, in the case of Miles and Sandy, also artistic collaborators. I am a trained artist and in my youth I attended a college-level conservatory. Like 35% of the CN student body that is of color (Conservatory Now!, 2017, p. 6), I am a woman of

color. I rarely had a teacher of color during neither my K-12 education nor when I was a student in higher education. I am passionate about accessible arts education and educational equity for students of color. As an insider in multiple communities at CN - as an arts teacher, a woman of color, and a conservatory-trained artist - I entered into this “practical action research project” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 54) with several biases.

In an attempt “to increase the ‘credibility’ of [my] findings” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 244), I used three methods of data collection: a review of relevant literature, field notes of teacher observations, and teacher interviews. I increased the number of teacher participants from two to four in an effort to have greater depth to my research and in hopes of reaching saturation in my research, or the point at which a researcher “begin[s] to see or hear the same things over and over again, and no new information surfaces as [the researcher] collect[s] more data” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 248). Each step in this action research project was reviewed by my University of St. Thomas, Education Specialist cohort classmates and my instructor, Dr. Jean-Pierre Bongila.

Description of the Analysis Method

I analyzed the categories and themes of the four sets of classroom observation field notes and the four interviews by highlighting all significant words and phrases in the transcription, and writing key codes in the margins. Observation Codes are on page 22, Table A1. Interview Code are on pages 24-27, Tables A3-A6. After coding the field notes and interview transcriptions, I organized the codes into various categories and themes, as see in Table A2, A7 and A8 on pages 23, 28, and 29. The four larger themes include classroom strategies, work on self, work on relationships with students, and specific qualities to cultivate. The teachers also provided a list

of resources for teachers interested in raising their consciousness. This list can be found on page 30-31.

Findings and Conclusions

Classroom Strategies

The classroom observation revealed multiple classroom strategies that the four research participants shared. All four research participants actively and intentionally demonstrated kindness, positivity and patience. They were persistent in their goal of sharing their knowledge with students. Each teacher made an effort to form genuine, positive connections with each of their students. This was demonstrated in each teacher's efforts to call all students by the correct name and to respond to all questions. These intentional practices run counter to the experiences of many students of color at Conservatory Now! who have shared stories with me of white teachers calling them the wrong name through an entire semester, never making eye-contact, or not greeting them in either the hallway or in the classroom (personal communication, 2014-2018).

In one powerful moment observed while I was Sandy's theatre class, a student quietly said, "thank you" to Sandy. Sandy heard her, sought the student's eye contact and said in a loud, clear voice, "You're welcome." This small moment felt significant. It demonstrated Sandy's respect and conscious awareness of each student's humanity, burgeoning adulthood and sense of self.

More than one teacher embraced chaos in their classroom, and a broad range of student activity and engagement. Rather than forcing students to attend to the lesson or berating them for a perceived lack of focus, teachers honored students' agency, their capacity to act

independently and to make their own choices. Teacher focused on capturing students' attention by conveying enthusiasm for the subject matter, as Darren did when explaining a science lab assignment with great animation and joy, and as Miles did by relying on jokes, teasing and gentle sarcasm. All four teachers honored students' voices and collaborated with students in the delivery of the lessons. Teachers were flexible in the format of the lessons, and solicited students' preferences and input.

Korley demonstrated an awareness of the dynamics of power and privilege in the classroom. Noticing that a group of students were talking over a student who was answering the teacher's question, Korley politely asked the first student to pause. Korley then asked the disruptive students, who were white, to stop talking and apologize to the first student, who was a person of color. Korley's intervention modeled respectful behavior, honored a student's voices, and directed students in the creation of a classroom culture of mutual respect and support.

Korley further demonstrated Culturally Responsive Teaching practice (Brown University, 2018) with the classroom activities based on the song "Somos sur" by Anita Tijoux, a Chilean rapper, featuring Palestinian rapper, Shadia Mansour. She led the class in exploring multilayered themes of colonization, female empowerment, and experiences of marginalized people in the rap lyrics. Korley gave an Arab American student the opportunity to share her cultural knowledge and Arabic linguistic knowledge with the class by translating the Arabic words of the Palestinian rapper.

All four teachers struck a balance between high standards and loving support. Miles and Sandy excelled at using positive reinforcement and gentle redirection. Even when redirecting a disruptive student, Miles was gentle and non-confrontational, choosing to quietly speak the

student's name multiple times until he caught the student's attention, and then only shaking his head once. When the student stopped the disruption, Miles thanked him. Both Miles and Sandy demonstrated the concept of recognizing and celebrating student achievement. In her class, Sandy frequently said "awesome" or "perfect." Her comments were repetitions of the same two or three words, but it was clear she was genuinely commenting about the specific student's work she was observing, rather than offering a blanket, "one size fits all" general comment. She would identify a student by name or vary her intonation and resonance of her words of praise to suit the moment. Miles makes similar approving and encouraging comments, such as "Nice. It was good." and "Not bad, not bad. Alright." His focus was firmly on what his students' had accomplished, rather than how far they had to travel to acquire a new skill.

Work on Self

To successfully teach students of color, the four research participants agreed the typical white teacher must first commit to working on her- or himself. If he or she has never interacted with people of color and is unaware of her/his privilege and social dominance, it is imperative that s/he seek out new experiences that will challenge his or her reality and assumptions. The research participants suggested white teachers can start with reading new books, expanding his or her circle of acquaintances and friends to include people of color, experiencing what it is like to be part of a minority, or being a foreigner through travel and immersing him- or herself in another culture. These actions, either alone or combined, can expand their viewpoint and enrich their worldview. At CN, teachers who hope to connect with their students on a deep level must create art and seek out a wide variety of teaching experiences. CN students are generally creative thinkers and learn in ways not often addressed in teacher training. Knowledge of the

arts and a wide repertoire of unique ways to teach standard material if of great benefit working with this population. Finally, building a relationship with a mentor can help a new teacher avoid many of the common pitfalls of the new teacher confronting their first teaching assignment in a diverse school district, or teaching students from a different cultural background from their own.

Work on Relationships with Students

Each participant stressed the importance of forming relationships with their students of color. The relationship building with students who do not share their ethnicity or cultural background may require more forethought and planning. Teachers must invest in and actively construct a positive, working relationship with each student of color. The data revealed steps toward building a positive working relationship between teachers and students, starting with being your genuine yourself, and remembering that nothing is personal. As one participant, Sandy said, "...if you can just train yourself [to remember]: it's not personal and you're still gonna have your job tomorrow...." Each participant likewise stressed that, when interacting with students, they attempt to focus on what matters: the student & the relationship. Participants shared a desire to genuinely get to know their students and become involved in their lives. Participants also repeatedly mentioned "validating and affirming" their students identity, background, behavior and choices, thereby honoring students' voices. When issues and disagreements between the participants and their students occur, participants shared a willingness to admit mistakes and to make efforts to earn or recover students' trust through support, praise, and a willingness to talk openly and directly about "the elephants in the room:" racism, privilege, and social justice.

Qualities to Cultivate

Finally, throughout the four interviews participants mentioned qualities to be cultivated by a teacher who, like them, is dedicated to teaching all the students in their room. There was a mix of qualities that will benefit the teacher as a professional including courage, self-awareness, charm, charisma, to name a few, and qualities that will help in the creation of positive, working relationships with all of their students, including empathy, flexibility, patience, and being respectful. For a full list of qualities, please see Table 8: Qualities to Cultivate on page 26.

Conclusions

In interviewing four white teachers from Conservatory Now!, the data showed that there are concrete actions a teacher can take to ensure greater success when teaching students of color. These findings lead to new questions about white teachers at CN who are struggling to connect with students of color in their classroom. The four teachers I interviewed shared a wealth of knowledge and experience that is currently not being shared with the larger school community. These findings suggest opportunities for growth within our school, especially if administration was to fully utilize the expertise of specific teachers, such as Sandy, Miles, Darren and Korley, to mentor teachers that are struggling to connect to all the students in their classroom.

The data revealed a list of traits and defining characteristics of teachers who have found success with students of color. Through hiring more experienced, perhaps older, teachers with arts experience who actively question white privilege and other aspects of the status quo and are willing to pursue continuing education and personal growth, CN would have a greater rate of success retaining and educating students of color.

The four research participants, Korley, Darren, Sandy and Miles, are white teachers who have opened their own eyes to issues such as colorblind racism, white privilege and the historical

and present-day underpinnings of the achievement gap. The four share a Midwestern upbringing and education. Exposure to resources, training and life experiences filled in the gaps in their life experiences and education, and raised their own “critical consciousness” (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017, pp. 88-89). Raising their consciousness and becoming more “woke,” or aware of social injustice and motivated to work for change, has helped them better understand the realities and life experiences of their students of color.

Strategies for Improving the Impact of White Educators

Through the formation of student-teacher relationships founded on trust, caring, cultural understanding, critical social consciousness and high expectations for the student, student engagement and achievement can be realized (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017; Chapman, 2013; Phillippo, 2012; and Soumah & Hoover, 2013). In order to achieve this imperative, teachers, especially those who are white and middle class, must expand their perspective and actively listen to the voices of all their students. With this goal in mind, I identified four concrete actions White educators can take to better engage students of color and become more effective in the classroom. Suggested solutions to improve the positive impact of white educators in culturally diverse classrooms include:

Immersive Stateside Study: White teachers living and working in a multicultural and diverse environments where white people are the minority and do not hold all the power.

A Teacher Mentorship Program for white teachers, begun during in-service and continued through the first 3 years of teaching, with teacher-mentors who are well-versed in social activism and committed to educational equity.

Digital Social Justice Library with books, films, and art to foster social justice learning and motivation to effect change (see Resource list on page 30-31).

Educator Hiring Profile with specific qualities and life/education experiences for use by school administrators searching for dynamic, culturally competent, 21st century K-12 educators, capable of effectively teaching all students.

Continuing Impact of This Research Project

At the suggestion the of my doctoral advisor, Dr. Aura Wharton-Beck, and with the encouragement of my University of St. Thomas professor, Dr. Bongila, I submitted a proposal to present my research at the 31st Annual Ethnographic & Qualitative Research Conference (EQRC) in Las Vegas, NV. My proposal was accepted and I will be presenting my research at the EQRC on February 26, 2019 in a poster session. I have uploaded my research paper, conference poster and a curated list of social justice activism and education equity resources to my professional website: www.ilahrleigh.com. I continue to use the findings from my research in my current work at Perpich Arts High School in Golden Valley, MN, where I am a member of the Music Department faculty and serve as the Performing Arts Departments representative on the Instructional Leadership Team.

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² Again, the name of the institution has been changed throughout this document to preserve the anonymity of the research participants.

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Appendix A

Tables

Table A1

Classroom Observation Codes

Sandy ³ Codes	Darren Codes	Korley Codes	Miles Codes
Individual Connection Recognition of students Demonstrating loving support and high standards Asking students to recognize each other’s achievements Tracking and celebrating student progress Acceptance of personal error Leading students in honoring each other Genuine, personal and positive connection to each student Very respectful to students Enthusiastic, loving instruction Deeply pleasant Genuinely pleased when student arrives, even when arriving late Kind, thoughtful Focused on work Nothing is personal Knows each student’s name Look directly in each students’ eyes when she speaks to them Offers private, one-on-one instruction separate from the larger group/Students never called out in front of group	Answers all questions, no matter how many Calls students by name Very engaged, contagious enthusiasm transmits to students Fun atmosphere Teacher honors student’s agency; students choose whether to engage Create a fun learning environment Answers some questions one-on-one in a low voice; preserving student’s privacy Patient	Modeling respect for students of color to white students Very respectful to students Culturally responsive teaching Endlessly patient Enthusiastic High tolerance for chaos and disruption Nice, and insistent High standards Pleasant Elicits students opinions and preferences	Trusts and believes students Holds them to high standards without shame Honors student agency - students are invited to participate, not required Students and teachers as co-collaborators Learning despite chaos Kind Patient Persistent Gentle Acceptance of personal error and imperfection Humor Complimentary of students

³ All names of research participants have been changed to ensure their anonymity.

Table A2

Classroom Observation Categories & Themes

Theme 1: Classroom strategies	Theme 2: Personal qualities	
Genuine, Individual, Positive connections Recognition & celebration of student achievement Loving support and high standards Creating a classroom culture of respect and support Honor student agency Culturally responsive teaching Honor student voices Embracing chaos and imperfection	Collaborative Trust Gentle Humor Tolerant Accepting Pleasant Persistent	Enthusiasm Positive Genuine Kind Thoughtful Acceptance Patience Fun

Table A3

Korley Interview Codes

Korley Codes 1	Korley Codes 2	Korley Codes 3
<p>Mentor who "suggested [she] look into teaching for social justice"</p> <p>Experienced being a minority as a White American person</p> <p>Experience teaching in a school where the majority of students are of color</p> <p>Exposed to books, new ideas, new training, and new systems of behavioral interventions</p> <p>Social justice</p> <p>Dr. Sharroky-Hollie and Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching</p> <p>Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports</p> <p>ENVoY – Elementary School behavior management system</p> <p>"Building and Bridging" - teaching students how to code switch, without denigrating their home culture/language</p>	<p>Neither her college experience, nor student teaching fully prepared her for teaching students of color</p> <p>"Heavily focused on relationships"</p> <p>Listening to students' voices and their preferences</p> <p>Honesty</p> <p>"Validating and affirming"</p> <p>"I do want to know." - desire to know her students and be involved in their lives</p> <p>"Trying to help them reflect a little"</p> <p>Student's voices: "The content is them."</p> <p>Marking cultural relevant events in her lessons</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Wide variety of teaching experiences</p> <p>Multi-ethnic family</p>	<p>Building relationships</p> <p>Listening</p> <p>Making an effort to break through the prison of white privilege</p> <p>Don't be neutral – not possible as a privileged white person</p> <p>Connect</p> <p>Leave your white privilege bubble</p> <p>Expose yourself to other people's realities</p> <p>Life experience</p> <p>Be the minority</p> <p>Be the foreigner</p> <p>Become immersed in someone else's culture</p> <p>Leave your safe zone</p> <p>Empathy</p> <p>Multi-lingual/multi-cultural</p>

Table A4

Darren Interview Codes

Darren Codes 1	Darren Codes 2	Darren Codes 3
<p>Family background and hometown – little exposure to people of color Examine your life and your own privilege - white/male/straight Read to open your mind Formative experiences White Privilege Backpack exercise Ethno-biography Early positive experience with a peer of color Day of Presence/Day of Absence Talking through race in a safe space Develop self-awareness and greater awareness of the humanity of people of color Experience being the minority Remaining neutral in response to evidence of student trauma</p>	<p>Wide variety of teaching experience Teaching dance at CN Teaching at dance studios Teaching Science at a Native American charter school. Teaching at a school that was majority African American Two Master of Teaching programs Gaining students trust Exposure to new ideas The Invisible Backpack – Peggy McIntosh Ruby Payne on poverty Code-Switching Podcast Waking Up White – Debby Irving Be yourself Be reflective Reconnecting and rebuilding the relationship with a student after an issue has developed</p>	<p>Be yourself Don't push Not taking on students' issues Get to know the student as an individual, know what they like Allowing the relationship to build over time Honesty Be in touch with your feelings and talk about them with students Listen to students and honor their truth Provide support Show you care Pay attention to your students Accept the kids as they are Spend time with them Continual education Self-reflection Privilege Be honest and direct in talking about race and privilege</p>

Table A5

Miles Interview Codes

Miles Vasich Codes 1	Miles Codes 2	Miles Codes 3
<p>Ethnic white identity (Serbian father) Experienced being a minority due to his politics; grew up as a liberal Democrat in a conservative, majority white hometown Experienced being the minority as a white teacher at a local community music school in the African American community.. Their missions is "to create a music learning community rooted in the African American experience..." Wide variety of teaching experiences Give students leadership opportunities Show students you believe in them</p>	<p>Poor teacher training experience in college Not well trained to teach students of color Talking openly and honestly about race Empathy It's not personal. Reflection Talk with students Get to know your students and what they're interested in Honor student's voices Address problems directly Mentor teachers</p>	<p>Self-Knowledge Honest conversations about race and privilege Humor Don't take self too seriously Open, honest conversation Respecting students when disciplining Creating a culture of positive learning, mutual respect, responsibility to the group Mutually beneficial relationship Develop relationships Show interest and care</p>

Table A6

Sandy Interview Codes

Sandy Codes 1	Sandy Codes 2	Sandy Codes 3
<p>Life experience Life experiences as a lesbian Social and racial justice Extensive, varied teaching experience "I think teachers have to have tools in the toolbox and it usually comes from these other great environments." Don't assume students will respect your authority Don't assume students will form a bond with you right away Be conscious of what authority means in different students' lives Invest in relationships with your students Learn your students' names and learn to pronounce them correctly. Praise Encouragement Humor Meet kids where they are, rather than forcing them to come to you. Be flexible Be authentic Know who you are Don't make students educate everyone in the room. That is the teacher's job.</p>	<p>Exposure to new ideas: Growing Up White Tim Weiss' books True equity and a truly equitable classroom – not fair, but equitable Negotiating Apologize and repair your relationship, when you unintentionally harm or damage your relationship with a student. Humor Honesty Direct communication "Figure out what do they need and how that can happen" Give students options Allow growth to happen over time. Allow relationships to build over time. Allow flexibility in your interactions with your students. "We do not grow as learners by trying to teach other people that we're right." Avoid issues when exploring difficult topics by structuring lessons, "Every discussion was centered around specific questions." Plan the learning. "Contain and set boundaries on the discussions" so every student is safe.</p>	<p>Take emotions out of contentious situations. Make every voice, even the unpopular, unlovable voices, heard by all students. Give everyone's opinions space. Suzan-Lori Parks, playwright Patience Flexibility Listen Diversity of materials available. Allow students some choice in their materials of their curriculum. Curiosity about the world and about people. Love young people. Learn about white privilege. "Think about the structure of 'teacher as authority' and 'student following authority.'" "Prioritize the relationship...over having a sense of order in the class" Apologize to students if you have hurt them. Repair relationships Trauma - learn about it "Train yourself: it's not personal and your still gonna have your job tomorrow" Gain work and life experience in environments where you are the minority. "Self-learning"</p>

Table A7

Interview Categories and Themes

Theme 1: Work on Self	Theme 2: Work on Relationships	Theme 3: Qualities to cultivate
Commit to Growth Seek to Know More Create Art Live more Leave the White Privilege Bubble Get to Know POC Immerse Yourself in Another Culture Teach more Find a Mentor	Be Yourself Nothing is Personal Focus on What Matters: the Student & the Relationship Get to Know Your Students Validate and Affirm Honor Students' Voices Become Involved Admit Mistakes Talk About the Elephant Earn Their Trust Form Relationships Praise Support Share Your Power	Honesty Flexibility Empathy Self-Awareness Courage Love Thoughtful Trustworthy Patience Respect Curiosity Responsibility

Table A8

Categories and Themes for Classroom Observations and Interviews

Theme 1: Classroom Strategies	Theme 2: Work on Self	Theme 3: Work on Relationships	Theme 4: Qualities to cultivate
<p>Create genuine, individual, positive connections</p> <p>Recognize & celebrate student achievement</p> <p>Offer loving support and high standards</p> <p>Create a classroom culture of respect and support</p> <p>Honor student agency</p> <p>Engage in culturally responsive teaching</p> <p>Honor student voices</p> <p>Embrace chaos and imperfection</p> <p>Collaborate with students on their learning</p> <p>Use humor and fun</p> <p>Convey enthusiasm for subject matter</p> <p>Be aware of dynamics of power and privilege in the classroom</p>	<p>Commit to Growth</p> <p>Seek to Know More</p> <p>Create Art</p> <p>Live more</p> <p>Leave the White Privilege Bubble</p> <p>Get to Know POC</p> <p>Immerse Yourself in Another Culture</p> <p>Teach more</p> <p>Find a Mentor</p>	<p>Be Yourself</p> <p>Nothing is Personal</p> <p>Focus on What Matters: the Student & the Relationship</p> <p>Get to Know Your Students</p> <p>Validate and Affirm</p> <p>Honor Students' Voices</p> <p>Become Involved</p> <p>Admit Mistakes</p> <p>Talk About the Elephant</p> <p>Earn Their Trust</p> <p>Form Relationships</p> <p>Praise</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Share Your Power</p>	<p>Honest</p> <p>Flexible</p> <p>Empathic</p> <p>Self-Aware</p> <p>Courageous</p> <p>Loving</p> <p>Thoughtful</p> <p>Trustworthy</p> <p>Patient</p> <p>Respectful</p> <p>Curious</p> <p>Responsible</p> <p>Gentle</p> <p>Tolerant</p> <p>Charming</p> <p>Persistent</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Kind</p> <p>Accepting</p> <p>Charismatic</p>

Appendix B

Recommended Resources

Tim Weiss' books

Suzan-Lori Parks' plays

Delpit, L., & Dowdy, J. (Eds.). (2008). *The skin that we speak : Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom*. New York, NY: London: New Press ; Turnaround [distributor].

Glynn, C., Wesely, P., & Wassell, B. (2014). *Words and Actions: Teaching Languages Through the Lens of Social Justice*. Alexandria, VA: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Hansberry, L. (1994). *A Raisin in the Sun / Lorraine Hansberry ; with an introduction by Robert Nemiroff*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Hollie, S. (2017). *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning*. (Second ed.).
Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Education.

Landsman, J. (2008). *Growing Up White*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Loewen, J. (2008). *Lies my teacher told me : Everything your American history textbook got wrong*. New York, NY: New Press.

Montgomery, A., Thompson, M., & Chow, K. (Producers). (2016-2018). *Code Switch* [Podcast Series]. NPR. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch>

Rothenberg, & Rothenberg, Paula S. (Ed.). (2012). *White privilege : Essential readings on the other side of racism* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Worth.

Simon, R. I. (1992). *Teaching against the grain : Texts for a pedagogy of possibility / Roger I. Simon*. (Critical studies in education and culture series). New York, NY: Bergin & Garvey.

Tatum, B. (2017). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? : And other conversations about race*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Zinn, H., & Emery, K. (1997). *A people's history of the United States*. (Teaching ed.). New York, NY: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton.