INTERROGATING RACISM: AN ARTS-BASED SELF-STUDY OF THE INTERACTIONS OF ONE WHITE TEACHER EDUCATOR IN A RURAL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

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INTERROGATING RACISM: AN ARTS-BASED SELF-STUDY OF THE INTERACTIONS OF ONE WHITE TEACHER EDUCATOR IN A RURAL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

By

JAIME J. VANENKEVORT

THESIS
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SIGNATURE APPROVAL FORM

Interrogating Racism: An Arts-based Self-study of the Interactions of One White Teacher Educator in A Rural Teacher Preparation Program

This thesis by Jaime J. VanEnkevort is recommended for approval by the student’s Thesis Committee and Department Head in the Department of The School of Education, Leadership, and Public Service and by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

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ABSTRACT

INTERROGATING RACISM: AN ARTS-BASED SELF-STUDY OF THE INTERACTIONS OF ONE WHITE TEACHER EDUCATOR IN A RURAL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

By
Jaime J. VanEnkevort

This arts-based self-study examined racism, whiteness, and white supremacy in the practices of one teacher educator in a rural, Midwestern university. Data was generated using arts-based methods. Narrative inquiry and critical incident technique (CIT) were utilized to analyze data. Through arts-based self-study techniques, I demonstrate how arts-based self-study can create diverse and multimodal access to understand identity construction and the effort to dismantle racism and other systemic barriers in the teacher education context. Furthermore, through multimodal arts-based data collection, I demonstrate the possibility for educators to navigate complex memory and emotional processing to develop more complex, nuanced understandings of antiracist identity through an intersectional lens. Finally, through the use of CIT and narrative analysis, I demonstrate how studying an “extreme” event in the research spring boarded me into a more complex and nuanced understanding of abolition, racism, and ABAR teaching in the teaching and learning event.
DEDICATION

For Brent, forever in the waves on the Cliffs of Superior

For Justin, and Harlow, and Maris.

For my mother, my father, my sister, my brothers.

And for Mary Oliver who taught me

We all have our place

in the family of Things.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge the mentorship of my colleague and thesis chair, Dr. Kristen White. You helped me keep my iron in the fire, and motivated me to pull the work out when it needed to cool.

I am grateful to Dr. Bethney Bergh, advisor and friend, and to Drs. Laura Kennedy and Wendy Farkas, my committee members. Your encouraging words and justice-oriented leadership as women in higher education continue to inspire.

I acknowledge, also, Dr. Christi Edge; your time, energy, and critical friendship played a significant role in the development of this work. Your way-of-being empowers.

I thank Dr. Joe Lubig, for your continued nudge and belief in my skills and capacity.

I thank April Lindala, for her mentorship, guidance, and shared stories.

Finally, I give my thanks to my students, who teach me so much of what I have to learn. I offer a heartfelt and sincere miigwech to you all.

This thesis follows the format prescribed by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), Seventh Edition.
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INTRODUCTION

Overview

The institutionalized practices of whiteness, racism, and white supremacy (see Appendix A) in teacher education programs perpetuate the systemic dehumanization of Black, Brown, and Indigenous students in U.S. schooling institutions across the PK-16 spectrum (Love, 2019). Teacher education operates from the unique space of preparing the professionals who will enter this system and deliver the public social good of education; therefore, teacher education is uniquely positioned to disrupt the narratives that systemically advantage some while disadvantaging others in U.S. society. Similarly, the disruption of whiteness, racism, and white supremacy in a rural context comes with its own set of challenges, especially when rural areas are predominantly white.

The disruption of racism and other systems of oppression in U.S. schooling institutions is urgent. Whiteness, racism, and white supremacy have negative and harmful consequences for Black, Brown, and Indigenous students and people of Color in PK-16 and higher education institutions (Love, 2019; Matias & Boucher, 2021). Furthermore, PK-16 teaching remains a white majority profession in a field serving an increasingly diverse population of Black, Brown, and Indigenous students and people of Color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). For example, in 2018, the teaching profession in U.S. schools consisted of educators who were approximately 80% white, while Black, Brown, and Indigenous students and people of Color made up 52% of the student body (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Likewise, Teacher Candidates (TCs) enrolled in teacher preparation programs at Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) are predominantly white; according to the U.S. Department of Education (U.S.
DoE) and the Office of Postsecondary Education, in 2015, where as 74% of TCs were white, only 26% of TCs were Black, Brown, Indigenous, multiracial, or people of Color.

Teacher education programs have a critical role in disrupting whiteness, racism, and white supremacy in the teaching profession by increasing TCs' understanding of the racial oppression of people of Color (Matias & Boucher, 2021). Because white individuals are born into a racialized society in which whiteness is the “standard,” many white TCs do not or have not examined their whiteness and how they might perpetuate whiteness, racism, and white supremacy to actively uphold white hegemony and disadvantage people of Color (Tatum, 1992). A critical examination of whiteness and its impact on people of Color in teacher education programs has been identified as one actionable step teacher educators can take to disrupt the harm in education institutions (Annamma, 2015). Furthermore, the examination of whiteness, racism, and white supremacy in teacher education must exist with the goal of disrupting racism and other systemic barriers to increase awareness of the suffering experienced by Black, Brown, and Indigenous students and people of Color in education institutions (Matias & Boucher, 2021).

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, the study aimed to contribute insights for other teacher educators into the challenges and tensions white educators may experience in understanding their role in designing, implementing, and evaluating antibias antiracist (ABAR) curriculum (see Appendix A) to dismantle racism and other systemic barriers. Second, this study invites other white teacher educators to examine their pedagogy and teaching practices to dismantle racism and other systemic barriers.
As a white teacher educator, I benefit from whiteness even as I seek to disrupt it. The act of engaging in a self-study centering racism as a white educator is, in fact, an enactment of privilege (Ohito, 2020a; Samaras, 2011). The critical examination of whiteness in one self-study is problematic, as the study focuses on and centers the experiences of a white educator and predominantly white TCs. Additionally, while self-study offers a methodology where I can interrogate my personal and professional accountability and authenticity in the purposeful design, delivery, and evaluation of an ABAR curriculum in one pre-methods teacher education classroom (Samaras, 2011), the impact of racism on people of Color position my self-study differently as a white educator than Black, Brown, and Indigenous colleagues. As a white educator, I have not experienced the negative and harmful health outcomes of racism (Brondolo et al., 2009; Paradies, 2006). I acknowledge that this self-study, at the intersection of whiteness and racism as a white educator, is enacted from a place of privilege.

A critical examination of methodology and purpose were critical as I engaged in self-study research. In order to disrupt racism and white supremacy in my self-study, I examined how my own understandings and meaning makings with racial identity in a teacher education classroom influenced self-awareness and the awareness of TCs as to how people of Color are racially oppressed in education institutions (Matias & Boucher, 2021). Additionally, I worked to center the voices of Black, Brown, and Indigenous scholars, teachers, and students in this self-study project and better understand whiteness, racism, and white supremacy in my teaching of an ABAR curriculum. Furthermore, I consistently and consciously interrogated the data I generated during the self-study research to question and reflect on whether the data aligned with the disruption of whiteness, racism, and white supremacy in education. Last, I employed a critical understanding of authenticity (Kreber et al., 2007; Love, 2019) to interrogate how, when, and
where I center dark folx and the “mattering” of dark folx (Love, 2019, p. 49) in my teaching of ABAR curriculum.

Research Question

This self-study responds to Matias and Boucher (2021) and Ohito’s (2020a) call for teacher educators to critically interrogate whiteness, white supremacy, and racism in education institutions. Likewise, Han and Leonard (2016) argue that enactments of racism, whiteness, and white supremacy are more pronounced in rural areas and that there is a paucity of research examining diversity in teacher education in rural contexts. Thus, I sought to examine how my teaching of an ABAR curriculum in a pre-methods foundations course at a rural public university in the Midwest disrupts white supremacy and racism. The following research question guided this study:

1. How did I, as a white teacher educator in a rural context, use arts-based self-study to understand how whiteness impacts my interactions with TCs while enacting ABAR curriculum?

Literature Review

The Constructs of Race and Racism in Teacher Education

The study of race, whiteness, racism, and white supremacy in the field of teacher education is well-documented (hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Matias & Mackey, 2021; Tatum, 1992). Much of the extant literature on whiteness and antiracism in teacher education focuses on TCs' enactments of whiteness (Borsheim-Black, 2015; Haviland, 2008; Sleeter, 2017). White TCs' resistance to a critical understanding of race, or white resistance, has been
identified as a barrier to their willingness to adopt antiracist pedagogies (Tatum, 1992; Sleeter, 2017; Matias & Mackey, 2016). Furthermore, the rural context can provide additional challenges to teacher educators teaching critical pedagogies, as administrators, faculty, and white TCs in rural education settings have demonstrated more resistance to social justice education than their urban counterparts (Han & Leonard, 2016).

Reflections on enactments of whiteness alone, however, are problematic, as they re-center whiteness as the focus of the study. Drawing on Matias and Boucher (2021), centering the voices, experiences, and stories of people, students, and scholars of Color is critical in critical whiteness work to de-center whiteness as the focus of the study. Furthermore, critical whiteness work must move beyond the racial awareness of white individuals challenging the narratives which protect white innocence or white ignorance. Matias and Boucher (2021) argue that individuals are born into a culture deeply embedded in white supremacy and racism, and as a result, are socialized into the knowledge and enactments of racism and white supremacy. The claim of innocence or ignorance can be understood as a choice, which allows whites to deny culpability in acts of racism and white supremacy (Matias & Boucher, 2021). ABAR curriculum must move beyond white racial awareness into work that does not safeguard the privilege of whiteness, but protects, cultivates, and safeguards the potential of Black, Brown, and Indigenous children (Love, 2019). Additionally, ABAR curriculum works from a framework of abolition to focus the liberation and educational freedom of all students, most particularly those who experiences various systemic forms of oppression based on multiple, intersecting identities (Love, 2019).

While many studies focus on the attitudes and dispositions of white TCs in regard to ABAR teaching, less attention has been paid to the way white teacher educators enact whiteness
in the teacher education classroom (Ohito, 2020a). Conversely, teacher educators of Color have critically examined whiteness and white supremacy (Matias & Boucher, 2021; Ohito, 2016; Ohito; 2020a). Ohito (2020a) describes the pain teacher educators of Color experience and have experienced documenting and doing antiracist work in the predominantly white academy.

**White Bodies**

Race is a lived experience, one that takes place viscerally in the body. Ta Nehisi Coates (2015) and Resmaa Menakem (Tippet & Menakem, 2021) remind us that bodies are the locus of intellectualized political and social policy or mores. Policy, though intellectualized and abstracted, roots itself in the home of the body; the outcomes of policy are lived in Black, Brown, queer, trans, Latine/Latinx, Indigenous, and women’s, etc. bodies. Coates (2015) writes:

> But all our phrasing – race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy – serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this. You must remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body. (p. 10)

Ohito (2020a) connects the lived experience of race as enmeshed in the body in their study on enactments of whiteness in the ABAR teaching practice of one white teacher educator. Ohito (2020a; 2020b) describes race as performative and grounds her research in affect theory, examining how feelings influence teaching practices and interactions. Ohito’s (2020a) study is a call for white teacher educators to pay attention to feelings, and specifically, to bodies, in their delivery of ABAR curriculum to unlearn whiteness and racism in their pedagogical practice.
Acknowledging and focusing the personal, emotional work of unlearning racism is a critical part of antiracist pedagogy (Helms, 1990; hooks, 1994; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Tatum, 1992). Matias and Mackey (2016) argue emotional literacy is an essential part of ABAR teaching practice. Tatum (1992) argues that leaving the unaddressed emotional responses associated with issues of oppression can interfere with “cognitive understanding and mastery of the material” (pp. 1-2). Similarly, Ohito (2020a) draws attention to the need to focus on the emotional literacy of teacher educators as they work to deliver a true, authentic embodiment of ABAR teaching in the teacher education classroom.

**ABAR Teaching**

ABAR teaching assumes that racism is a learned behavior, and as such, can be unlearned (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Tatum, 1992). At its core, ABAR teaching seeks to resist and dismantle racism, white supremacy, and other institutional and systemic barriers in the field of education (Love, 2019; Matias & Mackey, 2021; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). ABAR teaching also acknowledges racism as institutional, systemic, and manifesting on every level of the current political, social, economic, and community situations (Love, 2019). Furthermore, ABAR teaching must extend beyond the identity of race to include the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality can be understood as the complex interplay of multiple identities (race, religion, language, gender, sexuality, etc.) which influence experiences of discrimination and oppression, as well as individual and community power (Crenshaw, 1989; Love, 2019). Understanding intersectionality in ABAR teaching allows for a complex examination of the ways in which multiple intersecting identities may compound to create increased systemic barriers for individuals in systems designed to oppress and destroy particular types of bodies.
Tatum (1992) defines racism as a system of advantage based on race, in which racism is harmful to all parties involved; while racism also harms white individuals, people of Color suffer most from the effects of racism. Additionally, Tatum (1992) defines the difference between racism and racial prejudice. Because of the social and cultural reinforcement behind the racially prejudiced actions of white individuals, only white individuals are capable of racism in the U.S. context (Tatum, 1992). Identity is critical to understanding discussions of racism in the U.S. context. Because racism is associated with a negative, fixed identity for many white Americans, claiming an enactment of racism becomes an act of identity (Kendi, 2020). Some white Americans will deny acts of racism despite overpowering evidence to the contrary in order to distance themselves from a racist identity (Love, 2019). In order to dismantle racism, Kendi (2020) suggests renewed understandings of antiracism and racism. Rather than understanding racism as a fixed identity, Kendi (2020) suggests a person can move between acts of racism and antiracism in any unit of time. Rather than claiming a racist identity, white educators can claim a racist act, acknowledge the violence, harm, and pain to Black, Brown, and Indigenous folx¹, and take steps to engage appropriate restorative action.

Racism is manifested individually and systemically (Ladson-Billings, 2000) and is connected to whiteness: a set of values, ideas, norms, beliefs, and practices that uphold a status quo of racial hierarchy (Ohito, 2020a). Whiteness and enactments of whiteness provide real, material benefits to whites as a racial group in the forms of material wealth, economic power, and housing and real estate superiority (Matias & Boucher, 2021; Matias & Mackey, 2016). Furthermore, the benefits of whiteness are often accrued at a material cost to people of Color (Matias & Boucher, 2021). ABAR teaching practice aims to raise awareness of the complex,

¹ I use this spelling as a queer person, to indicate resistance to heteronormativity and cisnormativity. The use of "x" in language to indicate resistance has roots in Black, Latine/Latinx, and LGBTQ+ culture and history.
nuanced, and interlocking systems of oppression, including the interaction between race, racism, whiteness, and white supremacy.

The driving force behind racism and whiteness in the U.S. context is white supremacy. Matias and Boucher (2021) define white supremacy as the privileging of whiteness as the globalized norm by which racialized others are denied. White supremacy creates institutional conditions for race to impact lived experiences, benefiting white individuals with tangible gains like investment, property, and “colorblindness,” and disadvantaging people of Color with the dynamics of racism, like racial microaggressions, police surveillance, and job discrimination (Matias & Boucher, 2021).

“Colorblindness” is a specific aspect of whiteness, in which white individuals claim to not see color. In Helms’ (1990) stages of white racial identity development, “colorblindness” is part of the “Contact” stage in which individuals may deny the racial realities of U.S. society, claiming racism no longer exists or that we live in a post-racial world. Colorblind racism is particularly harmful when practiced by teachers. If teachers claim to not see color in the world, then they are not bound to rectifying the systems, actions, and processes that perpetuate racism and white supremacy in schooling institutions. Moreover, Matias and Boucher (2021) argue that teachers who claim colorblindness perpetuate the false narrative that racist policies and practices respond to “cultural deficits” of people of Color.

The critical examination of policy is urgent to ABAR teaching. Kendi (2020) argues that there are two causes of racial inequality: one, either something is wrong with people, or two, something is wrong with power and policy. Kendi (2020) makes the argument that once a person recognizes that nothing is wrong with a group of people, the person must examine power and policy. Applied to education, Kendi’s (2020) logic demands educators to critically examine why
Black boys are suspended at over three and half times the rate of white boys (de Brey et al., 2019), why Black girls are suspended at five and half times the rate of white girls (de Brey et al., 2019), and why the achievement gap exists (Love, 2019; Matias & Boucher, 2021; de Brey et al., 2019). Colorblind racism fails to recognize that the cause of racial inequality in the education system is power and policy.

Antiracism is the practice of opposing racism in all of its forms (Ohito, 2020a; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). Specific to teaching practices, antiracism aims to disrupt and dismantle racism, whiteness, and white supremacy in schooling institutions, including policies and practices that uphold racial hierarchy (Ohito, 2020a; Ohito, 2020b). Critical to ABAR teaching practice is the understanding that because we each are born into racism in U.S. society, racism is a part of each of our experiences. The claim of innocence or ignorance of racial disparities in U.S. culture is not a valid or viable stopping point for antiracist action (Matias & Boucher, 2021); antiracist practice must extend into deep understanding and reflection of the ways racism, whiteness, and white supremacy manifest in the everyday lived experiences and bodily expressions of teaching practice, and how this teaching practice adversely impacts the schooling experiences of students of Color.

**Conceptual Framework**

Drawing on hooks (1994) and Tatum (1992), I understand race to be a social construct created by a white racial majority to uphold racial hegemony and hierarchy, and to maintain a system of advantage for whites the U.S. context (Matias & Boucher, 2021). Race, racism, whiteness, and white supremacy are understood to be experienced both individually as well as institutionally. Racism, then, has real and lived consequences for all individuals living in the U.S., with whites benefitting from this system in gains of economic, social, material, and
political wealth (Matias & Boucher, 2021) and people of Color experiencing the outcomes of policy and procedure intentionally designed to destroy the body (Coates, 2015; Tippet & Menakem, 2021).

**Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS)**

CWS can be used to understand the phenomenon of whiteness, race, racism, and white supremacy as operating within the educational sphere. Matias and Boucher (2021) indicate the importance of CWS to de-center whiteness by centering the voices and experiences of scholars and people of Color. Furthermore, Matias and Boucher (2021), argue for a Black whiteness studies approach, which acknowledges racism as deeply embedded in every aspect of U.S. society, thereby disrupting the notion that white individuals can be ignorant or innocent in the perpetuation of racism in U.S. cultural and social structures.

By applying a Black whiteness studies approach to CWS in this arts-based self-study, I critically interrogated racism, whiteness, and white supremacy as enacted in my own teaching practices and disrupted that notion that I and other white teacher educators are somehow innocent or ignorant of enactments of whiteness, racism, and white supremacy. Furthermore, a Black whiteness studies approach to CWS required me to interrogate when, where, and how I center, in this self-study, the voices and experiences of students, scholars, and people of Color in my reflections on the enactments of whiteness, racism, and white supremacy in my teaching. Last, a Black whiteness studies approach to CWS allowed me to interrogate whether the data I generated during the self-study aligned with the dismantling of racism, whiteness, and white supremacy in teacher education.

CWS was appropriate to this study, as the study aimed to examine and disrupt racism in the predominantly white and rural context of one midwestern regional university teacher
education program. As a white teacher educator and researcher in a predominantly white and rural context, I used CWS as an analytical tool to examine and disrupt racism, center the voices and experiences of people of Color, and disrupt the re-centering of my own whiteness in the research study.

Methods

Positionality

This self-study examines antiracism, whiteness, and the teaching and curriculum of one white teacher educator in one rural context. Interpretations are bound by the political and social situation of the storyteller, a queer white educator in the north Midwest. What I noticed, what I saw, and how I told the story are necessarily shaped by my position and experiences. To acknowledge both structures and lives in my self-study, what Weis and Fine (2012) call “critical bifocality” (p. 174), I must acknowledge the limitation that I, nor my family, have ever experienced the harm of the phenomena I am studying (whiteness and racism in education systems). Recognizing the historic and structural benefits I and my family have received and continue to receive in the U.S. context can jar my self-study narrative into a more honest and authentic (dis)harmony as I work to interpret understandings, findings, and contributions to literature (Weis & Fine, 2012).

Additionally, I am close to the work. As my self-study yielded findings related to memory, I am deeply embedded within the data.
Arts-based Self-Study

This arts-based self-study (Edge & Olan, 2021; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009) employed a qualitative approach (Glesne, 2016). I used arts-based self-study methods and descriptive observations to collect data to illustrate my thinking about, feeling, and doing of ABAR teaching (Glesne, 2016). Data was analyzed using narrative inquiry (Chase, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Wertz et al., 2011) and incorporated critical incident technique (CIT, Wertz et al., 2011). Narrative inquiry and CIT are described in further detail below.

Participants

This self-study focused on my interactions as a teacher educator in one asynchronous teacher education classroom.

Data Generation

This self-study occurred during the first summer session of my asynchronous pre-methods foundations education course, which I taught for six weeks. TCs responded to self-reflective prompts on identity, policy, and teaching practices as part of their weekly Writer’s Notebook assignments. TCs also completed three key assignments during the six week course. These three key assignments included a teaching sojourn creative project, an educator interview transcription, and a final cumulative synthesis project. Course texts included Bettina Love’s (2019) *We Want to Do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, as well as further supplemental texts embedded in the Writer’s Notebooks. The course was split into three two-week segments and contained guiding essential questions in each curricular segment.
From Thursday to Sunday each week, TCs participated in an asynchronous conversation on course resources, using Love’s (2019) text as their touchstone. TCs conversed with one another using the video platform VoiceThread (VT). TCs were responsible for posting their initial thinking on the course text and resources by Thursdays at midnight, and then were responsible to respond to one another at least two more times over the course of at least two days. I borrowed and adapted, with permission, curricular framework from Dr. Christi Edge in the Teacher Education department at Northern Michigan University to create this asynchronous model of engagement.

As the instructor, I responded to and provided feedback on course materials completed each week. I generated arts-based self-study data each week after I provided feedback to TCs on their work. Arts-based self-study data was generated using the Sketch to Stretch (S2S) reading comprehension strategy (Beers, 2003; Short & Harste, 1996). S2S is a visual learning strategy that takes place after a reading event; S2S is a symbolic representation of learning (Beers, 2003). In order for a S2S to be created, the reader must translate their understandings from a reading experience into a visual depiction. The act of creating a S2S requires readers to translate meaning from one sign system into another, thereby generating a new form of expression and knowledge (Short & Harste, 1996).

To begin the S2S process, I first completed listening to TC responses. I then provided feedback using a rubric and personalized written comments to all individual TC contributions to the weekly discussion. I then downloaded the written feedback into an Excel document to organize and review my written feedback. Next, I prepared to begin my S2S by getting out a pen and a sheet of paper; for my project, I used a journal with 8.25 inch by 5 inch sheets of dotted grid paper and a black gel pen. Prior to drawing, I physically wrote down my research
question(s) and the course segment essential questions on a note and keep the note close to my journal in order to guide my thinking during the drawing process (Edge, 2019). Then, finally, I began to draw, being intentional to keep my research question in mind as I began to sketch. Additionally, I worked to “let go” of distracting thoughts that cropped up during the sketching process; for example, I tried to “let go” of any worry I had regarding needing to create something specific; rather, I worked to simply sketch and see where my sketch took me (Edge, 2019).

After I finish sketching, I created a written description of what I was thinking, feeling, and doing while creating the sketch in order to understand new meaning made from the S2S process (Beers, 2003; Edge, 2019). I then took a photo of the S2S with my cell phone, uploaded the photo to my email, and then uploaded the photo to VT to create a new and ongoing VT project. I then recorded a video voice comment on the VT reading my written description and reflecting on new meanings made during the S2S drawing, writing, and video memoing process (Glesne, 2016). At the end of six weeks, I analyzed the S2S data using narrative analysis (Glesne, 2016). Images of all sketches (1-6) can be found in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using narrative inquiry (Chase, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Glesne, 2016) with the integration of Critical Incident Technique (CIT, Wertz et al., 2011). Data analysis took place in five steps, modeled after the data analysis spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018). First, I organized data by saving all six S2S voice memo transcriptions from VT to a secure server. Data was organized chronologically, according to narrative analysis technique (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I then printed off all six S2S voice memo transcriptions and read the data several times, taking in-vivo notes in the right-hand margin and assigning categories to actions happening in the data in the left-hand margin. Categories included the terms “research question,”
“questioning,” “text connection,” “feeling,” “awareness,” “memory,” “understanding,” “realization,” “expanded thinking,” “new thinking,” and “critical event.” I also indicated in the left-hand margin when I thought a moment “felt important” and also listed the names of specific people mentioned in the data. People included family, scholars I was reading, teacher candidates, past students, and authors/scholars we were reading in the course. I also used symbols to indicate meaning-making in the right-hand margin. The top and bottom margins were used for reflective notes, wonderings, comments, and questions.

For the second round of analysis, I used an eight by ten and half inch spiral bound college ruled notebook to condense data by working with words and identifying and applying in-vivo codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Glesne, 2016). For this round of analysis, I organized the data numerically by category as written in the left-hand margin in the first round of analysis. For example, in second round data analysis for my first sketch, the first note is listed as: 1: Research Question. Underneath each category, I identified and applied in-vivo codes and also identified quotes significant or important to the code. In the right-hand margin, I included page numbers associated with the data and also identified early themes. Additionally, I used highlighters to color-code categories and people mentioned in the data. Last, I identified the need to include an additional category to organize round two data analysis. The additional category was labeled as “visual description.”

In the third and final round of data analysis, I used notes from round two data analysis to focus specific sections of data. I then used a modification of the RADaR technique (Watkins, 2017) to condense codes, apply themes, relate categories, themes, and families to each other, and then relate categories, themes, and families to frameworks in the literature (Creswell & Poth,
I finalized data analysis by representing and visualizing the data by creating a narrative point of view (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In my analysis, I sought to understand how I constructed meaning regarding the experience in my asynchronous pre-methods foundations education course. As the purpose of narrative analysis is to attend to both the story and the telling of the story, rather than to dissect the stories into themes and patterns, I sought to make meaning through an intentional shaping of my experiences, and to organize the events, feelings, and objects in relation to one another over time (Chase, 2018; Glesne, 2016). Focused attention to the telling of the story, the story formation, and story structures was critical in my data analysis (Glesne, 2016). Furthermore, I considered how the context influenced how I identified story, and what I decided to highlight, focus, and share (Glesne, 2016).

As narrative encourages attention to emotions (Chase, 2018), a critical event in my data was defined as one in which an extreme of emotion was identified. One moment in the data was identified as a critical event. I began the narrative inquiry with a hermeneutics of suspicion, looking to decode hidden meanings in the text (Chase, 2018; Josselson, 2011).

**Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative can be understood as a specific type of communication in which meaning is made through the deliberate shaping of experience (Chase, 2018). Additionally, narrative is a way to understand the actions of self and others and is a process of relating actions, events, feelings, and thoughts to each other across time (Chase, 2018). Importantly, narrative inquiry is a way of understanding, with stories at the heart of the understanding.
Because narrative works with detailed stories in order to better understand how meaning is made and organized, context is crucial (Chase, 2018; Josselson, 2011). Context illustrates the understanding that narratives are socially situated interactions, meaning that the story constructed is embedded in political, historical, institutional, and personal contexts (Chase, 2018). Furthermore, an understanding of context can indicate the possibility for or preclusion of a particular person or group’s story, in addition to considering who has control of the story (Chase, 2018). Context can lead to an understanding that narratives are produced by historical, political, and cultural contexts, de-emphasizing the role of the individual in creating the narrative. The non-Western narrative studies of Bhatia (2011), Gemignani (2011), and Segalo (2014), as discussed in Chase (2018), emphasize the role of context in creating narrative.

Furthermore, the perspective of narrative has the ability to re-shape thinking. Counternarrative, Indigenous knowledge bases, and non-Western perspectives challenge status quo understandings of story, including what story is told, how the story is told, the purpose of the story, and who tells it (Chase, 2018). In *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*, Jo-ann Archibald (2008) offers listeners both a distinct word and a way of understanding story in order to transform curricula and ways of being in educational institutions. *Testimonio*, a Latin American model of counternarrative, gives voice to people who have experienced, firsthand, violence, oppression, or marginalization and lack institutional social and/or political power (Chase, 2018).

In this self-study, narrative inquiry shed light on the experiential meaning making of one teacher educator using arts-based methods to generate data. Additionally, the self-study provided insights into the culture of one asynchronous summer session teacher education classroom in a predominantly white rural context. Last, self-study offered the opportunity for me, a white
teacher educator, to explore how whiteness was both centered and de-centered in the curriculum over time, in addition to how self-perceptions of whiteness impacted my interactions with TCs.

**Critical Incident Technique**

In the 1950’s, James Flanagan developed Critical Incident Technique (CIT) with two main purposes: to solve practical problems and develop board psychological principles (Wertz et al., 2011). CIT focuses on significant events within a research problem or framework and then provides a flexible set of principles to collect, analyze, and synthesize data from observations (Wertz et al., 2011). Importantly, CIT provides a framework to identify, describe, and interpret significant events within a research paradigm. CIT is valued for its flexibility in being employed with other qualitative approaches and its systematic development of flexible principles for research using detailed memories, reporting, and analysis (Wertz et al., 2011).

CIT was appropriate for this narrative research study, as memory became a critical component of the study. Additionally, CIT provided a framework for me to consider what "extreme behavior” arose in the study data (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 51). Similar to the work of William James and Abraham Maslow, Flanagan emphasized the study of particular critical incidents to gain insight on effective or ineffective outcomes, rather than attempt to collect a set of generalized knowledge to demonstrate effectiveness or ineffectiveness (Wertz et al., 2011). Analyzing a critical incident can shed light or insight on significant feelings, thoughts, or actions during an event that can lead to recommendations or deepened understandings of a phenomenon. In Flanagan’s work, analysis of critical incidents led to recommendations to changes in aviation standards (Wertz et al., 2011). A critical incident was defined, in my self-study, as an event
significant to the researcher; in the case of this study, the significant event was located in a memory event associated with strong emotion. One critical incident was identified.

Finally, CIT must be utilized in a situation in which the purpose and effects of human activity are clear (Wertz et al., 2011). As my research study is bound by the aims and purpose of my research question(s), the purposes of my human activity in this endeavor are clear: to learn more about whiteness and antiracism in my own self-studied teaching practices, with the goal of learning something I might be able to share with other educators hoping to effectively dismantle and break down racism and other systemic barriers in teacher and PK16 education.

**Significance**

Whereas research regarding whiteness in teacher education focuses primarily on TCs, this study aimed to contribute to the literature by better understanding the enactments of whiteness by one teacher educator in a rural context. Furthermore, I sought to interrogate how my experiences teaching an ABAR curriculum to predominantly white TCs influenced the disruption of racism, whiteness, and white supremacy in teacher education and centered or did not center the voices and experiences of Black, Brown, and Indigenous students, scholars, and people. Last, a dearth of research exists that examines diversity in rural education (Tan & Leonard, 2017). According to Han et al. (2015), diversity encompasses individuals who hold identities (race, gender, religion, language, etc.) which differ from the majority in the U.S. context. Therefore this study aimed to add to the body of literature examining racism and ABAR teaching practices in a predominantly, rural, white professional teacher preparation program.
Findings

Narrative analysis concerns itself with the story being told. While analyzing data for my self-study, I found myself situated in the multilayered stories of self and culture – not something I expected at the beginning of the research process. In memory, I did not even know I wanted to use narrative analysis until late on in my research proposal process. And even then, I did not know what narrative analysis really meant.

It was much later, after reading multiple articles and texts on narrative research, that my understanding of narrative analysis grew beyond my initial seed of a love for stories. While reading Archibald (2008), I first encountered the idea that story can contain lessons on how to live a “good life” – here, Archibald references First Nations/Indigenous knowledge and Yukon First Nations Elder Mrs. Smith that the path for living a good life can be found in the seeking of guidance from traditional teachings in Indigenous stories.

While my path in this research is not rooted in traditional Indigenous teachings, I connect to the idea of better understanding a good life through better understanding story. Gregory Cajete, in Archibald’s (2008) text, defines living a good life as an Indigenous ideal rooted in striving to think always of the highest thought – to think richly of one’s self, community, and environment. In the context of this self-study, I encountered rich memories surfacing to the front of my consciousness; stories I had buried, or at least temporarily disconnected from, arose in connection to my research question, both surprising me and inviting my exploration as I sought to understand racism, whiteness, teaching, and education. As I explore connections and findings from this research, I think of First Nations/Indigenous knowledge on living a good life, and how I might re-frame my findings to better understand how to live a good life through the rich understanding and exploration of self, community, and environment.
Now, we begin, together. These are the stories of my research.

**Importance and Relevance of Memory in Arts-based Data Collection**

The importance and relevance of memory quickly became a critical noticing of mine in the research process. The S2S process not only seemed to generate memory connections for me as I actively sketched; I also began to process the memories from my current position as the memories bubbled up. Memory became present as the first event in Sketch 1, following a visual description. Sketches 3, 4, and 5 also contained memory events.

I found that the recalled memories were located across the course of my lifetime. In Sketch 1, the recalled memory was recent - just a month prior in the researcher’s life. In Sketch 3, I recalled memories from the year I turned 18 years old. In Sketch 4, I recalled a memory from my childhood, and in Sketch 5, I recalled a memory from my early twenties.

During the data collection process, I commented on the presence of memory arising in the data. As I recalled a memory in Sketch 4 associated with Yang’s (2006) graphic novel *American Born Chinese*, I made note of “deep remembering” as part of the sketching process for me:

> Um, and this was in my childhood, and I did that as a child. So I have deep remembering and memories connecting. So deep, deep remembering, and memories as a part of this process for me.

Additionally, in Sketch 4, as I am thinking about barriers to positive antiracist identity in rural areas, I connect the idea of memory to the idea of identity, and I feel like I have discovered something. I write:
So now I also connect to Han et al.’s (2015) comment that resistance is stronger in rural areas. Perhaps this is because the work of developing white antiracist identity “feels” very hard, very conflictive – perhaps, for some reason/s, there are more barriers in rural areas to developing positive antiracist identity? Maybe not? How might memory play a part in this? I find these sketches to be actively, strongly activating memory for me – (this feels like discovery)) -

The feeling of discovery located in memory events was significant throughout the research process. I described the onset of memory as both surprising and as connected to new learning or realization. At the end of the voice memo for Sketch 4, I was so excited by my realizations and discoveries, that I expanded my thinking in the voice memo to speak specifically on my research question and the feeling of discovery as related to memory:

So I just want to reflect a little bit more… this drawing felt very exciting to me. Um and in terms of realizations and discoveries that I felt I was having connecting to my understandings about antiracist and abolitionist work, um and my research question, right - how do I as a white teacher educator use arts-base self-study to understand how whiteness impacts my interactions with TCs while enacting an antiracist antibias curriculum – um, I felt that I started making some headway with some of my own biases, specifically connected to memories - and I think that’s been occurring throughout each of my sketch to stretches – um, that memories seem to be getting activated for me - and by navigating these memories and confronting these memories, I think I’m doing some work processing some of the guilt that I still hold on to about those memories and things that I have enacted even very recently. Um and so I think maybe this is helping me with some of my guilt that I still have.
Importantly, the narrative in the data seems to shift after the occurrence of the critical incident, which occurred in Sketch 3. In Sketches 1 and 2, and even in the beginning of Sketch 3, prior to the critical incident, my thinking was focused on ideas of centering versus decentering whiteness and grappling with emotions. After the critical incident in Sketch 3, and in Sketches 4, 5, and 6, my focus shifts to storytelling as a way to know self and others, grappling with racism, safeguarding student potential and freedom dreaming, collective resistance, and developing positive antiracist identity.

In this way, through the reading of Love’s (2019) text with my course and my continued self-reflection through research, I found whiteness becoming de-emphasized in my self-study post-critical incident. Importantly, the critical incident marked the turning point where I began to better understand my past, my present, and my identity as an antiracist educator. Entry point to the critical incident and the critical incident is described in further detail below.

**Two Memories As Critical Incident**

Though multiple memories occurred throughout the data collection process, one memory, in particular, was identified as a critical incident for its significance to the researcher and its relevance to the research process.

I quickly discovered that the critical memory, initially understood as personal and unrelated to the research process, was deeply embedded in and relevant to the research question at-hand. I identified this initial critical memory, and one connected, subsequent critical memory, as being at the crux of the research study and question; the two connected memories became the critical incident of the study, and represented a “turning point” in the direction of the research process and the researcher’s understandings (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 73). The findings in this
The two connected critical memories occurred in Sketch 3, in the heart of the data collection and research process.

**The First Critical Memory**

The first critical memory involved the death of my cousin, Brent. When Brent and I were both 17 and still in high school, I lost Brent to suicide. He lived next door to me, and I still recall the feeling of the October air as I walked across the field to his house. Many of my family members were there; however, I was one of the first. When I arrived, I learned how my cousin had died. That afternoon is both forever, and forever ago, in my mind.

In the research process, the presence of memory came as a surprise to me. Specifically, recalling the death of my cousin, Brent, as part of this self-study research was unexpected, and jarring. The memory came upon me, moving to the forefront of my mind with the lines I drew of water and waves in Sketch 3 (Figure 1). As I am in the process of describing a visual image of waves as part of the sketch, I make an unexpected connection:

So I want these lines here to represent, um, water. I try to make it, so – I add like swirls here, here, and then waves. I’m trying to do waves. Um, as I draw the waves, I think of my high school students. And then I think of Brent… Um, so I draw two waves specifically to represent, um, to represent him. And these waves are here.
As I read and re-read the data, I can read myself, in this section, attempting to simply describe the process of remembering as I draw. However, as I continue to re-encounter the memory in the data, I find myself elaborating further, trying to more accurately describe how the images pair with the words. At this point in the voice memo, I add considerably more description regarding the water, waves, and cliffs:

Um, and I draw cliffs here. So the water, I am thinking as I’m drawing this water, I’m thinking of Lake Superior. And with the cliffs, I’m thinking of Black Rocks, which is on Presque Isle in Marquette, Michigan… I was just thinking about, um, Brent, and like, the waves, um, and then the cliffs, right? Because I’ve always associated, or it’s one of the ways that I’ve like made sense about Brent’s death is that like, when I run by Lake Superior, I visit Lake Superior specifically on Presque Isle, um, I think of him, like water
crashing up on the rocks. Um - so. Okay. alright – so at this point, I’m drawing. I’m thinking about Brent and the cliffs and Lake Superior.

At this point in Sketch 3, in both the written reflection and in the voice memo, I am specific to make the note that, “I feel sad as I draw.”

I continue to move forward in describing Sketch 3 after this point, describing visual images, connections, and thinking. However, I continue to circle back to the memory of Brent. As I describe the visual image of a face, meant to represent story sharing, I connect to Brent again:

Um, I then draw lines or waves coming from the face figure, here, representing our stories. Initially, I intended to draw another face about here. Um, but then I stopped. I decided to let the wave of stories circle in on themselves. Ah, to flow to no one else in particular… so, um, as these stories are circling in on each other, I think of the stories that are not told. I think of stories that are kept to the self. I represent these using circles here, isolated circles that are not connected to anything. I draw six, um, thinking of stories I haven’t told my teacher candidates about myself and my teaching this summer semester. So I haven’t told them about Brent. I haven’t told them about my high school students… so, um, as I’m drawing these circles not connected to anything, I then think of stories hidden not only from others as informing my teaching and relationships, but then I also think of stories hidden from the self. So I’m thinking of Brent, here. I think of how to represent this.
At this point in the description, I make a clear connection to the memory of my cousin and to my current teaching and learning. I go on, then, to elaborate and describe my surprise regarding memory for the first time:

Um, I pause as I'm thinking of, like, how to represent this because I was surprised; I didn't write this, but I remember I was surprised that I started to think about Brent while I was doing this drawing. And I was thinking about... how [as] that was happening, how this is, that was, sort of hidden from myself and my understanding of my teaching, right? Like how that part of my, um, past and history and understanding informs my teaching. So I wanted to represent how that was hidden from me because I wasn't thinking about Brent at all. At least I didn't think I was when I was doing this reading of Love's (2019) text, um, or beginning this drawing.

At this point in Sketch 3, I seem to open something in myself through drawing that is too important to ignore. I find myself continuing to work to make sense of, and re-shape, my understandings of why and how my memory of Brent came surging forth. A connection to the research question emerges:

So I paused when I was thinking about how to represent hiding stories from yourself. And it’s not something I really do often at all in these drawings. Usually I’m constantly drawing. But I paused, and I decided to put a circle representing knowledge then put that circle in a box – um, trying to represent knowledge as blacked out to the self. I think of how important Brent is to me at this point in the drawing and to my teaching – I draw lines moving diagonally, away from the box, and then underneath it as well. Um, I am thinking of my own experiences and intersectionality – um, I feel I am understanding myself better, not just whiteness, but intersectionality... um, so at this point in the
drawing, I draw three, um, drops shaped like tears because I’m feeling sad – I am sad, right? I remember I was, um, tearing up, I was crying a little bit while I was drawing. Um, so I write, “I am sad.”

I then begin to blend my current memory about my cousin Brent into the next critical memory. I describe briefly my transition, merging the first memory into the second memory:

I remember right after high school, about a half a year after Brent’s death… he died in October. I graduated in May. Um, I remember that right after high school that spring, I went, I worked at a camp called Camp New Day, which was a camp for kids with incarcerated parents… I remember why I went into teaching, and I put a little connection to the Sojourn in there. Um, but part of, I remember, like, thinking, how can I, how can I influence, um, others, right? How can I - not stop, right, what happened to Brent, but maybe that was what I thought when I was younger, but I thought – how can I – how can I make some changes? Um, because I didn’t want to lose my cousin, right? Oh, getting teary on this one.

At this point, I begin to make a transition into the next critical memory, involving an experience I had at Camp New Day as a camp counselor. However, as I make this transition, I need to point out that a particular TC from my summer 2022 session is critically connected throughout the first memory and the transition to the second memory. I recall this particular TC, Bree, both after my initial remembering of Brent, as well as just prior to the second critical memory. Both connections to Bree are directly linked to Love’s (2019) text, and a story Bree shared with me during our summer 2022 session. The second critical memory is described below.
The Second Critical Memory

The second memory making up the second half of the critical incident in this self-study occurred as a blended and connected memory to the first critical memory. Both memories occurred the year I turned 18; while the first memory occurred during the fall when I was 17, the second memory occurred during the spring, when I was 18, immediately after I had graduated high school. The second memory involved my work as a camp counselor at a camp for kids with incarcerated parents.

The second memory came up equally as unexpectedly as the first critical memory. The distinct connector was a section of Love’s (2019) text, as well as a shared story from a TC enrolled in the summer session of my 2022 summer session pre-methods foundation course. This particular TC, Bree, shared a personal story in connection to Love’s (2019). In chapter four, Love (2019) shares a story regarding a prior student named Mark. In her work for this segment of our course, Bree shared that Mark’s story connected to her. Bree shared that although her story was different than Mark’s, she had a similar story; Bree goes on to write that like Mark, Bree had teachers like Love who cared for her, and are the inspiration for Bree now working to become a teacher.

I recall Bree sharing this information about her story and her life as part of the first critical memory; Bree is blended in to both my first critical memory, as well as my second. After I recall Bree’s story and connection to Mark, I write that “storytelling feels incredibly important to me to communicate at this point.” I then go on to continue to think about, and remember Brent as part of my first critical memory.
I recall Bree again, at what seems to be the close of the first critical memory and the beginning of the second critical memory. I write:

Um, I also think of Mark and Bree because Camp New Day was a camp for kids with incarcerated parents. I don’t know if Bree’s mom or dad was incarcerated, but she said that her story was similar to Mark’s. So I wonder that when she wrote that. But I know Mark in Love’s (2019) writing has a parent who is incarcerated. Um, and then this [memory] came to me as I was writing, and it did come to me when I was drawing, too. But I didn’t spend as much time with it, but I elaborated on it in the drawing. So this is anecdote I’m going to share with you about Camp New Day, where I was a counselor, um, for girls. Um, but this is an experience I had regarding, um, a little boy in the camp.

I go on to describe a memory involving me, an 18 year old white camp counselor, and a camper, a nine or ten year old Black boy. As I begin to recount the memory, I immediately acknowledge that I still have shame about this memory, writing, “So I think shamefully of an experience with a little Brown boy I had at Camp New Day.” I go on to recount the memory, which involved me and another camp counselor dressing up as secret superheroes during lunch time at the camp:

I remember we were dressing up, um, me and a friend, another friend I was doing camp counseling with. She was also a counselor. She and I were dressing up, um, like characters, and we were, like, putting masks on our faces. And then we would come in at lunchtime and like, pretend to be different, um, like a superhero or camp characters or something. And the kids really loved it, and we would play. It was a game we were playing.

I go on to write about Ben, the boy camper mentioned early in the memory:
And I remember one little boy who was Black and young – probably about third grade, maybe, in my memory - I’m 18, about this point – um, confronting us, um, me and my friend who was the other camp counselor, at one of the lunches where these masked characters showed up. Um, and this boy called us out on our lie, um, because we denied that we were the camp counselors.

I then go on to describe a critical moment in the memory, the part of the memory associated with shame:

Um, he insisted every time we showed up at lunch or anywhere, um, and we denied it - and we denied it when we were counselors, too. We were like, “It’s not us,” right? Um, so one lunch, I remember he was really insistent, and I remember I said something cruel. I write cruel here, and I write that because I remember the feeling of it being wrong, what I had said, and I can’t remember what I said, um, or his response, but his response is more like, was more or less “whatever.” Like, “I know it’s you.” But I remember I was [pause] – I wrote “cruel” here.

I then go on to describe my attempts to restore the interaction, recalling the memory and working to make sense of the memory as a now 34 year old person:

So I remember apologizing later to this little boy, me, and 18 year old white girl, and him, a maybe 10 year old Black boy whose mom or dad or both were in prison. I remember in my memory he acted like it wasn’t a big deal, at least in my memory. Um, and I remember the guilt and feeling so ashamed. I remember inviting him later in the camp to tell ghost stories around the campfire, and him not wanting to at first. And then finally he jumped in and told a story and all of us who were there celebrating his story. And I think
now, right, 34 – it’s no wonder he didn’t trust me right in that moment of inviting him to tell a story. Um, but even before that, because right, we were like, lying to him, which was not something that he needed, and he was like, telling us that.

At this point in the voice memo, after recalling this memory and working to make sense of it from my current position, I clearly struggle to re-enter and transition to the next part of the sketch to stretch drawing. I pause several seconds, look away from the computer screen, and look at the physical copy of the writing and drawing in Sketch 3. I look at the physical copy of the drawing and writing for several seconds; my face is drawn, and I am not speaking. My mouth is pulled at the corners, and I appear visibly stressed. I eventually find traction to re-enter the drawing by anchoring myself back in the drawn images of Sketch 3:

So. The image of the drawing – so that’s something I’m thinking about at this point in the drawing, that memory from when I was 18. Um, so then the cabin opens up at this point, the two lines going out diagonally. I think about whiteness – um, and I think about my own pain. I think about the little boy from Camp New Day. I think about Love (2019) and Mark and Bree and I think about Brent. I think about my research question. Um, I think about how our past, present, and future live within us in our teaching, um, and I’m connecting to an interview I had with April Lindala here that touched on this, um, idea, um, this idea that is a part of Indigenous Knowledge.

Critically, at this point in the sketch, I begin to make a multitude of intersecting connecting resources, ideas, and people. This is represented in the visual image of the next part of my sketch, which are multiple intersecting shapes:
Um, so I drew, I then draw the same intersecting shapes that are also in drawing one in the first sketch to stretch, representing multiple intersecting experiences and identities. How we bring them with us to teaching. I think about white guilt and about my own guilt. Um, and I’m thinking still about Camp New Day, here.

I then go on to describe a section of Love’s (2019) text, where Love writes about a white teacher she had named Mrs. Knight. I reference a section of Love’s (2019) text that a TC had also brought in to Discussion 3 (the discussion preceding Sketch 3):

And I remember a quote a teacher candidate brought into discussion three from Love (2019) about how even as Mrs. Knight, or Ms. Knight, supported Love, um – even as Mrs. Knight acknowledged how their stories intersected and overlapped, Knight always knew her whiteness was a factor, a facet, that eased her experiences while Love’s darkness was a facet that complicated hers. And that’s a quote right out of Love’s (2019) text.

Then, after connecting to Love’s (2019) text, I make a critical connection to Matias and Boucher (2021), reflecting on the idea of white innocence, or ignorance:

Um, and here, I reflect a little bit more on Camp New Day. As a white 18 year old girl, I knew this, I knew the difference. It was part of the reason for my incredible guilt and shame from the Camp New Day interaction. And there, now, I’m connecting to Matias and Boucher (2021) when they argue that, um, like that white ignorance and white innocence, um – like, teaching a curriculum cannot work to uphold that, because as we are all born into a racist society, um, we have knowledge of it, right? And that’s what I think I’m acknowledging here, is like – I felt shame in that moment, not just because that
little boy was a little boy, but also because he was Black and I was white. I knew that mattered somehow. Um, and I felt shame.

The rest of the drawing in Sketch 3 demonstrates continued connections to people, course authors, TCs, my curriculum, and abolitionist mentors. From this point onward in Sketch 3, I move forward from the memory of Brent and Camp New Day into how I might, as a teacher, actualize abolition as a teacher educator. As I re-read the data, I interpret almost a sense of relief, or clarity, as I continue forward in the descriptions. I write about Love’s (2019) concept of freedom dreaming, and I begin to personalize how I think of safeguarding student grit, zest, and potential:

So these rings represent an abolitionist way of being that I can and my teacher candidates can manifest in safeguarding student potential, and these concentric circles ripple out. I realize that this teaching is for me, that it is personalized to me. I realize the ways I have done this and ways that I have failed, and I’m thinking of intersectionality, here, right, for my students of varying identities, um, intersecting identities. So I realize ways I have this, ways I have failed, ways I will continue to safeguard. And then also, I understand again that I will, in moments or events, fail.

I then go on to make a connection to a then-current experience with a TC in my summer session asynchronous class. I describe how I had brought in a policy reading from an organization that is not well-respected, how my TC critiqued the piece in her work, and how I understood that moment as a moment of failure:
Right, so that was a moment in which I failed. And, um, also, I’m having some thinking about how that’s okay. Because now I’m building in a lesson, um, for Segment 3 about this; but that’s a different piece.

I then go on to connect failure to growth, and to a personalized understanding of abolition in teaching through an intersectional lens, spring boarded by the work of Kendi (2020):

And here I have a connection to Kendi (2020) about how Kendi (2020) talks about, um, antiracist being. You can be antiracist and you can be racist in a given day. It’s about moments, and then Kendi (2020) talks about, like, what’s important is that we, um, acknowledge those moments of failure. Um, so the abolition is teaching, and my teaching feels personalized to me – ways that I’ve been doing this, and then I list Cassie Mae, Stephanie, Jenine (past high school students) and Brent and then, ways that I failed - and then again, I list Cassie Mae, Stephanie, Jenine, and Brent. So again, I connect to Kendi (2020), there, suggesting that, like you can do good in these moments, right? I can be antiracist. I can be, um, queer positive. I can be fighting classism in moments. And then, in other moments, I can be failing, um, those same human beings.

Finally, I move to the idea of community and the need for community to comprehensively support our students, supported in my thinking by Love’s (2019) work:

And then I have a connection to Love (2019), because she’s really specific in these two chapters about the need for community. She writes… one person cannot do all the heavy lifting. Um, and that’s a quote from Love (2019). Because one person is not enough, we will fail. We need a joist of humans who we can interlock with to support our students wholly and comprehensively… because there are no saviors, and Love (2019) is really
specific here. She’s talking about white saviorism in the first part of the sentence. But the end of the sentence, she says there are no saviors, suggesting that there’s not one person that can do it all. Ever.

Last, I make a final connection to Love (2019), my TC, Bree, and to Brent:

She (Love, 2019) writes about how our students cannot move these roadblocks alone. They need community. Um, and then I connected to Bree, because Bree had brought that quote into her Discussion 3. And then I connected to Brent, thinking of the ways that he could not move his roadblocks.

This final thought ends Sketch 3.

**Reflecting on the Entry Point to the Critical Incident**

I began Sketch 3 with the same process as my prior two sketches: read TC thinking and writing submissions, provide feedback to the TCs, review the feedback, think of the research question, and begin drawing. I had no conscious thought of Brent in my mind as I began Sketch 3. In fact, Sketch 3 began with a firm, clarified intention to represent relationships. In contrast to Sketches 1 and 2, I began Sketch 3 with clarity and decisiveness; the discomfort and tentative hesitation with which I had begun Sketch 1 and 2 was not present. To describe how I began Sketch 3, I wrote:

So I begin left center, drawing a circle. I know immediately I want to represent connections. Student to student. Teacher to student. Relationship building. Student to text. Teacher to text. Mostly, the sensation/feeling of developing relationships with my students.
The intention to represent relationships at the start of Sketch 3 was the clearest and strongest intention I had yet had in beginning a sketch. I include descriptors of the drawing indicating this clear, strong sensation. I include the following verbal note in my voice memo:

I’m pretty certain at this point while I’m drawing, to draw really firm, bold circles – so the dark black in the ink – I want them to be very solid, very firm.

Additionally, in the written reflection, I write about wanting the lines to thick, and strong:

I then draw another line from the second circle, moving from right to left – connecting back to the original circle, here. I want the connecting tube, this tube that’s created, to be thick. I want the lines to be strong.

While a strong clear intention began my drawing in Sketch 3, the visual images created seemed to prompt memory. Visual images and connection to memory are described below.

**Visual Images and Memory**

Importantly, memories generated in the data collection process (i.e. the S2S process) were preceded by specific, visual images I had drawn. However, prior to the critical incident memories, I not only described specific visual images; I also recalled *specific people and stories* associated with these people. Furthermore, I associated the recalled specific people and stories with my own past and present stories; in other words, *I understood the specific people in my past and present as part of my current story as described and experienced in the research process.* As I generated an image prior to the critical incident memory in Sketch 3, I wrote:

I draw a dotted circle shape to the left… I realize I am thinking of not only my teacher candidates in my connections, but I’m also thinking about my past high school students…
Cassie Mae, Stephanie, Jenine, Marie, Tara, Chase, Rhianna – I realized my teaching contains and comes from/is a part of my experience with them. So to clarify, these are names of students that I taught in high school when I was a high school teacher.

I then continued to expand into the thinking by sketching further images, which then led to the re-shaping and deepening of prior meaning:

So I begin to draw flowing lines angled diagonally left to right. I draw a curving line over the moon shape to represent my current experiences as encompassed by these experiences, these people, my students, my high school experiences. So this line is meant to represent that my current experiences are contained also within the experiences of my past.

The S2S process not only allowed me the ability to generate visual images to represent abstract thinking; the produced visuals also then gave me access to clarify, deepen, and re-shape meaning as I interpreted the images and made connections and decisions, leading to the generation of further images and clarified meaning-making.

Discussion

Reflecting on the Critical Incident

At every stage in the data collection and analysis processes, I struggled with the critical memories. Both struggles were rooted in emotion. In my memories with Brent, I struggled with the trauma of his death as I had experienced it as a 17 year old person. I experienced deep sadness, and surprise, as I made sense of the memory in relation to my research project.
In my memory with Ben and Camp New Day, I struggled with the knowledge that I had caused pain for a child, as a person who was in a position to care for this child. I struggled to reconcile current shame and guilt I still carried from the experience with current self-perceptions, understandings about race, oppression, and power, and efforts as an antiracist educator. Additionally, I struggled with sharing, extending into, and articulating each memory. In my memory with Ben and Camp New Day, I noticed a significant long pause as I finished recounting the memory.

Importantly, the role of memory seemed to lead to greater self-understanding and development of nuanced understandings regarding abolition, intersectionality, and positive antiracist identity through the processing of past and current memories. After the critical incident, my focus shifted from the idea of centering versus de-centering whiteness to the focus of grappling with racism and developing a positive, complex, intersectional antiracist identity. Interestingly, across sketches, the place where I chose to begin my drawings, from start to finish, also indicated the shift to de-center whiteness as the focus of the study. In Sketches 1, 2, and 3, I begin each of my drawings in the center, or left center, thinking about whiteness. After the critical incident, in Sketches 4, 5, and 6, each drawing begins top left, top left, and top right, respectively.

Furthermore, the processing of memory seems to lead to deeper understanding of whiteness post-critical incident. Instead of the dominant theme of centering versus de-centering whiteness in Sketches 1 and 2, more complex themes regarding whiteness arise post-critical incident in Sketches 4, 5, and 6. These themes include the influence of whiteness and white resistance; perceptions of whiteness; whiteness as “getting in the way” of abolition/whiteness as a barrier to abolitionist teaching; white abdication of antiracist responsibility; and conflictive
antiracist identity. The theme of letting go of whiteness, present in Sketch 2, shifts to the more complex idea of (re)letting go of whiteness throughout time in Sketches 5 and 6.

Additionally, the theme of grappling with racism rises as a prominent theme post-critical incident in Sketches 4, 5, and 6. Interestingly, the theme of grappling with racism often occurs in conjunction with the theme grappling with emotions. After recalling a childhood memory connected with Yang’s (2006) graphic novel in Sketch 4, I connect again, a more recent experience regarding a camp in my local area that appropriates Indigenous culture and practices.

I reflect, and write:

I connect, here, also to Love’s (2019) work in the comment of a teacher candidate during discussion… [who] brought in Love’s (2019) quote that whiteness works best when invisible and Kendi’s (2020) comment that the heartbeat of racism is denial. Yes. Whiteness is so pervasive; it’s deeply internalized… so we, as white, or we whites, and other people ensnared in by racism, will claim innocence, ignorance, or deny racism and racist acts even as we excuse the racist actions of ourselves, our children, and others in our community.

Later, in Sketch 5, I deepen into the idea of racial innocence or ignorance as I grapple with racism and emotions in the effort to develop positive antiracist identity:

A connection I had here while writing was the Matias [and Boucher] (2021) article about how racial ignorance and innocence are not truly viable because we are born into, um, a society that is deeply embedded in racism. Um, and that we encounter racism all the time, right? In our culture. Ah, and our feelings are um, evidence of that, right, whether it’s guilt or shame or um, you know – like, the knowledge is there. The point is that the
knowledge is there, and the feelings tell us that knowledge of racism is there even when we deny it.

These findings, as described in the data, support CWS and theories generated by CWS scholars in the understanding that racial innocence or ignorance in U.S. society is not viable (Matias & Boucher, 2021). Additionally, these findings place racism and dismantling racism at the center and primary focus of abolitionist teaching and learning, removing from the center of the study a focus on enactments of whiteness; rather, whiteness becomes a structure abolitionist teachers must grapple with in order to develop complex, antiracist identity.

Storytelling and art as abolition under the umbrella theme of tools of abolition also arose in the data post-critical incident. In reflecting on the role of art as abolition in Sketch 6 (Figure 2), I excitedly notice that the incorporation of arts-based modes of expression in Segment 3 of my curriculum has led to different ways of knowing my students and how they learn:

I draw a circle around, um, art, just kind of highlighting it, and bright rays jumping off, um, to just emphasize the role of art I the classroom. Um, and specifically in this discussion six feedback, I was noticing how it brought to light, right – this kind of looks like a sun – it brought to light different ways of knowing my students and how they learn. Um, and then this, the complexity of the task of using, um, art, uh, in the classroom to dismantle racism.
The finding of art as a tool of abolition aligns with the findings in Ohito’s (2020b) study on multimodal literacy expression, as well as Love’s (2019) emphasis on the role of art in abolitionist classrooms.

Additionally, throughout the data, specific instances of story sharing occurred between me and multiple TCs. In the act of story sharing through work submission and discussions (TCs) and feedback (me), storytelling became a way for us to know one another in more nuanced, complex ways. Storytelling also made visible complex, rich, and intersecting identities. Throughout the data, I frequently reference TCs who shared stories with me throughout our course, including Adelai, who shared stories regarding their Indigenous and queer identities; Melanie, who shared stories regarding her mental health, ethnic heritage and history, and experiences growing up in multiracial family as a white woman living in a rural, predominantly
white area; and Catalin, who shared experiences of childhood poverty and adult, medical trauma.

The experience of story sharing allowed the TCs in my class and I to provide one another with self-defined, clear anchors to know one another, making visible, on our own terms, identities and experiences important to our own self-understanding and the understanding of course texts and materials. The experience of engaging in the reciprocal act (storyteller telling, listener listening) of story sharing became a way for the TCs and I in our classroom environment to know one another richly, with compassion. This finding drew from Indigenous Knowledge and knowledge bases, specifically from understandings embedded in Archibald’s (2008) concept of storywork.

Finally, the processing of memory and the emotions of memory in order to make sense of identity arose as prominent theme during and post-critical incident in Sketches 3, 4, 5, and 6. After processing the memories of the critical incident, I found myself opened-up, so to speak, in processing further memories connected with developing antiracist identity. I was hesitant to offer the critical incident memories in this writing, as I considered my story sharing as possibly harmful, as each story carried within it its own trauma (health, wellbeing, and death; racism, oppression, and power dynamics). However, I understood a need to represent the stories as experienced in the research process, in order to provide an anchor to understand my findings. Additionally, Bamberg (2012) emphasizes personal story, including admissions of transgression or embarrassing situations, as an important resource in developing relational connections between members of a communicative practice. In this way, I hope my stories can help other educators in their path in grappling with racism and other systemic barriers in education, and in developing positive, intersectional antiracist identity.
The findings can be better understood in consideration of narrative practice and identity navigation. Bamberg (2012) highlights how storytellers, or speakers, in navigating identity through narrative, reveal aspects of who they are and how they would like to be seen as they make sense of the past, present, and/or fictitious events – the storyteller, in effect, reveals how they engage in identity practices which reveals a sense of self across storytelling practices. As stories are concerned with character, and how characters make claims, my self-study research can be understood by my personal understanding of critical incident, and identity navigation as I relay the incident in the findings. My understanding that the processing of memory has led to deepened and more complex understanding of abolition and antiracist identity in teaching and learning evidences identity construction in-process. Certainly, I want to be understood as antiracist and abolitionist in my practice; in this way, my findings are both liberated and limited by my identity construction and experiences.

Finally, Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1981) understandings of the dialogical, multivocal self can be used to resist closure and stay with tensions in the narrative event. As the construction of the story reveals the inner world of the storyteller, as well as aspects of the outer social world in which the storyteller lives, my narrative can be understood as a personal attempt to reconcile multiple psychic realities that are constantly in relation to, and interacting with, one another (Josselson, 2011).

Limitations

The study is bound by limitations, primarily the perspective of the researcher. Critical perspective on the data is needed from other antiracist educators and scholars of Color, as my perspectives are bound in the experiences of whiteness. Furthermore, more research is needed on
the role of memory in arts-based data collection and abolitionist teaching. While arts-based data collection prompted specific memories for me which allowed me to move into a more complex understanding of my own antiracist identity, it is not known that this is the case for other educators utilizing the same method.

**Conclusion**

Self-study, combined with arts-based methods, has the possibility to shed light on an educator’s efforts to dismantle racism and other systems barriers in the field of education. Specifically, arts-based self-study allows for diverse and multimodal ways to understand the construction of identity in regards to the effort to dismantle of racism and other systemic barriers in the teacher education context. As Ohito (2020a) has pointed out, a dearth of research on white teacher educators in the teacher education context exists. Additionally, Ohito (2020b) has indicated the use of arts-based methods to having the potential to disrupt whiteness in the classroom. The use of arts-based self-study methods allows the possibility for educators, and white educators in particular, to examine the enactment of abolition in their teaching practices, and better understand racism, whiteness, and other systemic barriers (heteronormativity, etc.) in their own teaching practices.

Furthermore, arts-based methods have the possibility for educators to connect teaching experiences to lived experiences, as contained in memory. Multimodal data collection, and specifically, data collection through arts-based methods, has the possibility for educators to navigate complex memory and emotional processing in order to develop a more complex, nuanced understanding of antiracist identity through an intersectional lens.
Finally, the use of CIT, in conjunction with narrative analysis, allows for the possibility of in-process identity navigation, as data analysis allows for the researcher to better understand themselves and their teaching by studying an “extreme” event in the research. In my self-study, I noticed a distinct shift in identity navigation post-critical event, spring boarding me into a more complex and nuanced understanding of abolition, racism, and ABAR teaching in the teaching and learning event.

Last, in order to resist closure and stay with the tensions of learning, I understand identity construction as ever empirically in interaction and under construction (Bamberg, 2012, original emphasis). The personal/individual and social dimensions of identity are understood as blending one into the other, ever influencing understanding, meaning-making, and identity construction. While narrative inquiry allows the researcher the opportunity to construct identity in coherent, purposeful ways, the storyteller must also resist the closure narrative offers.
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Appendix A

TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Racism

Racism can be understood as a lived experience, one that takes place viscerally in the body (Coates, 2015). Tatum (1992) defines racism as a system of advantage based on race, in which racism is harmful to all parties involved; while racism also harms white individuals, people of Color suffer most from the effects of racism. Additionally, Tatum (1992) defines the difference between racism and racial prejudice. Because of the social and cultural reinforcement behind the racially prejudiced actions of white individuals, only white individuals are capable of racism in the U.S. context (Tatum, 1992).

Whiteness

Whiteness can be understood as a set of values, ideas, norms, beliefs, and practices that uphold a status quo of racial hierarchy (Ohito, 2020a). Whiteness and enactments of whiteness provide real, material benefits to whites as a racial group in the forms of material wealth, economic power, and housing and real estate superiority (Matias & Boucher, 2021; Matias & Mackey, 2016). Furthermore, the benefits of whiteness are often accrued at a material cost to people of Color (Matias & Boucher, 2021).

White Supremacy

Matias and Boucher (2021) define white supremacy as the privileging of whiteness as the globalized norm by which racialized others are denied. White supremacy creates institutional
conditions for race to impact lived experiences, benefiting white individuals with tangible gains like investment, property, and “colorblindness,” and disadvantaging people of Color with the dynamics of racism, like racial microaggressions, police surveillance, and job discrimination (Matias & Boucher, 2021).

**Antiracist Antibias (ABAR) Teaching**

Antiracism is the practice of opposing racism in all of its forms (Ohito, 2020a; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). Specific to teaching practices, antiracism aims to disrupt and dismantle racism, whiteness, and white supremacy in schooling institutions, including policies and practices that uphold racial hierarchy (Ohito, 2020a; Ohito, 2020b). Additionally, I understand ABAR teaching from an intersectional lens. In this way, ABAR teaching works to oppose bias and oppression in all forms (i.e. ableism, sexism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity, et al.). ABAR teaching practice aims to raise awareness of the complex, nuanced, and interlocking systems of oppression, including the interaction between race, racism, whiteness, and white supremacy.
Appendix B

SKETCH TO STRETCH (S2S) IMAGES

Figure 3

Sketch 1
Figure 4

Sketch 2
Figure 5

Sketch 3
Figure 6

Sketch 4
Figure 7

Sketch 5
Figure 8

Sketch 6