

HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE TULSA RACE  
MASSACRE: AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF  
A PLACE-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
ON OKLAHOMA TEACHERS

By

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Abstract: The story of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 was hidden from history for generations. In the three years leading up to the centennial of the event, this story came to light for more and more citizens. Tulsa area teachers, many of whom did not know about the Tulsa Race Massacre, felt compelled to teach this history to their students. Because teachers cannot teach what they do not know, several attended a workshop designed to equip teachers with strategies and resources to teach about this hidden historical event.

This qualitative collective case study examined how Tulsa-area teachers made changes, both personally and professionally, after their participation in a three-day, place-based Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. Participants learned this history through field trips, recordings from survivors, counternarratives, and participation in learning strategies that they could later use with their students. Participant stories of teaching about the Tulsa's hidden history revealed grappling with their issues of identity, struggling to teach sensitive and tough historical content, and engaging in difficult conversations. Additionally, findings indicated that effective professional development can be a conduit for not only professional growth, but also an illumination of one's identity and catalyst for personal change.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

I was born in Tulsa in 1966 during a time of struggle for Civil Rights. In the fourth grade, my family moved to a town nearby, although still in Tulsa County. During the era of Jim Crow, this town was known as a sundown town. As a sundown town, the White community enforced strict rules about the movements of African Americans in the “White” areas after dark (McConnell & Miraftab, 2010). In my small town, there were also restrictions about where our Black citizens could live. Restrictions relegated them to a small area in the town known by the derogatory term “colored town” (People had worse names for it when my mother was in school there). My grandfather was the Chief of Police during the 40s and 50s. He wrote tickets and jailed people when he caught them in White areas after dark (Figure 1).

## Figure 1

### *Examples of Tickets Written by My Grandfather in 1950*

The above named defendant  
arrested of the crime of PROWLING IN WHITE TOWN  
for that in the City of Sand Springs and in the State of Oklahoma,  
on the 4 day of Oct A. D. 1950  
THIS MAN PEEKED THROUGH A WINDOW AT THE HOME OF A WHITE MAN.  
Paul 10-9-50  
WORKING ON STREETS.  
contrary to the form of the city ordinances in such cases made and provided against the peace and dignity of the City of Sand Springs.  
STATE OF OKLAHOMA }  
TULSA COUNTY } SS  
I, Jack Daniel being duly sworn on oath, say that  
the statements set forth in the above complaint are true.  
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 5 day of Oct 1950  
Paul 10-9-50  
Police Judge

arrested of the crime of Drunken  
for that in the City of Sand Springs and in the State of Oklahoma  
on the 8 day of Oct A. D. 1950  
This man was found Drunk on the street of colored town on pecuniary  
Paul 10-9-50  
WORKING ON STREETS ONE DAY  
contrary to the form of the city ordinances in such cases made and provided against the peace and dignity of the City of Sand Springs.

I attended school in this town from fourth grade through my high school graduation. I had limited experience with racial diversity. I went to school with children from the Ratliff family, but there was eye-rolling and considerable disdain any time their names were mentioned. I never considered why everyone I went to school with looked just like me. I never wondered why my friends and teachers looked just like me. I never questioned the identity of my pastor, my Sunday school teacher, or my Blue Birds Leader. I was proudly a member of the all-White Rainbow Girls, a Masonic youth organization. I also never thought of myself as a racist; however, in reflecting on my past and recognizing the racist influence of family, friends, neighborhoods, and institutions I was part of, I realize now that I was.

My father was racist. He would make such comments as “I like Black people; everyone should own one.” He would tear any pictures of Black people out of magazines and the *TV Guide* and forbid my mother to watch any show with a Black actor. My mother’s first experience with a person of color was when she had a mammy as a young child. My

grandfather said the last time he saw a Black person in the town he was born was hanging from a tree. In college, when I had a confrontation with a group of African Americans, a police officer asked me to describe the perpetrator. I replied, “I don’t know. They all look alike to me.” That is hard for me to admit, and it makes me shudder today, but it is an example of how racist tendencies and ideologies can be present, even if you think they are not.

After college, I returned to this same White town, eventually teaching at the elementary school I attended when I was a child. Growing up in this environment and choosing to return to the same place greatly limited my worldview. I decided to remain in this same town for my entire teaching career. I taught fourth and fifth grades in the general education classroom for 23 years before earning my master’s in library media as the librarian for the last seven years of my K12 teaching career.

Oklahoma is a textbook adoption state, meaning each school district chooses its curriculum from a state-approved list. During my K12 career, I used the curriculum selected by my school district. I assumed that I was giving my students a complete education. I was proud of myself for using children’s literature instead of the basal reader and teaching science without a textbook. But for other subjects, I used the chosen curriculum. I taught about Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) and his “I Have a Dream Speech” and Rosa Parks, the tired seamstress on a bus during Black History Month. We made dragons and ate Chinese food during Chinese New Year. We celebrated Christmas Around the world by making crafts from “other” places and sampling food from various cultures. My teaching was what Rudine Sims Bishop (2015) referred to as “folk, food, and festivals.” I was “doing” diversity, right?

It wasn't until I began my Ph.D. program that my teaching world came crashing down. My view of how I had been teaching for 30 years crumbled, and I experienced cognitive dissonance more than ever before. Two events caused this self-doubt and confusion. The first event happened when I attended Oklahoma State University Writing Project Summer Institute in 2016. On a sweltering day in the middle of the summer, we took a walking tour of Greenwood that ended at John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. I did not want to take this walk. I was hot, sweaty, and grumpy. But it was there for the first time that I learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. I was 50 years old, had been an educator for almost 30 years, was born in Tulsa, had never lived outside of Tulsa County, and had never heard about the Massacre. A plaque in the park told the story (Figure 2), and as I read these words, I wondered why I did not know about this.

*The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 was the single worst incident of racial violence in American history. It began after Dick Rowland, a nineteen-year-old African American shoe shiner, was accused of assaulting Sarah Page, a young white elevator operator in the Drexel Building in downtown Tulsa on May 30, 1921. Spurred on by sensational newspaper coverage, a white lynch mob gathered the next afternoon outside the Tulsa County Courthouse where Rowland was being held, but black Tulsans, many of whom were military veterans, were equally determined to prevent the lynching. When a contingent of armed African American men arrived at the courthouse, a shot was fired and the city was thrown into chaos.*

*Throughout the long night and day that followed, gangs of whites attacked African Americans on the streets of Tulsa, and lit the first fires along the edges of Greenwood, the city's primary African American community. Black defenders made a*

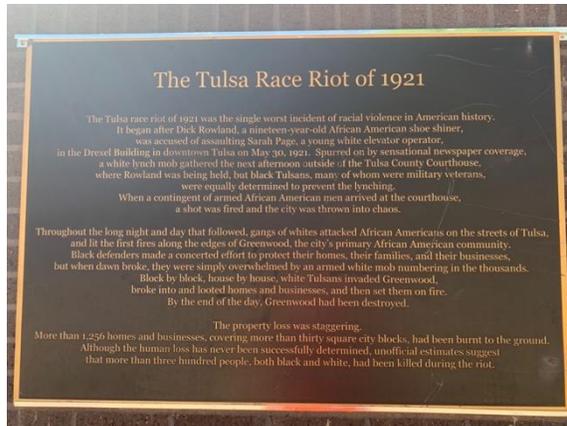
*concerted effort to protect their homes, their families, and their businesses but when dawn broke, they were simply overwhelmed by an armed white mob numbering in the thousands. Block by block, house by house, white Tulsans invaded Greenwood, broke into and looted homes and businesses, and then set them on fire. By the end of the day, Greenwood had been destroyed.*

*The property loss was staggering. More than 1,256 homes and businesses, covering more than thirty square blocks, had been burn to the ground. Although the human loss has never been successfully determined, unofficial estimates suggest that more than three hundred people, both black and white, had been killed during the riot.*

This story is staggering and yet I did not know about it. I was from this area. I taught Oklahoma history to my students, yet this was an event that was not in any textbooks I learned from or textbooks I used to teach social studies.

**Figure 2**

*The Plaque at John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park*



After reading the plaque, the docent told us to raise our hands in the air and walk toward him. As we walked with our hands in the air, the docent led us to Hope Plaza, which contains three bronze sculptures representing actual photographs from the 1921 Massacre. As we held our hands in the air, the docent pointed to the sculpture titled Humiliation. Our posture mimicked the statue's posture, a Black man with his hands raised in the air. The docent explained how White Tulsans rounded up Black Tulsans and marched them through town, with their hands raised in a sign of surrender to White people or humiliation to Blacks. They marched to various internment camps around the city of Tulsa. This moment was powerful, and I felt humiliation.

The second epiphany happened that fall when I took a class titled Diversity and Equity. In this class, Dr. Denise Blum assigned a reading by Herbert Kohl (1991) entitled "The Politics of Children's Literature: What's Wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth?" I learned that what I knew and taught my students about Rosa Parks was not the entire story. Parks was not a tired seamstress who sat in the front row of a bus. She did not cause a boycott because

of anger. She was part of a carefully planned movement for social change. Reading the whole story, I realized this was probably not the only “myth” I instructed my students.

This one, six-page article made me question everything I thought I knew about teaching. I began to reflect on my teaching style (I thought I was one of the best), the students who had been through my classroom (all shapes, sizes, color, ethnicities, and histories), the curriculum (given to me by my school district) I had espoused, and the perpetuation of colonialism, racism, othering, and censorship that I had allowed to occur both in the classroom and the library. I went through a grieving process for countless students and parents whose lives I touched and could have impacted in a more positive, culturally responsive fashion. I was angry, frustrated, and sad all at once. Yes, I taught what I knew and how I thought best, but my teaching and thinking were faulty and incomplete. I did not know the whole story, and I did not teach the entire story. Becoming a teacher-researcher, examining my Whiteness and privilege, and exploring critical theory has made me a better educator overall.

My passion has been to become the best teacher educator that I can be. By learning as much as I can about the history that has been left out of textbooks and curriculum, I believe I am beginning to right a wrong that I committed for 30 years. In educating myself about the actual events and taking a critical stance when dealing with the textbook, I can help other educators become more knowledgeable about untold events. The Tulsa Race Massacre was left out of Oklahoma Academic Standards and textbooks for 88 years. This omission is unconscionable and reflective of systemic racism evident in public schools.

This study investigated the impact of a place-based professional development about the Tulsa Race Massacre on Oklahoma teachers. The study took place over a two-and-a-half-year period as I examined how teachers made changes personally and professionally because they participated in this workshop sponsored by Oklahoma State University-Tulsa and the Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Committee. In addition, this study questioned how the racial identities of these teachers impacted their teaching and their daily lives.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As children make their way through public K-12 education, the predominant mode of learning is through textbooks. In 2002, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement for the U.S. Department of Education published the Nation's Report Card. The report revealed that 74% of teachers use textbooks provided by their school district to guide lessons. This number was drastically higher for social studies or history classes. For social studies classes, 94% of teachers used the provided history textbook as the primary source of knowledge for their lessons. Teachers rely heavily on the provided textbooks and curriculum to be historically factual. Textbooks are assumed to be reliable sources; unfortunately, research has shown this is not the case (Loewen, 2007; Ravitch, 2003).

Often the social studies curriculum as designed serves to further White dominance by marginalizing others. Social studies curriculum promotes White-centered dominance using textbooks that are often full of misinformation and containing a single story of history, the promotion of a curriculum that silences "others", and choices made by teachers, some blatant and others misguided (Apple, 2004; Hickman & Porfilio, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Loewen, 2007). Lawrence (1997) believes that "cognizant or not, white teachers inherently

obtain and thus profess a set of social, economic, and political privileges that often manifest into biases or perceptions in the classroom” (p. 110). Textbooks influence and reinforce these perceptions in the classroom.

Misperceptions are especially egregious when it comes to historical knowledge. For example, in 2010, the Texas State Board of Education decided to “water down the teaching of the civil rights movement, slavery, [and] American’s relationship with the UN” (Castro, 2010). This is just one example of missing or erroneous information. While the Tulsa Race Massacre happened in 1921, it was missing from the Oklahoma social studies standards until 2012. Even though it was added to the standards, the mention of the “riot,” as it is called, is scant and does not give clear guidelines on what to teach, how to teach it, or any suggestions of materials to use. This is a problem for Oklahoma teachers, many of whom had the same experience and did not learn about the Massacre until later in life and not from a textbook.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Representation matters; however, a review of both textbooks and trade books will reveal a lack of equal representation. Children’s and young adult literature, along with textbooks, tend to provide students with a singular view of the world, and typically it is not a multicultural one. The Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) is a research library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Each year this group documents the number of children and young adult books published, examining the number of books by and about people of color. In 2018, they reviewed 3,682 books. The researchers at the CCBC examined those books for characters and found 50% were about White people, 27% were about inanimate objects such as trucks, robots, etc., 10% were about African Americans, 7% were

about Asian Pacific Islanders, while only 1% were about American Indians/First Nations ([ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)). As Bishop (1990) asserts, “When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part” (Bishop, 1990, ix).

The opposite is true for White students. When all they see in the books they read are people who look just like them, they get a false sense of their importance. They develop an ethnocentricity that can be just as harmful. Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie coined the term “single story” in her 2009 TED Talk. She warned that if we reduce people to one story, we risk having a critical misunderstanding of others. According to the annual report produced by the group We Need Diverse Books (2016), lower literacy levels have been reported in minority students living in poverty. “Lower literacy levels have been linked to the lack of representation in children’s books” (p. 11). When students have authors and characters they can relate to, they can connect to reading in a powerful and personal way.

Aside from children's and young adult literature that reflects a dominant Eurocentric paradigm of life, teachers are frequently required to use textbooks that may only have scant or missing information on less represented groups (Apple, 2004; Hickman & Porfilio, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Loewen, 2007). These textbooks tend to focus on the dominant White European perspective, altering history to suit dominant White culture, promoting a sense of patriotism, and often containing mistakes or omissions. In her book *The Language Police*, Diane Ravitch (2003) takes a critical look at textbooks and the textbook adoption process. One of Ravitch's criticisms is that textbook committees do not review or evaluate textbooks for accuracy. While some small state organizations may review history textbooks, Ravitch

(2003) argues that they are not equipped with the "resources to check the factual accuracy or historical soundness of books that include hundreds of facts. Consequently, state and local textbook selection committees make their own judgments" (p. 140). This is true of Oklahoma. I interviewed the chairman of the social studies textbook committee in 2018, who stated that they do not have time to do a deep dive into the textbooks on which they are voting.

The history textbook seems to be where the most egregious errors happen (Apple, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2018; Leland & Bruzas, 2014;). Mistakes are made, history is left out or sanitized, and voices are not heard. The status quo in educational institutions seems to be White privilege and dominance. One goal of the social studies curriculum is to shape how students see themselves. How do African American students see themselves in the sanitized version of social studies often portrayed in textbooks? How does the White student view himself, given the dominance often portrayed in the textbooks? Students are learning an incomplete history, and this is troublesome. According to W.E.B. DuBois (1964):

One is astonished in the study of history at the recurrence of the idea that evil must be forgotten, distorted, skimmed over. We must not remember that Daniel Webster got drunk but only remember that he was a splendid constitutional lawyer. We must forget that George Washington was a slave owner... and simply remember the things we regard as creditable and inspiring. The difficulty, of course, with this philosophy is that history loses its value as an incentive and example; it paints perfect men and noble nations, but it does not tell the truth. (p. 722).

Fifty-four years later and the issue remains. As teachers, how are we portraying history to our students – specifically the Tulsa Race Massacre? Whose voices are being heard, and whose voices are we silencing? This study examined what happened when teachers participated in a professional development that provided texts that disrupt the single-story narratives of the history textbook and considered how such texts may influence attitudes and teaching approaches. Using case study methodology with a critical theory perspective, I researched teachers' experiences who participated in a professional development workshop on the Tulsa Race Massacre—interviewing and examining journal entries made during the seminar, written reflections, and social media posts following the workshop.

### **The Research Question**

The question that guided this study was as follows:

- How was the journey of Oklahoma teachers impacted after participating in a workshop focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre?

### **Overview of Study Design**

I conducted this study using qualitative collective case study methodology and methods to collect and gather data. Qualitative researchers are “interested in how people make sense of their world and how they interpret and experience different events” (Hignett & McDermott, 2015, p. 120). I am specifically interested in how the participants interpreted and experienced both the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development and teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre. The collective case study allows the researcher to study several cases linked together somehow (Goddard, 2009). While the participants taught in different school

districts, subjects, and grade levels, they were tied together through their participation in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development.

I used various methods to obtain data for this study, including three sets of video/audio-recorded and transcribed interviews, participant journal writings, course evaluation forms, lesson plans, samples of student work, and social media posts. The interviews took place during two different school years (2019-2020 and 2020-2021), with the final interview being the summer of 2021. In addition, I kept reflective researcher notes about the professional development. I also kept notes during the entire process of data analysis. Each of these methods, taken together, provided a deeper, richer meaning of the individual cases and supported the overall study.

### **Interviews**

I conducted three one-hour interviews with six participants and two one-hour interviews with one participant for this study. Of the twenty interviews I conducted, five were face-to-face, and fifteen were on Zoom. The interview approach that I took was a combination of an informal conversational strategy and a standardized strategy (Patton, 2015). I had a standard set of questions to ask each participant, but I also had the freedom to probe deeper depending upon participant responses.

### **Artifacts**

In addition to the interviews, I collected a variety of artifacts as data sources. These artifacts included journals kept during the professional development, a final writing from the last day of the workshops, and a course evaluation. Some participants also provided lesson plans, photographs, and samples of student work.

## **Significance of the Study: Can We Trust History?**

As new research continues to shed light on old “facts,” can we ever really know the whole truth about what really happened in the past? This question seems to be prevalent today, as witnessed by outcries in mainstream media and social media. Should we celebrate Columbus Day? Should we take down statues of Confederate soldiers? Should schools and sports teams change their names? Some people appear eager to question and examine the accuracy of historical events, while others want to maintain the status quo and keep everything the same.

I conducted this research as a follow-up to a Tulsa Race Massacre professional development that I had a part in organizing and presenting. This workshop was the first in a series of events planned by Oklahoma State University-Tulsa to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre. As the centennial of this event neared, stories about the Tulsa Race Massacre flooded mainstream media and social media. As noted in my discussion of social media posts, Tulsans remained divided on many issues concerning the Tulsa Race Massacre, including the accuracy of the event. Many Tulsans were learning about the Massacre for the first time as this hidden history was finally coming to light. Until recently, the Massacre was not talked about or learned about in school. It was not in the Oklahoma State Standards or history textbooks. Massacre survivors kept quiet and White Tulsans refused to acknowledge the event. As the 100th anniversary neared, questions arose about the payment of reparations, the search for mass graves, and even whether to call it a massacre or a riot.

Furthermore, questions have arisen about how teachers approach various subjects. Recently there has been a charge that schools are indoctrinating students. Critical Race Theory has become a hot-button topic across the United States. A term that was not well known just a year ago is now outlawed in several states, including Oklahoma. Questions have arisen from educators and parents about how this bill will impact what their students learn. On May 7, 2021, just 23 days before the 100-year anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre, Governor Kevin Stitt signed into law House Bill 1775. This controversial bill prohibits teaching children that one race or sex is greater than another. Proponents of this bill have mislabeled this ideology as Critical Race Theory. However, CRT in its truest form does not indoctrinate students or make anyone feel guilty. In his video announcement of the bill, Governor Stitt (2021, 1:48) ends with colorblind rhetoric by quoting parts of Martin Luther King's I have a dream speech. These few words "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" (King, 1963) are often used to promote the racist ideology of not seeing color. Even though teachers are not teaching Critical Race theory, and most do not know what it even means, the passage of this bill adds to the tension already palpable in Oklahoma education. How will this impact teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre, or will it? One of my participants will not be allowed to use the book *Dreamland Burning* (2017) by Jennifer Latham because it could be perceived as violating this new bill.

Can we trust history? In this research, I have followed teachers as they have grappled with this question - teachers who are learning about the Massacre for the very first time or are learning how to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre to their students. These teachers have wrestled with their emotions of not knowing about the Massacre until they were adults,

struggled with how to instruct their students about this timely event even if it is not in their standards, and even grappled with their identity. How often does learning about history make you question your identity?

### **Subjectivity Statement**

It is important to acknowledge my interest in this specific topic. I am a White female educator. I taught at the elementary level for 30 years before recently retiring at the K12 level. I am currently teaching pre-service teachers at the university level. I grew up in a small, primarily White, mid-western town. I went to college and came back to teach in this same mostly White, mid-western town. My encounter with and knowledge of people who are racially and culturally different from me was minimal. I used the curriculum adopted by my school district to teach my students without questioning the validity of the materials. As I began my doctoral program, I was confronted with hidden histories, my Whiteness, biases, and privilege. These things caused me to explore what I had previously taught and how I taught it. More importantly, it caused me to examine what I did not teach, and I was appalled. When I earned my initial teaching certification, I was not taught about diversity, multiculturalism, or the importance of an antiracist pedagogy. As a former K12 student or future teacher, I was not taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre. This hidden history underpins the reason for this research project.

### **Elementary School Teacher, Librarian, Graduate Teaching Assistant**

With a teaching career spanning over thirty years, I have taught everything from kindergarten through graduate school. I have also taught a variety of subjects. For most of my career, I used the textbooks and curriculum adopted by Oklahoma, one of 20 states

considered textbook adoption state. Being a textbook adoption state simply means that a committee of people choose at the state level what textbooks can be used by all districts. After a significant paradigm shift, I began to question my entire teaching career. How had I silenced others during my teaching career? Whose stories did I allow to permeate my classroom, and whose stories were left out? Whose history was promoted in my classroom, and whose was erased? These questions are important ones for teachers to consider as they turn a critical eye to the means of knowledge transmission in their classrooms.

### **Limitations of the Study**

A limited number of participants offer a limited number of lived experiences. Only seven of the sixteen professional development participants agreed to be part of this research study. Of these seven, one participant decided to retire in the middle of the research. Further, these seven participants represent a small percent of the teachers teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre in their classrooms across Oklahoma, especially as we commemorate the centennial of this event. Also, despite the fact that two males participated in the professional development, only females chose to participate in this study.

COVID-19 was another limitation of this study. I began interviewing my participants in February of 2020. In March of 2020, COVID-19 shut down the school buildings in Oklahoma and across the globe. Because of this, some of my participants were either limited in how they taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre the first year or were completely unable to teach about the Massacre. COVID-19 continued to be a limiting issue in the following school year as well (2020-2021). While some of the participants taught about the Massacre face to face, others continued to be online. Because of COVID-19 other restrictions included no

group work, no field trips, and no library visits. An unprecedented ice storm and winter blizzard also limited the amount of time spent teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Other effects of COVID-19 included one participant retiring in fear of her health. I conducted most of the interviews virtually.

The topic of the Tulsa Race Massacre itself can be a limitation. The Massacre is a place-based event. Issues about how history is taught could change depending on geographical location. Schools outside of Oklahoma may not be teaching about this topic.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Antiracist Pedagogy* – An antiracist pedagogy examines power relations embedded in history and schooling, fosters critical thinking, and encourages antiracist language and vocabulary.

*Critical Literacy* – “Critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships” (Coffey, 2010, p. 1).

*Counternarratives* – Counternarratives are those stories that tell the often-silenced voices of the "other." Counter narratives can be books, poetry, videos, etc., that give voice to the non-dominant narrative. According to Gloria Ladson-Billings (1999), these stories tell all sides of an issue.

*Departmentalized* – When a teacher teaches a specific subject matter

*Dominant Narrative* – A dominant narrative describes the lens through which history is told from the dominant culture's perspective. In this case, the dominant culture in history

textbooks is the White European culture. A dominant narrative tends to tell one group's story while silencing the "other".

*Ethnicity* – Like the term race, ethnicity is a social construct designed to categorize people. Blakemore (2019) broadly defined ethnicity as “large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background” (para. 1).

*Massacre vs. Riot* – I chose to use the word Tulsa Race Massacre instead of Tulsa Race Riot for this research. In 2018, The Tulsa Race Riot Commission officially changed its name to the Race Massacre Commission. According to State Senator Kevin Matthews (2018):

Although the dialogue about the reasons and effects of the terms riot vs. massacre are very important and encouraged, the feelings and interpretation of those who experienced this devastation as well as current area residents and historical scholars have led us to more appropriately change the name to the 1921 Race Massacre Commission.

In 1921, when this event occurred, White Tulsans referred to the event as a riot. A riot implies violence on both sides. Also, by calling it a riot instead of a massacre, the insurance companies could deny the claims of all the destruction to Black Wall Street. The estimated loss was 1.5 million in real estate and \$750,000 in personal losses. By saying massacre instead of riot, I acknowledge that White Tulsans perpetrated this event.

*Master Narrative* – The “bundle of presuppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared

cultural understandings persons in the dominant race bring to the discussion of race”

(Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, p. 462).

*Microaggression* – “a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority” (Oxford, 2021).

*Multicultural* – Often thought of in terms of race or ethnicity; in this study, it refers to race and ethnicity and differing religions, genders, socioeconomic statuses, sexualities, and abilities.

*Other* – Other was a term first used by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2008) in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* The other refers to those that are oppressed, that don't have a voice, the social groups who are at the margins of society. Antonio Gramsci used the term Subaltern for Other.

*Pedagogy of Equity* – "Teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within, and create and perpetuate, a just, humane, and democratic society" (James Banks, 1997).

*Privilege* – All the benefits given simply because you are White (or straight, or middle class, or male) are privilege (Kimmel & Ferber, 2017). In this study, I refer to White privilege.

*Pull-Out Program* – A program that takes special education students out of the regular classroom and places them in alternative programming.

*Race* – Race is a social construct and is an attempt to categorize people primarily based on physical differences. It is often used as a tool for oppression and violence. In their Racial Formation Theory Omi and Winant (1994) explained:

Once we understand that race overflows the boundaries of skin color, super-exploitation, social stratification, discrimination and prejudice, cultural domination and cultural resistance, state policy (or of any other particular social relationship we list), once we recognize the racial dimension present to some degree in every identity, institution and social practice in the United States – once we have done this, it becomes possible to speak of *Racial Formation*. (p. 10)

*Racial Identity* – Belgrave et al. (2000) define racial identity as one’s sense of self that is related to racial group membership.

*White Fragility* – The defensive moves that White people make when under even a minimum of racial stress. Emotions brought out by these defensive moves include anger, fear, and guilt. Other behaviors exhibited by White fragility include arguments, silence, and running away, thus restoring White equilibrium (DiAngelo, 2018).

### **Summary and Organization of Remaining Chapters**

Disrupting the “single story” portrayed in textbooks and curriculum deserves interrogation, as does the omission of significant historical events. I believe that teachers should be critical of such materials. Further, I posit that using a variety of texts, including children’s and young adult literature, can offer another perspective on history and allow our students to learn the truth of our history, the whole truth, not just the sanitized version found in the curriculum.

This study sought to identify and learn from the experiences of seven Tulsa area teachers that

participated in a Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. I explored how they incorporated the materials and resources from the workshop and any pedagogical and attitudinal shifts made because they participated in the workshop.

Chapter 2 gives a detailed explanation of current theories, which may serve as lenses through which the data could be analyzed, including critical theory and critical literacy. It further contains a review of past and current literature and empirical studies available on the topic of the history textbook, the damaging effects of the single-story, and using other texts to disrupt the single story and the power of professional development. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and methods for the proposed research project. Chapter 4 provides descriptions of the context of this research, including the story of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the OSU-Tulsa Campus, and the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. In Chapter 5, I present the individual case studies, and in Chapter 6, I share the cross-case analysis. Chapter 7 summarizes the study, and I discuss the conclusions and implications, and recommendations future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **The Danger of a Single Story**

Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a critically acclaimed and award-winning novelist. In 2009, Adichie coined the term "single story" in her Ted Talk "The Danger of a Single Story." Through this Ted Talk, Adichie explored her early experiences with the single story of books and literature. As a young child growing up in Africa, Adichie voraciously read British literature as those were the books available to her in a formerly colonized Nigeria. In these books, Adichie learned a single story of good literature. When she began writing her own stories, she wrote exactly the kind of stories she was reading: All her characters were "white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out" (Adichie, 2009, 0:31). These stories contrasted greatly with Adichie's real life because she had never seen the snow, did not talk about the weather, and had eaten mangoes, not apples. Not until she was an adult did Adichie find African authors and learn that girls like her who have "kinky hair and skin the color of chocolate" (Adichie, 2009, 2:07) existed in literature. At this time, Adichie learned about the dangers of presenting a single story.

In short, the danger of a single story is about power. Who gets to tell the story? When are the stories told? How many times are the stories told? The "nkali," those in power or that are greater than are the ones that tell the story. Those in power do not just tell their story. They tell other people's stories, and because of the power dynamic, this story becomes "the" story. This is the misleading dominant ideology in Western society. In her Ted Talk, Adichie (2009) discussed the importance of stories and how people's minds are shaped through storytelling. She stressed the importance of having several stories about a place, not just one. Several stories about a person, place, or event are likely to tell more of the story than just believing one single story.

Storytelling is powerful and identities are often constructed through narratives. As Reissman (2008) acknowledged, "Narratives are composed for particular audiences at moments in history, and they draw on taken-for-granted discourses and values circulating in a particular culture" (p. 3). The danger then of a single story is that by reducing complex humans to one single story, we are stripping them of their humanity, and this discourse is powerful. In telling a single story, the powerless are internalizing the power of the oppressor. Through discourse and language, the powerful are continuing their damaging control over the oppressed (Walder, 1998).

Adichie (2009) further explained how having an incomplete story was harmful to other people's understandings. Adichie is markedly aware of how power shapes whose stories are told and how we tell them, and whose stories are left untold. She defines power as "the ability not to just tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person" (Adichie, 2009, 10:03). She further explained how damaging stereotypes are and that the problem with stereotypes "is not that they are

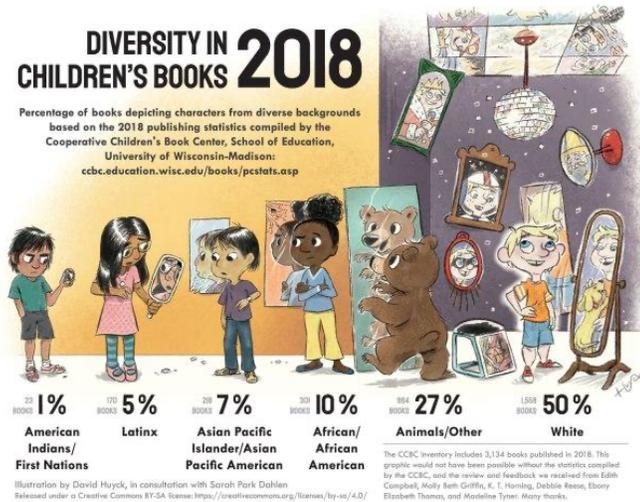
untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story" (Adichie, 2009, 12:49). The one story that is prevalent in the United States is the dominant Western ideology. This is what our students are learning.

Education is one institution in the United States where oppression, hegemony, and maintenance of the status quo is perpetuated. Through the curriculum, both explicit (textbooks, literature, testing) and hidden (norms, values, beliefs), racism and racial stereotypes are perpetuated (Ross & Bondy, 2013). Children's literature and history textbooks are two places where this is a problem. (p. 29). In her book, *The Case of Peter Pan, Or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, Jacqueline Rose (1984) suggested that children's literature is a form of colonization. As with the English books Adichie read as a child, much of children's literature presents a single story – white, middle class, two-parent (male and female) home.

The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) has documented yearly children's and young adult literature by and about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The CCBC data from 2018 showed that out of the 3,138 books published in 2018, the characters were overwhelmingly White (50%) (Figure 3). The second most common characters were animals or inanimate objects (27%). The remaining 23% included African/African Americans, Asian Pacific Islander/Asian Pacific American, Latinx, and American Indians/First Nations in order of descent. The single story in children's literature is evident when examining the data. The single story is White.

**Figure 3**

*Diversity in Children's Books*



*Note.* Retrieved from <https://readingspark.wordpress.com/2019/06/19/picture-this-diversity-in-childrens-books-2018-infographic/>

Further, Claire Bradford (2003) argued:

settler-society representations of identity result in an ideology of power that not only reduces indigenous characters and cultures to caricature but also ultimately reduces a reader's power as well. Indeed, these unexamined assumptions of race and privilege cause outmoded reading and recycled interpretive practices (p. 207).

In her classic essay, "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors," Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) discussed the importance of children's literature in the lives of children. Children need books that are mirrors. These books allow children to see themselves in a book. "Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (p. 1). Books that provide mirrors to children allow them to see characters

that look and act like them, characters that are dealing with the same issues as them. Being able to read about someone that is just like you is powerful. Seeing yourself mirrored in a book encourages the development of a positive self-image. Not seeing yourself does the opposite (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Hurley, 2005). When children worldwide learn to read from books that do not have characters that look like them, silence them, or leave them out, they get a distorted picture of their place in the world (Larrick, 1965; Sims Bishop, 1990).

Children also need books that are windows. Books that are windows allow children to see characters that are different from them. Maybe the book shares a different family structure. It could show another socio-economic status than the students. Perhaps the book shares about a different culture or ethnicity. It could incorporate ability/disability, sexuality, or another religion. Students need books that allow them to see lives that are different from their own. Books need to reflect the diverse world in which we live. When the books students read only reflect their background, their lived experiences, their heritage, they get a sense that their experience dominates other experiences (Galda, 1998).

Freire's work is especially relevant to Bishop's (1990) third metaphor – books as sliding glass doors. A significant component of Freire's (1970) work is praxis which he defined as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (p. 51). By offering children books that are sliding glass doors, teachers provide students the opportunity to transform their world. With sliding glass doors, students are offered the opportunity to act (Johnson et al., 2018). Freire (1970) noted that when people think critically about their world, they are set to change it.

Other researchers have added to or modified Bishop's thinking. Consider Indigenous Activist Debbie Reese. In a lecture to students at Iowa State University in February 2020, Reese discussed adding curtains to Bishop's Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors. She stated that the metaphor of curtains needed to be added because there are some things that Native writers do not want to share. They do not wish to share about ceremonies or rituals that have been demonized in the past. Some things need to remain private; hence, the curtains over the windows.

Grace Enriquez (2021), professor of Language and Literacy, updated Bishop's metaphors by changing them to Foggy Windows, Tiny Mirrors, and Heavy Doors. Enriquez recalled how as a young Asian girl, she wanted to find characters that were windows to her. When she found a minor character in a *Babysitter's Club* (Martin, 1986) book, despite being 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Japanese, this character did not look or act like Enriquez. She referred to these as foggy mirrors – reflecting a distorted image of who she was. The metaphor of the tiny window discussed how the windows into other cultures are often limited to special events – Black History Month, Asian-American Heritage Month, or Pride Month. Lui and Ball (2019) argued that "Isolating multicultural content from the rest of the curriculum reinforces their unexamined assumptions about race and ethnicity" (p. 80). When teachers only share diverse books during special events we are enacting Enriquez's (2021) "tiny mirrors." Enriquez added the word heavy to Bishop's metaphor of sliding glass doors. Sometimes, even if we share literature that allows students to walk through the glass door into another world, teachers do not support their learning. This makes the sliding glass door heavy and presents missed opportunities for teachers to support their students in these new worlds.

Books are also so much more than just mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Grant Snider (2018), an author and illustrator of children's picture books, published the comic in Figure 4. He portrayed books as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors but added what books are beyond these three metaphors. Realizing the power of books is essential. Sharing more than a single story is vital.

**Figure 4**

*Books Are... by Grant Snider*



*Note.* Retrieved from <http://www.incidentalcomics.com/search?q=Rudine+bishop+sims>

### **The History Textbook: Another Single Story**

Not only is children's literature a place of concern, but the teaching of American history is also problematic. Zoé Samudzi (2016) wrote an article entitled "We Need a Decolonized, Not a 'Diverse' Education." In this article, Samudzi explained that American education could not be neutral or apolitical when much of our history is revised. In her discussion, she quoted an Ewe-Mina proverb: "Until the story of the hunt is told by the lion, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter" (p. 2). She acknowledged that until indigenous communities can tell the story of the "discovery" of

the United States and "the African diaspora can write the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade until marginalized communities are the storytellers of their experiences, history will be rendered partially complete but wholly privilege the knowledges and perspectives of colonizers" (p. 2).

In his 1978 book *Orientalism*, Edward Said discussed the history taught in American education is the history given by the colonizers. "It is the part of history given him, (or taken from him) the difference is slight" (p. 286). Until the marginalized or colonized are allowed to speak, American education continues to silence their voices and perpetuate the cycle of othering. In her article "How to Uphold White Supremacy by Focusing on Diversity and Inclusion," activist Kyra (2014) claimed that history and history textbooks are white-written. Since the time of civil rights, the colonizers (White people) have worked hard to hide their history of abusing their White supremacist power (Kyra, 2014).

Scholars have scrutinized the history textbook for many years (see Aldridge, 2006; Brown & Brown, 2015; Foster, 2013; Loewen, 2007; Moore & Clark, 2004). These scholars have raised concern over history that is overlooked, overgeneralized, and exclusionary. In 1933 Carter G. Woodson argued that "the same curriculum that tells the oppressor that he is everything and superior tells the 'Negro' that he is nothing" (Woodson, 1933, p. 5). This is the danger of a single story and is still prevalent in education today.

Author James Loewen is well known for his critique of history textbooks. In his book *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (2007), Loewen took a critical look at topics typically

celebrated in an American history textbook and tells the "real" story of the event. Some events explored in Loewen's book included the Vietnam War, Abraham Lincoln, Christopher Columbus, and Reconstruction. Loewen encouraged teachers to deconstruct these single stories from the textbook and look critically at what we teach children. Bigelow and Peterson (1998) explained why this is important. In referring to the story of Christopher Columbus, they said, "Both the words and the images of the Columbus myth implicitly tell children that it is acceptable for one group of heavily armed, white people from a 'civilized' country to claim and control the lands of distant non-white *others*" (p. 10). This is the danger of the single story.

In 2018, Gloria Ladson-Billings authored an article about the funding of race and viewing race as a commodity. Race is fully funded by society meaning that it is so embedded in everything we do that it is akin to an investment. In the article, Ladson-Billings discussed that school is a significant site where race is funded. She posits that the way race is funded "contributes to continued inequitable, unjust, and undemocratic practices in schooling and education in the U.S." (p. 90), and that one of the significant purposes of education was to assimilate those different or the "other" into "normal" – white, Anglo-Saxon, and American.

Curriculum and textbooks are ways that race is funded in the U.S. As many curricula theorists state – Whose knowledge is important? Whose story is being told? Whose voice is being heard? And whose isn't? (Christensen, 2011; Janks, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2018; Leland & Harste, 2005). As Ladson-Billings (2018) succinctly stated, "What intellectual information and experiences students have access to, what they are denied access to, and what distortions of information they encounter can serve as

powerful funders of our racial ideology" (p. 97). When we teach children only one side of the story, we are presenting to them what we value most as a society. Embedded in the curriculum are our values and our beliefs. The curriculum contains what we have identified as important and worthy of sharing (Brosnan, 2016). In leaving out other voices and perspectives, we are saying their story is not essential.

Many scholars have completed content analysis of history curriculum, standards, and textbooks (See Bello & Shaver, 2011; Lillejord, 2013; Mahadi & Shahrill, 2014; Southworth, 2015; Suh et al., 2015). History textbooks, curriculum, and standards appear to fall short of ridding education of racism and the danger of the single story. In 2004, Joyce King named three ways a single story is maintained in history curriculum – invisibilizing knowledge, marginalizing knowledge, expanding knowledge, and one way to fix it - deciphering knowledge.

Invisibilizing knowledge promotes the group's culture in power (white) while making invisible any contributions or accomplishments of others or acts of aggression by those in power. Invisibilizing knowledge attempts to make everyone a “we.” Fitting everyone into the same category by using the word we invisibilizes knowledge of all our students. According to King (2004), our students of color will ask, who is this we this teacher is talking about?

Marginalizing knowledge distorts history. It marginalizes groups and individuals by relegating them to the sidelines of history. Marginalizing history is only teaching about Blacks during Black History Month. Marginalizing history is not telling the story of the Taíno people when you teach about Columbus. Marginalizing knowledge leaves

out the story of the Tulsa Race Massacre when teaching Oklahoma history. Inaccurate depictions of Native Americans with war paint, tepees, and a bow and arrow (Haukoos & Beauvais, 1996; Lintner, 2004) marginalizes knowledge. “African American and American Indian students may feel marginalized through historical representations of subjugation and hardship” (Lintner, 2004, p.30). Epstein (1994) concluded that history textbooks need to consider which groups are marginalized and from whose perspective is included information told?

Expanding knowledge is what King (2004) refers to as an "additive" approach. In this approach, schools, textbooks, or curricula make an “effort” to include more diverse faces (Ladson-Billings & Brown, 2007). For example, many basal readers (the reading textbook) have diverse faces or names, yet they live “normative” lives. In this way, a claim can be made for including diversity, but they are missing the ideology of White supremacy in this attempt to expand knowledge (King, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Brown, 2007). I experienced this personally. I asked a first-grade teacher, who still used the *Dick and Jane* reading series (1930) if she was concerned about the lack of diversity in the books. She opened one of the readers and flipped through it. She pointed at a picture and stated their friend had “slanty eyes. She’s Chinesey.” She concluded that a picture of one girl with “slanty” eyes made the books diverse. This attempt at expanding knowledge only furthered White supremacist ideals.

Deciphering knowledge (King, 2004) is a way to contend with the single story of the history textbook. Instead of creating new knowledge, teachers can teach students to "decipher" the racial ideology inherent in education. Read about Christopher Columbus and encourage students to raise critical questions – who is missing from the story? Read

about George Washington, who managed a massive plantation and encourage students to raise critical questions about slavery vs. Washington's ideals of equality. Read about the Tulsa Race Massacre and raise questions about who is telling the story. Read about the Tulsa Race Massacre and question the pros and cons of reparations. Decipher knowledge and discover how the curriculum and textbooks maintain the status quo.

The social studies curriculum is a very vulnerable site in education where hegemonic ideology is present. A look at state standards for social studies, which guide what students learn, quickly shows what those in charge of creating those standards believe is essential. Textbooks and testing are a billion-dollar industry. People design them with an economic interest, not necessarily an educational one. As Takeda (2016) states, "Political and economic forces select information about a powerful group as legitimate knowledge and publishes it in textbooks" (p. 388). This legitimizes White history while omitting others' stories (Brown & Brown, 2015; Heilig et al., 2012; Stoskopf & Bermudez, 2017). Unfortunately, as Heilig et al. (2012) have discovered, the information chosen to be in the textbooks is aligned with high-stakes testing. This high-stakes testing is another money-making industry and another place where a single story is told.

### **Critical Race Theory and the Counternarrative: The Other Side of the Single Story**

Critical Race Theory (CRT), an outcropping of Critical Legal Theory, is a powerful lens to examine racial inequalities in education and educational policies (Aronson et al., 2020; Lynn & Adams, 2010; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Su, 2007). Using

counternarratives or counter storytelling as it is sometimes called is a central tenet of CRT.

As its name suggests, counternarratives are those narratives created from the point of view of those who have historically been marginalized. “Counter” itself implies that this is a space of resistance against traditional domination. Counternarrative goes beyond the idea that those in positions of power tell the story of and for those in the margins. Instead, these stories come from the voices and perspectives of the historically dominated and marginalized. The effect of a counternarrative is to empower and give agency to those communities that have often been silenced. By choosing their own words and telling their own stories, these communities disrupt the single story told about and for them (Mora, 2014).

These counternarratives are used to disrupt the master narratives that often dominate the learning of so many. Acuff et al. (2012) defined master narratives as myths and other stories used to sanitize and white-wash history. Montecinos (1995) claimed that the use of master narratives to represent a group:

is bound to provide a very narrow depiction of what it means to be Mexican-American, African-American, White, and so on ...A master narrative essentializes and wipes out the complexities and richness of a group’s cultural life...a monovocal account will engender not only stereotyping but also curricular choices that result in representation in which fellow members of a group represented cannot recognize themselves. (pp. 293-294)

Master narratives become the norm and are often internalized by both the oppressed and the oppressor. This lends power to those master narratives, and they become the stories that we know not only of others but of ourselves as well. We become the stories we know and if what we know is the master narrative then that is what is reproduced (Andrews, 2004). If the narrative we know of ourselves opposes the dominant master narrative, how do we make sense of it?

Using counternarratives to disrupt the single story of the textbook allows “groups whose marginality defines the boundaries of the mainstream, whose voice and perspective – whose consciousness – has been suppressed, devalued, and abnormalized” (Delgado, 1995, p. 64) to have their voice heard.

Solorzano & Yasso (2002) discussed counternarratives as part of Critical Race Theory. They listed the four distinct functions of counternarratives:

1. They can build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice.
2. They can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems.
3. They can open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing the possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position.
4. They can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone. (p. 475)

The use of critical literacy with counternarratives is how teachers can disrupt the single story of the history textbook.

### **Critical Literacy**

Critical literacy is an approach to teaching that stems from Marxist critical pedagogy. Critical literacy advocates for teachers and students to take a critical stance towards texts. Critical literacy encourages readers to analyze all texts through a critical lens. At its core, critical literacy promotes social justice. Literacy is a social practice (Vasquez, 2004) that deals with power relations and contributes to social justice or inequality (Huang, 2011). From a critical theoretical perspective, literacy is viewed as having social, political, and historical meaning.

With critical literacy, students are encouraged to "pay attention to what a particular text is doing to them, how it positions them, and whose interests are being served by how the text is written" (Leland & Harste, 2000, p. 3). Critical literacy questions power structures and the status quo. All texts are written from the perspective of the author. By learning to read from a critical perspective, students question the perspective presented by the text and decide for themselves their positionality in the world. A critical perspective acknowledges that reading, like all of education, is not a neutral event. Instead of following a script or manual, teachers of critical literacy become advocates for children, helping them critique their classroom, school, society, and world.

In a critical literacy classroom, issues of equity are addressed. Students examine such social issues as gender, class, or race. Students critique the books they read and the textbooks they use. They critique issues of power in their educational setting and

inequalities they see in the communities in which they live. For example, Chafel et al. (2007) used critical literacy to explore the social issue of economic disadvantage with their students. Williams (2009) interrogated hip hop culture in a social studies class, using a critical lens, and created counternarratives to build the students' own cultural identities. Vasquez (2000) discussed the inequitable treatment of women in a poster depicting the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with her kindergarten students. Souto-Manning (2010) examined how first graders investigated the perceived injustice of the pull-out program of their school. The first graders also used picture books to explore issues of misinformation in their social studies textbook.

Critical literacy promotes students reading the word and their world (Freire, 1970). In doing so, students interrogate a variety of social issues through multiple texts or counternarratives. Using critical literacy, students deconstruct texts and learn how they are both “positioned and positioning” (Janks, 2010, p. 61). Luke and Freebody (1997) proposed a model of literacy that included a critical component. They maintained that students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century needed to develop skills in four areas. Students needed to become code breakers, text participants, text users, and text critics. While many prescriptive reading programs develop skills in the first two areas alone (code breakers and text participants), little time is spent encouraging students to become text users and text critics. A critical literacy program would help develop these skills (Leland & Harste, 2000; Luke & Freebody, 1997).

Critical conversations take place in a critical literacy model. Instead of answering scripted questions at the end of the story, students dialogue about their books. Leland et al. (1999) recognized that readers need to question the texts they read, assumptions made,

and how the text positions them. Questions that students need to ask include, "Whose story is this? Who benefits from this story? and What voices are not being heard?"

Critical conversations about books are meaningful because "they highlight diversity and difference while calling attention to the nature and role of literacy in our society" (Harste, 2000, p. 507). Critical conversations about books, whether in a Freireian culture circle or a Peterson and Eeds (2007) literature group, build students' awareness of life as they transact with quality literature. When critically exploring texts Stevens and Bean (2007) asked:

- Who/what is represented in this text?
- Who/what is absent or not represented?
- What is the author trying to accomplish with this text?
- For whom was this text written?
- Who stands to benefit/be hurt from this text?
- How is the language used in specific ways to convey ideas in this text?
- How do other texts/authors represent this idea?
- How could this text be rewritten to convey a different idea/representation

Books are powerful. Books can bring change. Books can stir a student to action. As mentioned before, books can be mirrors, windows, or sliding glass doors (Sims Bishop, 1990). However, if purposeful choices are not made in choosing literature they can become tiny mirrors, foggy windows, or heavy sliding glass doors (Enriquez, 2021).

Leland and Harste (2000) developed characteristics of powerful books. These books lend themselves to critical conversations:

- Don't make difference invisible, but rather explore what differences make a difference.
- Enrich our understanding of history and life by giving voice to those who have traditionally been silenced or marginalized.
- Make visible the social systems that attempt to maintain economic inequities.
- Show how people can begin to take action on critical social issues.
- Explore dominant systems of meaning that operate in our society to position people and groups of people.
- Help us question why certain groups are positioned as "others." (p 4)

Engaging children in conversations about the types of books listed above helps them see the world differently, encourages questioning their assumptions, insists on pushing back against the status quo, and fosters a desire to action. Critical literacy leads to conscientization or critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Critical consciousness means understanding your world and taking action against oppressive forces (Freire, 1970). These stories do not end happily ever after and are often not tied up in a neat little bow, but neither is life. Not wanting to discuss issues for fear of harming children is unacceptable. Not teaching critically is helping to maintain the status quo that is so damaging to children of color. "For us, complicity compels acknowledgment by those who dwell in the sacrosanct, unquestioned center that they too are thoroughly implicated in the unfolding of our cultural world – with all its inequities, injustices, and scabrous edges" (Davis & Sumara, 1999, p. 28). Critical literacy questions the world with all its

"scabrous edges." Using children's literature is one way to begin critical conversations with students.

Based on the principles discussed above, Mellor and Patterson (2004) suggest that a critical literacy classroom have the following tenets:

1. Texts are sites for the construction of plural, often conflicting, and contradictory meanings.
2. Texts (and readings) promote interested “versions of reality.”
3. Texts (and readings) are always partial – in the sense of being always fragmentary and never neutral.
4. Readers are constructed as meaning-makers by the readings or interpretations available to them. (p. 87)

Teachers engage their students in critical literacy and disrupt the single story by making these tenets central to the classroom. Another way to do this is by developing a critical pedagogy.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

Not only should literacy instruction be critical, but all curricula should have a critical focus. A critical focus disrupts the commonplace, upends what is considered normal (white, middle-class), and brings multiple perspectives to the forefront. Critical pedagogy started with Henry Giroux (1983) with his publication of *Theory and Resistance in Education*. In this book, Giroux set forth the foundation for critical

pedagogy by claiming that education should be a democratic process and, as in critical theory, should lead to transformative action for the oppressed. Philosophers such as Gramsci, Freire, hooks, Foucault, and Giroux critiqued the climate in public education. By daily implementation of norms, students are inculcated into upholding the interests of those in power. (Darder et al., 2003). This maintenance of hegemony can be disrupted with critical pedagogy.

Critical educators recognize the problems inherent in society. Critical pedagogy works to uncover the roots of the issues (cultural, societal, socio-economical) and teaches students to become aware of how these issues affect them in school, their neighborhoods, and society in general. Critical pedagogy deals with the relationship between power and knowledge. For philosopher Michel Foucault, power and knowledge go hand in hand. Knowledge, like education, is never neutral. Power comes from everywhere and is part and parcel of domination and resistance (Foucault, 1972).

While critical pedagogy does not have a set of scripted practices, it acknowledges and builds on the funds of knowledge that students bring into the classroom. Moll et al. (1992) defined funds of knowledge as the experiences, cultural practices, and skills acquired by a student through community and family life interactions. It is imperative in a critical classroom that all students are acknowledged and what they bring into the classroom is valued. A deficit mindset is not a part of a critical classroom.

Critical pedagogy is more than just multiculturalism. bell hooks discussed the importance of emancipatory liberating education. Hill et al. (2005), evaluating bell hooks, said of her:

hooks doesn't advocate a simple multiculturalism – add women and color and stir – but, rather, speaks passionately for the creation of communities that struggle to understand the effects of power, the social construction of knowledge and identity, the meaning of education, and the need for social and cultural change. (p. 42)

This is the heart of critical pedagogy. In her book *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks, following in the footsteps of her mentor, Paulo Freire, encouraged teachers to develop a critical pedagogy that teaches students to transgress against racism, classism, and sexism in order for them to achieve freedom (hooks, 1994).

Critical pedagogy means having critical conversations with other teachers. Critical pedagogy means having critical conversations with students. Critical pedagogy means employing critical literacy in the classroom. Critical pedagogy means questioning the textbooks that might give a white-washed version of history. Critical pedagogy means critiquing the curriculum mandated by the school district and challenging the power structures and biases present. Critical pedagogy challenges instances of othering. Critical pedagogy gives voice to those often silenced. Critical pedagogy is engaged pedagogy.

### **Professional Development – Encouraging Teachers to Disrupt the Single Story**

#### **Why Professional Development?**

The world as we know it is ever-changing. Until 1900, human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By 1945 knowledge was doubling every 25 years. In 2021, knowledge is doubling every thirteen months, and IBM projects that with the increasing use of the internet, knowledge will double every 12 hours (Schilling, 2013). What does this mean for

educators? It means that “We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist, using technologies that haven’t been invented, in order to solve problems, we don’t even know are problems yet” (Fisch, 2021, 0:43). Educators are tasked with teaching increasingly complex skills that students need to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In a report for the Learning Policy Institute, Darling-Hammond (2017) stated:

Sophisticated forms of teaching are needed to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem-solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction. In turn, effective professional development (PD) is needed to help teachers learn and refine the pedagogies required to teach these skills. (p. V)

There was so much interest in professional development that in 2015 President Obama outlined effective professional development in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This act stated that professional development should be “sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused...” (S.1177, §8002 (42)).

There is a growing body of knowledge of the importance of personalized learning for students (see Bingham et al., 2016; Camacho & Legare, 2016; Redding, 2014; Walkington & Bernacki, 2020). Amelia Harper (2018) questioned if personalized learning is essential for students, shouldn’t it be just as important for teachers? Professional development builds on the knowledge that teachers already have and develop them in areas they may struggle. So, if professional development is personalized, then teachers, like students, “will feel more engaged in the process of learning” (Harper, 2018, para. 4). Personalized professional development will be more aligned with teachers’ needs, interests, and goals.

## **Characteristics of Effective Professional Development**

For professional development to make a change, it needs to be effective. Researchers have long studied the characteristics of effective development (Bechtel & O’Sullivan, 2006; Birman et al., 2000; Boyle et al., 2004; Cohen et al., 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2001; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; King & Newman, 2000; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021; Wei et al., 2007). These ten researchers examined the results of local and national surveys conducted with thousands of teachers as well as explored 119 studies previously conducted surveys. The top four characteristics for professional development are duration (8), content-focused/subject specific (7), collaborative (6), and active learning (6). Each of these is discussed below.

### ***Duration***

Birman et al. (2000), Boyle et al. (2004), Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), Garet et al. (2001), Kedzior & Fifield (2004), King & Newman (2000), Sims & Fletcher-Wood (2021), and Wei et al. (2007) found that the duration of the professional development (PD) was a critical factor in its effectiveness. Rather than a one-day or a one-time professional development, these researchers found that extended opportunities and substantive engagement (Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Birman et al., 2000) increased the effectiveness of PD. The length of professional development is not quite as clear. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found, “Though research has not yet identified a clear threshold for the duration of effective PD models, it does indicate that meaningful professional learning that translates to changes in practice cannot be accomplished in short one-off workshops” (p. 15). Like their students, it takes time for teachers to assimilate new information (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021), hence the need for an extended time in professional development.

### ***Content Focused/Subject Specific***

Professional development is effective when “when it focuses on enhancing teachers’ knowledge of how to engage in specific pedagogical skills and how to teach specific kinds of content to learners” (Wei et al., 2007, p.15). Seven of the studies found that PD was effective when it was content-focused or subject-specific (Birman et al. (2000); Cohen et al., 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2001; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021; Wei et al., 2007). As the importance of the duration of professional development, the content was also vital. Often, PD has nothing to do with the teachers that it is designed for, leading to ineffective professional development (Garet et al., 2001; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). Effective professional development includes an intentional focus on teaching strategies associated with specific subjects or curriculum. “Ideally, the PD is aligned with school and district priorities, providing a coherence for teachers, as opposed to having PD compete with differing school and district priorities” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 6). These same studies found that student achievement improved the most when their teachers were involved in professional development focused on content knowledge.

### ***Collaborative***

Boyle et al. (2004), Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), Kedzior & Fifield (2004), King & Newman (2000), Sims & Fletcher-Wood (2021), and Wei et al. (2007) all list collaborative as an essential characteristic of effective professional development. These researchers note that teacher learning is more likely to occur if teachers collaborate with their peers both in school and outside of school (King & Newman, 2000; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). Another study conducted by Birman et al. (2000) found that teachers who collaborate with those in the same grade, content area, or department are more likely to have remarkable success with their professional development. Having peers to dialogue or troubleshoot with creates an atmosphere where teachers are more

likely to attempt what was learned in the PD. Another suggestion with collaboration was that teachers who attend professional development together could observe each other and give immediate feedback. “Collective work in trusting environments provides a basis for inquiry and reflection into teachers’ own practice, allowing teachers to take risks, solve problems, and attend to dilemmas in their practice” (Wei et al., 2007, p.7). When teachers have the chance to be collaborative, their learning is enhanced, leading to better student learning.

### ***Active Learning***

Active learning is moving away from the traditional lecture-style of learning to a more engaging format. Just as students have varying learning styles, so do the teachers that teach them. Effective professional development needs to contain active learning (Bechtel & O’Sullivan, 2006; Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2001; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Wei et al., 2007). Active learning directly involves teachers in the strategies and practices they will take back to their classrooms. Techniques suggested by the research included interactive activities, elements of collaboration, reflection, discussion, planning, and practicing the skills. When teachers can participate in hands-on strategies, their content knowledge is enhanced (Wei et al., 2007).

### **Barriers of Effective Professional Development**

The three most significant barriers for school districts or teachers to participate in are cost, location, and time. High-quality professional development is expensive. Birman et al. (2001) found that often the cost for a district to bring professional development to the schools is twice as much as districts typically spend on teachers. The prohibitive cost of PD includes salaries or stipends for the presenters, resources needed, and travel expenses. Dutro et al. (2002) suggested a way to lower the cost of PD would be for a few teachers in a school or district to become highly trained, and then they present the professional development to others. The location of the

professional developments offered might also be a hindrance. Sometimes professional development is offered in other cities or even out of state. Travel and costs of attending these types of PD keep teachers from attending, especially if their school district does not fund these types of activities. Another consideration with the location of professional development is those PDs only offered in an online format. Network capabilities, knowledge of online platforms and tools, and comfort level (Lock, 2006) are barriers to teachers participating in online professional development. The final barrier to professional development is time. Many professional development opportunities are offered outside of contract hours – before school, after school, and during the summer. If teachers choose to take these PDs they are doing so on their own time. Teachers already do so many school-related activities on their own time – planning, grading, and meetings, that many do not want to take part in professional development on their own time. One solution to this would be for school districts to provide time in a teacher’s schedule to participate in PDs.

Professional development can be a conduit for change both professionally and personally. Several studies have been completed that examined the characteristics of effective professional development. These characteristics include duration, content focused, active learning and collaborative. Hinderances to professional development include cost, time, and location. Despite a thorough search, no research on professional development as a conduit for personal change could be found. This research fills that gap.

### **Summary**

In 2009, Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie coined the term single story. A single story is an overly simplistic single view of individuals, groups, or countries. Sometimes these single stories are based on a lack of knowledge, but often they have malicious intent and tend to silence other voices. Those in power often tell a

single story, and they are telling other people's stories, not just their own. Education is one institution where these single stories are prevalent. Through textbooks, curriculum, testing, norms, and beliefs, racism and stereotypes continue to exist (Ross & Bondy, n.d.). The single story can be found in the books students read and in their textbooks.

Single stories are told in children's literature when only the "norm" is seen – White, two-parent, Christian, and middle or upper class. Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) used the metaphors of a mirror, window, and sliding glass doors to describe the types of books children need to have access to. Mirrors are books that children can see themselves reflected – their culture, family structure, socioeconomic status, peers, and problems. Windows are books that allow children to see into worlds that are different from their own. Sliding glass doors not only allow students to see other worlds but they also are moved to act on those other worlds (Bishop, 1990).

The history textbooks also share a single story. History is written by the winner – in this case, the United States. History textbooks revise history, ignore history, omit history, and distort history. History also privileges the colonizer (Samzudzi, 2016). Social studies teachers rely on the textbook more than any other subject. The textbook needs to be a place where all perspectives are told and all voices are heard. Using counternarratives brings the other side of the story to light. Counternarratives are one of the central tenets of Critical Race Theory, which examines how racism exists in education. Using critical literacy, teachers can instruct students to question everything around them – books, textbooks, schools, neighborhoods, the world. By asking whose voices do we hear? Why is the author writing this piece? Whose voices are left out? students examine systems of power and oppression in their world.

Finally, professional development was explored. Professional development is a way for teachers to learn new skills and strategies. By participating in effective professional development, teachers increase their knowledge and experience. This leads to greater achievement by students. Effective professional development is not just necessary; it is mandated by Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. Professional development can have a positive impact on teachers and could disrupt the single story in the classroom. The next chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research design and methods I used in this qualitative collective case study.

## CHAPTER III

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGY, AND METHODS

#### **Where Were You, Teachers?**

I received my public education first from Tulsa Public Schools then later at schools in surrounding districts, all in Tulsa County. I was immersed in an education in the surrounding school districts that can only be described as White. Despite attending schools in Tulsa County, I had never learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. It was not in the textbooks I read. The White teachers that taught me did not mention it. Growing up White in a predominantly White place, attending predominantly White schools, being taught by predominantly White teachers, something was missing - a connection to locally relevant issues (Taylor et al., 2017). Teachers have an incredible opportunity, whether in science, social studies, or English language arts, to situate their students in community issues that have consequences for their daily lives (Jurow & Shea, 2015).

The Tulsa Race Massacre is one such community event that still has consequences for teachers and students today, 100 years later. Tulsa covered up the Massacre, and Oklahoma left it out of the state standards and textbooks for at least 80 years. Survivors could not talk about it. Urban renewal, often referred to as the second Massacre, silenced it even more. As we near the

100-year commemoration of this tragic event, discussion of the Massacre, inside and outside of classrooms, has become more prominent in the community. How did the erasure of the Tulsa Race Massacre affect teachers and their ability to teach this topic? How do teachers bring this truly relevant issue into their classrooms?

In this qualitative case study, I explored what effect a three-day workshop focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre had on teachers, both personally and professionally. Another aim of this research was to examine how counternarratives disrupt the knowledge that teachers bring into their classrooms. This chapter describes the study and the methodology that I used in conducting this research. I first discuss the qualitative nature of the design and rationale for its use in this study, followed by the theoretical lens and framework. I also describe the participants, initial setting, data collection, and data analysis.

### **Research Question**

In response to the problem presented above, I designed this study to answer the following question:

- How was the journey of Oklahoma teachers impacted after participating in a workshop focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre?

### **Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective: Qualitative Methodology and Rationale**

Qualitative research explores how individuals bring meaning to social or human problems (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative inquiry allowed me to explore seven teachers' identities before the workshop. I examined how their identity influenced their teaching practices and curricular and pedagogical choices they made. Using this method, I further explored how teachers experienced the workshop while attending and what techniques they took back into their

classrooms. I was also able to examine any changes the participants made both personally and professionally.

Qualitative research also seeks to understand people's experiences and backgrounds while giving an in-depth look into how these life experiences affect perception (Patton, 2015). The backgrounds and experiences of the research participants were varied. They were born and raised in different communities, attended schools in various places, learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre in different contexts, taught different grades and subjects, and had many teaching experiences. This qualitative research explored how these differences influenced the way they taught racialized historical content (specifically the Massacre) in their classroom and how the collective experience of the workshop influenced their classroom practices. For these reasons, a qualitative design fits my research project.

A theoretical perspective is a set of assumptions that inform the way researchers frame their questions, design, conduct the research, and then analyze the data (Crotty, 2015). The nature of this research project lends itself to a critical theoretical perspective. A critical theoretical perspective examines and exposes power structures and hegemonic ideologies. Critical inquiry takes a close look at how meaning is constructed and how those meanings "support particular power structures, resist moves towards greater equity, and harbours oppression, manipulation and other modes of injustice and unfreedom" (Crotty, 2015, p.60). I assert that a critical perspective will provide the context required for this study.

Accordingly, as the title of Gary Howard's (2006) book suggests, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*. In critically exploring what and how teachers learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre and examining what and how they teach about this topic, a critical perspective is needed to understand how teachers make meaning of these culturally situated topics. Patricia Benner (2005) writes:

No higher court for the individual exists than meanings or self-interpretations embedded in language, skills, and practices. No laws, structures, or mechanisms offer higher explanatory principles or greater predictive power than self-interpretations in the form of common meanings, personal concerns, and cultural practices shaped by a particular history. (p. 5)

The White supremacist capitalist patriarchy shapes the cultural practice of silencing voices and perspectives in history textbooks, children's literature, and curriculum, which reiterates what Gary Howard said above: we can't teach what we don't know. Teachers often only teach what they know using the curriculum provided to them by their school district.

This research study is grounded in a constructionist epistemology; knowledge is constructed, not inherent. The construction of knowledge is not an individual event; knowledge construction is based on one's interaction with other people and one's environment. Individuals make meaning as they are engaged in their world. More specifically, a social constructionist epistemology underpins this research. A social constructionist epistemology deals directly with culture and how that culture directs our behavior and organizes our thoughts and experiences. Culture is based on a shared set of symbols and meanings (Crotty, 1998). We view these symbols through the lens that our culture "bestows" on us. This lens allows us to interpret and give meaning to our experiences while simultaneously ignoring others (Crotty, 1998). Thoughts, emotions, ideologies – all reality is socially constructed. Social construction underscores the hold that culture has on individuals. Culture shapes how we see things and gives us a definite view of the world. Culture's shaping of our minds is to be welcomed as what makes us human and endows us with the freedom we enjoy (Crotty, 1998). This research project examined how old knowledge and assumptions met with new knowledge. It explored how the participants constructed knowledge based on this "meeting."

People can experience the same phenomenon but view it differently (Crotty, 1998). In this study, I explored how teachers in the Tulsa area construct race. Specifically, I explored the phenomenon of learning and teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre: How have teachers constructed knowledge of this historical event? How have teachers imparted this knowledge to their students? What happens when old knowledge or lack of knowledge about a historical event is confronted with new knowledge of the same historical event?

### **Theoretical Lens/Framework: Critical Race Theory**

Despite claims to the contrary, education is not neutral (Freire, 1976; Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). Most White Americans claim that the United States is a post-racial society (Dawson & Bobo, 2009). Critical Race Theory (CRT) asserts that racism is so embedded in American culture that it appears natural. It is so ingrained that it is almost unrecognizable, and it has become so enmeshed in the fabric of the United States that it has become a permanent fixture (Bartlett et al., 2005; Delgado, 1995; hooks, 1992). CRT in education is a "set of perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform the structural, cultural, interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of people of color" (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002, p. 25).

In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate established a basis for CRT as a theory in the field of education that analyzes "the nature, form, and function of racism in the United States educational system" (Williams, 2009, p. 7). Using a critical theoretical lens, CRT critiques and challenges the status quo, especially in education. In 2001, Solórzano and Delgado-Bernal presented the five central tenets of critical race theory. CRT:

1. Highlights a centrality of race and racism as well as its intersectionality with other forms of subordination

2. Challenges the hegemony and dominant ideology that is engrained within society
3. Possesses a commitment to social justice
4. Highlights the centrality of experiential knowledge in developing understanding; and
5. Relies on an interdisciplinary perspective.

Critical Race Theory in education views the curriculum adopted by schools as an instrument to further the dominant narrative. A dominant narrative is a story or explanation that promotes the dominant group's (White) narratives and ideologies while silencing the voices and stories of others (Ladson-Billings, 1996; Swartz, 1992). Textbooks and curricula normalize and legitimize dominant narratives privileging some groups and marginalizing others. Voices with a different perspective are often left out of textbooks and curriculum. This is especially apparent with history textbooks that distort or omit the African American experience in the history of the United States.

Schools across the country relegate African American history to February when they “celebrate” Black History Month (Woodson, 2018; King & Brown, 2014; Dagbovie, 2004). Students learn the stories of Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, and Harriet Tubman, but these “simplistic renditions of Black heroes and saviors inadvertently reinforce notions of Black exceptionalism” (Pitts, 2020, p. 5). Teachers do not teach their students about Wentworth Cheswell, the Black man that rode with Paul Revere warning about the British. They do not learn about James Armistead, born a slave but turned double agent during the Revolutionary War. His intel led to the successful execution of the Siege of Yorktown, which ended the Revolutionary War. And students were not taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre, which happened in 1921 but was not included in the Oklahoma Academic Standards until 2012.

An essential aspect of CRT is the use of counternarratives. A counternarrative "creates space for alternative explanations that are valued and respected because it emanates directly from the experiences of marginalized populations" (Williams, 2009, p. 7). Majoritarian stories tell the story of the dominant group, typically White, middle-class, heterosexual, while at the same time silencing the voices of the dominated. Majoritarian stories, much like racism, become so entrenched in culture that they seem to be the whole truth. As Delgado (1995) points out, Whites do not see their view as just one perspective. Instead, they see it as the truth.

Critical race theorists use counternarratives, sometimes called counter-storytelling, to give voice to the oppressed and as a tool to challenge and alter racial domination (Tate, 1995). Counternarratives provide additional perspectives and a more complete and multifaceted account of historical events. Bringing in multiple perspectives and voices opens a discourse that can address each of the central tenets of CRT.

## **Methodology**

### **Case Study Design**

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a phenomenon in a real-world context over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Yin, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher can explore individuals or organizations through interventions or relationships (Yin, 2003). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) case study is an "exploratory form of inquiry that affords significant interaction with research participants, providing an in-depth picture of the unit of study" (p. 46). The phenomenon explored in this case study is a group of seven teachers that participated in a Tulsa Race Massacre workshop. The research took place across two consecutive school years. The multiple sources of information included interviews, journals, participant take-aways, student work samples, and lesson plans.

Cases are bound by time and place. In fact, Thomas (2015) says that a case study is defined more by how it is bound than the methods a researcher chooses to use. In binding the case, the researcher ensures that the study remains reasonable in scope. Binding a case includes binding “by time and place, time and activity, and by definition and context” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 546). In this research, each case was bound by place (Oklahoma State University-Tulsa), time (June of 2019), activity (Tulsa Race Massacre professional development), and group (Oklahoma teachers). I interviewed the participants in the 2019-2020 school year, the 2020-2021 school year, and the summer of 2021, which further binds this case.

A collective case study allows the study of several cases to explore one phenomenon (Stake, 1995). A collective case study has the advantage of enabling researchers to make comparisons across several cases. This research design is used to examine several cases that are linked together in some fashion – either through a common issue or some other similarity (Goddard, 2009). A standard set of research questions is created to guide the study in a collective case study, but each case is treated as its own entity. In a collective case study, the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of each case. A collective case study typically lasts for an extended period of time (Goddard, 2009). In my research, the commonality between the cases is the participation in the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop; however, the cases represented a wide variety of schools, school districts, grade levels, and subjects taught. The study also lasted for two and a half years, meeting the requirements for a collective case study.

### **The Tulsa Race Massacre Professional Development**

In March of 2018, three years before the centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre, OSU-Tulsa created a Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Committee. The purpose of this committee was to recognize and honor the community and the historical land that OSU-Tulsa occupies. As part of this committee, Dr. Shanedra Nowell and I volunteered to develop and host a professional

development for Tulsa area teachers focused on literacy and teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre.

**Figure 5**

*Excerpt of Action Plan*

**Action Plan**

<b>Idea</b>	<b>Person in Charge</b>	<b>Date</b>
Teacher workshop	Shanendra Nowell and Shelley Martin-Young	Summer 2019 Summer 2020
Special topics course 3950 for American Studies	David Gray	Fall 2020
Digital humanities course to work on archived walking tour	Stacy Takacs	Spring 2021 – digital humanities
Community workshop (one Saturday or evening)	Nekki Reagan-Neeley & Tonya Hammer	Juneteenth 2019 (possibly repeated 2020)
Deliberative dialogues	Tami Moore & Tonya Hammer	Fall 2019 through Fall 2021
Arts-based celebration	Tami Moore & Nekki Reagan-Neeley (possibly with help from Stacy Takacs? Guthrie Green?)	??Connect with one-day workshop?? Fall 2021

*Note.* This is an excerpt of the Action Plan created by the OSU-Tulsa Race Massacre Commission Committee

We met several times to create the timeline of events, the content we would present, the resources, including counternarratives, the materials used for recruitment (Appendix A), and field trip and speaker decisions.

The professional development, “Writing and Remembrance: Strategies for teaching the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre,” was born from these meetings with Dr. Nowell. We held the three-day professional development in June of 2019. Both Dr. Nowell and I announced the workshop on our social media. OSU-Tulsa also advertised the seminar on their social media platforms.

Participants enrolled online and paid a \$25 registration fee. We used the fee to purchase teaching materials and refreshments. OSU-Tulsa provided a budget for the guest speaker fees. Teachers each received a journal, a copy of *Dreamland Burning* (Latham, 2017), and *Tulsa Burning* (Myers, 2004). We provided breakfast to the participants each morning. 16 participants enrolled in the workshop: 14 females and two males. The workshop lasted from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each of the three days. Each day's schedule is listed below.

### *Day 1*

- As teachers entered the room, they made a name tent, got refreshments, and wrote in their journals:
  - What do you know about the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre?
  - What do you hope to learn over the next three days?
  - Why are you interested in this event/topic?
- Welcome by Dr. Pamela Fry, OSU-Tulsa Provost and VP of Academic Affairs
- Introductions of the facilitators (Dr. Nowell and I)
- Participants introduced themselves, grade level, school district, content area, share responses
- Dr. Nowell led the group in Dinner Party Activity and introduced the history of the Tulsa Race Massacre
- Author Anna Myers was the guest speaker
- Teachers participated in Curriculum building
- Presentation of materials available at OSU Tulsa archives
- Closing activity – write in journal – choice of persona poem or image poem based on what they learned on day 1
- Homework – Read portions of *Dreamland Burning* and *Tulsa Burning*. Choose at least one quote from each selection

### *Day 2*

- Read aloud *The Undefeated* by Kwame Alexander (2019) – participants respond to the story in their journal – discussion
- Literature Strategies
  - Literature Circles – *Dreamland Burning*
  - Novel in a Day – *Tulsa Burning*
- Guest speaker – Jennifer Latham
- Introduce text sets
- Greenwood Cultural Center Field Trip
- Homework assignment – create a text set to teach some aspect of the Tulsa Race Massacre

### ***Day 3***

- Journal writing – 3 takeaways and burning questions
- Guest Speaker – Dr. Dewayne Dickens
- Walking tour of Black Wall Street
- Mural artist discussion
- John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park
- Lunch together
- Presentation of text sets
- Share resource folder
- Workshop evaluation

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

After receiving IRB approval, I sent an email requesting participation in this study to the 16 Tulsa Race Massacre Workshop participants. Initially, of the 16 emailed, six teachers agreed to participate in follow-up interviews. The two males that participated in the workshop did not respond; therefore, the only participants involved in this study identified as female. The composition of participant group aligns with the statistic of 74% of teachers are female and when considering lower grades, this percentage is even higher (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2021). I added another participant later in the study when one of the participants decided to retire in the middle of the research process bringing the total to seven. In this case study research, the participants were Tulsa-area teachers who participated in a Tulsa Race Massacre professional development in June 2019. The participants' years of teaching experience ranged from two years to forty-one years. One participant was a special education teacher; the other six were regular education teachers. The grades the participants taught ranged from fourth grade through high-school seniors with subjects including history, journalism, and English Language Arts (ELA). One participant taught in a self-contained classroom, meaning she taught all subjects, while the other six teachers were departmentalized.

The participants all identified as female with five identifying as White, one identifying as biracial, and one identifying as Asian or intraracial. After analyzing the data, I noticed substantial differences in the stories of the White participants compared to the stories of the non-White participants. The stories of the two women who did not currently identify as White shared incidents that included past identifications as White. Both women wrestled with their identity and shared stories of uncertainty and times of feeling like they were alone. They both struggled with the feeling of not fitting in with any particular group, and shared stories of White identification at different points in their past. Sakura was forced to identify as White in a work situation and Luciana chose to identify as White because “it was easier.” Although these women did not identify as White at the time of the study, at some point in their lives they were White, by force or by choice. I decided to bracket [White] to designate that there was more to know about this forced or choice of a White identity. In qualitative research, one engagement with bracketing is when the researcher revisits the data and acknowledges their evolving comprehension of it (Fischer, 2008). While bracketing in qualitative data does not involve actual brackets around the word, I chose to identify Sakura and Luciana’s past classification as [White] to further examine the microaggressions these women faced. Even Luciana’s choice of identifying as White because it was easier, points to White privilege. In her stories she acknowledged benefitting from privilege because of her choice to identify as White, conversely this choice allowed her to avoid microaggressions. On the other hand, Sakura’s forced identification as White was a microaggression in and of itself as there was no option to choose Asian as a racial identity, thus creating conditions for her cultural invisibility.

Table 1 lists the participants’ grade level, subject(s) taught, the district’s proximity to Tulsa, and years of experience. The participants’ names are pseudonyms. I also changed the names of the school districts and specific schools

Before the professional development, I only knew one of the participants. I had been Luciana's instructor for a Children's Literature course at OSU-Tulsa. I met the other participants for the first time at the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop. Since that professional development in 2019, Michelle, Ashley, Susan, Sakura, and I have attended some of the same workshops. I also participated in a social justice panel at Oklahoma State University Writing Project that Belinda attended.

**Table 1***Participant's Demographics*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years' Experience</b>
Belinda	White	6	ELA	20 miles	2
Ashley	White	4	All (Self-Contained)	30 miles	11
Michelle	White	9-12	Social Studies/Math	30 miles	15
Victoria	White	8	ELA	20 miles	2
Luciana	Biracial	4/5	ELA/Social Studies	10 miles	2
Sakura	Asian	6	ELA	10 miles	37
*Susan	White	9-12	Journalism, creative writing, reading for pleasure	45 miles	41

**Data Collection**

Qualitative case study research involves comprehensive data collection taken from multiple data sources. While interviews were my primary data source, I also collected various artifacts from the participants, including journal entries, workshop evaluation forms, lesson plans, and student work samples.

## *Interviews*

Qualitative research often involves interviews. Researchers use interviews to find out from participants, “those things we cannot directly observe...We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions” (Patton, 2015, p. 426). Researchers conduct interviews to gather people’s stories. Interviews (Appendix B, C, & D) with the participants are the primary data source for this research.

The interview approach that I took was a combination of an informal conversational strategy and a standardized strategy (Patton, 2015). Informal conversational strategies approach interviewing with open-ended questions, a natural flow of conversation, and flexibility (Patton, 2015). By combining this with a standardized strategy, I had key questions that I asked all participants. Still, I had the flexibility in “probing and in determining when it is appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth” (Patton, 2015, p. 441). The combined interview approach worked well with this research project.

The interviews began in February of the 2019-2020 school year. Waiting until the second semester to begin the interviews gave teachers time to teach their students about the Tulsa Race Massacre. The second interviews began in November of the 2020-2021 school year, with the possibility of the participants teaching about the Massacre for the second time. The final interview took place in July of 2021. The interviews were conducted in a mixture of a face-to-face format and virtually using the Zoom video platform. Initially, I prepared to complete all interviews face-to-face; however, COVID-19 disrupted this study, forcing me to conduct interviews on a digital platform. Before the interviews, I emailed the participants a link to a consent form on Qualtrics (Appendix E). The consent form gave directions along with my email address if they had any questions. Once they signed the consent form, I scheduled a time to

conduct the first interview. For subsequent interviews, I simply emailed them a request for a follow-up interview.

**First Interview.** I designed the initial interview to learn about the participants' backgrounds. I divided this initial interview into three categories: before, during, and after the Tulsa Race Massacre seminar (Appendix B). Questions in the before the workshop category examined the participants' background: the neighborhood they grew up in, the schools they attended, and where and when they learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. In general, the interview questions about during the workshop focused on what they learned and their biggest takeaways from the professional development. The last category of questions probed teachers' participation in the workshop to discover whether they made any pedagogical shifts. If participants acknowledged shifts, how has their teaching of racialized historical content changed? Further, the interviews explored any attitudinal shifts that the teachers made after participation in the workshop. In this first interview, I sought to discover if the participants taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre and used the materials and resources gained from the workshop.

The original interviews lasted around an hour and were audio and video recorded. I conducted four of these interviews face-to-face and two of them on Zoom. I did not add the seventh participant until the second interview. Because of the topic's sensitive nature, I posit that video recording the interviews gave me as much data to analyze as the transcripts themselves. By viewing the videos, I was able to take note of body language, tone, and mannerisms. For example, every time Belinda said the word Black, she would cover her mouth and whisper. I took note of the whispering during the interview, but when I watched the video, I saw how often she did it and that she also seemed to look around the room and at the door to see if anyone could hear her.

**Second Interview.** The second interview was a follow-up to the first interview. I asked probing questions based on the responses participants gave in the first interview. A few of the

interview questions were the same for each participant, but I individualized many of the questions. The second interview was video recorded and lasted from forty-five minutes to an hour. During this interview, I clarified and deepened questions that I asked during the original interview. I also asked questions to determine if the participants continued teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre the following year, if and how the content had changed, and if there were changes in other areas, both personally and pedagogically (Appendix C). Furthermore, I asked the participants to reflect on their identity and how this was reflected in their pedagogy and curricular choices. I conducted all these interviews via Zoom.

**Third Interview.** I conducted the final interview in the summer of 2021. This interview was after participants had the opportunity to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre for two years. In this interview, I wanted to delve deeper into the emotions they experienced when they learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre, when they participated in the professional development, and when they taught the Massacre to their students. When the participants combined the information about the Tulsa Race Massacre with their experiences, an emotion happened (Peters, 2020). To encourage the participants to try and describe those emotions, I used the Human Systems Emotion Wheel System (Peters, 2020). The Emotion Wheel (Figure 6) served as a conduit for discussing these emotions.



participants. Zoom is a video conferencing platform that allowed me to video and audio record these interviews. A slight modification to the IRB was necessary before I conducted these two interviews. Because of continued COVID-19 restrictions, the second round of interviews was completed solely on Zoom.

For the second interview, I conducted all using the Zoom platform. I added Susan, the seventh participant during this round of interviews. I asked her the questions from interviews one and two. Before I conducted the third interview, I emailed each participant their “story.” I asked them to read over the narrative and make any changes or clarifications to what they read. Sakura, Belinda, and Victoria were the only participants that made changes. I conducted six of the final interviews via Zoom. I interviewed Belinda face to face and audio recorded this session.

**Table 2**

*Participation in Interviews*

Participant	Interview 1 – 2019- 2020 school year	Interview 2 – 2020- 2021 school year	Interview 3 – summer after 2020- 2021 school year
Belinda	Face to Face	Zoom	Face to Face
Ashley	Face to Face	Zoom	Zoom
Michelle	Face to Face	Zoom	Zoom
Victoria	Face to Face	Zoom	Zoom
Luciana	Zoom	Zoom	Zoom
Sakura	Zoom	Zoom	Zoom
Susan	N/A	Zoom	Zoom

*Artifacts*

In addition to the interviews, I collected other artifacts as data sources. These artifacts include a journal that participants kept during the three days of the workshop, a final writing that we had the participants complete, and the workshop evaluation forms. A couple of the teachers sent work samples, and a few also provided lesson plans for their teaching of the Tulsa Race Massacre. I took pictures of displays in their classrooms with permission, and some participants sent me pictures.

**Journals.** Participants were given a journal upon their arrival at the workshop. As they came in, we asked the participants to respond to the following questions about the Tulsa Race Massacre:

- What do you know about the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre?
- What do you hope to learn over the next three days?
- Why are you interested in this event/topic?

We encouraged participants to write in their journal reflecting on the days' experiences or responding to specific prompts throughout the workshop. We asked them to bring the journals with them on field trips and write thoughtfully about speakers and lesson presentations, adding any questions, thoughts, or concerns they may have. The participants chose what, if any, of the journals they shared with the researcher.

On the last day of the workshop, we asked the participants to write about their top three takeaways and any burning questions they may still have. After a discussion of these takeaways, participants turned these writings into the professional development leaders. We also asked the participants to complete an evaluation of the workshop. They respond to 14 statements with a Likert-style rating of 1-5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, along with two open-ended questions asking for specific examples of things learned and other comments (Appendix F). Twelve of the sixteen teachers returned the workshop evaluation form (all seven of the research participants did), and thirteen turned in their takeaways and questions writing. During the second interview, I asked some participants to clarify the statements made on the workshop evaluation.

**Figure 7**

*Excerpt of Evaluation Form*

10	I feel that <b>my professional expertise</b> was valued and nurtured during the workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
11	The <b>guest speakers</b> were informative and worthwhile.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The interaction and discussion allowed me opportunities for <b>professional connection</b> with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
13	The <b>balance</b> of lecture and hands on work was appropriate for the content.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I would <b>recommend</b> this workshop to others.	1	2	3	4	5

Please describe and give an example of resources or ideas you've learned about in the workshop and how you might use them in your classroom practice/pedagogy.

Greenwood cultural ctr, walk around Greenwood, books - Ruth + the Green Book, the Greenbook, Dreamland Burning, Tulsa Burning, text, pictures, Bill White, authors, Google docs, youtube videos. This was rich!!

Please offer any feedback you would like to share with the presenters or with Oklahoma State University related to this workshop.

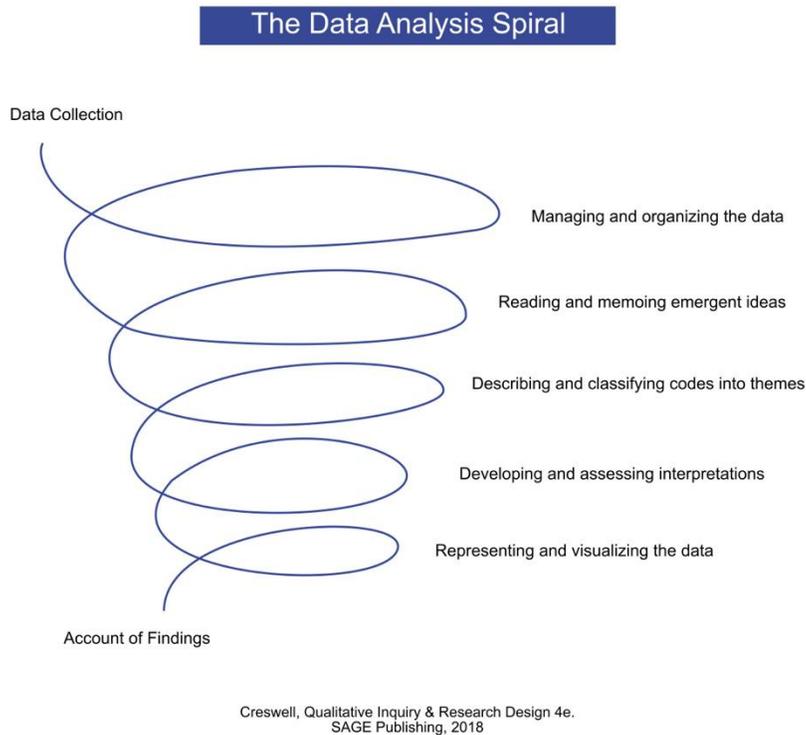
This workshop is one of the best that I have been to in a long time. It was well paced, strategies were diverse, there was lecture + a great blend of excursion, multiple speakers and activities. I have taken great notes and started on a unit to teach. I want involved in the next portion of training.

**Data Analysis**

In qualitative research, data analysis is an ongoing process that, for me, began as soon as I transcribed my first interview and noted intriguing phrases and ideas that lingered with me. My analysis followed what Creswell and Poth (2018) described as a data analysis spiral (Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

*The Data Analysis Spiral*



While qualitative data analysis does not follow a linear process, I describe each ring in the data analysis spiral linearly. The first step in the spiral is the managing and organization of the data. As soon as I had completed an interview, I downloaded the video to my computer. Each participant had a separate file. I transcribed each interview and added the transcription to the file. Having individual files for each participant made it easy to analyze data from each participant separately or easily compare data from participants. As I transcribed the interviews, I created a researcher's log and made notes about words and ideas that struck me as necessary or that I frequently heard in interviews. I wrote this in a notebook that I kept next to my computer.

After organizing the data into separate files, I read the transcriptions in their entirety multiple times to “immerse myself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole

before breaking it into parts” (Agar, 1980, pg. 103). Creswell and Poth (2018) refer to this as reading and memoing emergent ideas. Reading the transcriptions allowed me to get a feel for the data I had collected without worrying about codes just yet. During this phase, I also realized that I needed to conduct second interviews to clarify some of the first interview responses and investigate whether the participants continued teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre.

As I conducted and transcribed second interviews, I spiraled back up to the managing and organizing stage. I scheduled these second interviews for the second school year after the workshop. I again conducted the interviews and immediately transcribed them. I added these transcripts to the files I made in the first round of interviews. I also added memos to the researcher’s log. I immersed myself into these second interviews and read them all in their entirety as I noted emerging ideas.

Moving back into working with the data from the first round of interviews, I did a thorough read-through of each interview, highlighting words or phrases that caught my attention. This “playing” with the data allowed me to search for patterns or concepts that appeared important (Yin, 2018). To get to know my participants better, I also sent them a survey through Qualtrics that had demographic questions and questions about the workshop. As I received the responses to the demographic survey, I wrote a short narrative about each participant.

Playing with the data led me to begin the coding process. I decided to use the constant comparative analysis method when coding my data. The constant comparative method (CCM) of data analysis involves a continuous (constant) comparison of data with developing themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). CCM is a method that allows the researcher to code and analyze their data simultaneously (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Moving in a similar spiral fashion, this method allowed me to analyze and code the data more fluidly. CCM involves three steps in the

coding process: open, axial, and selective (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I used these three processes when coding the interviews.

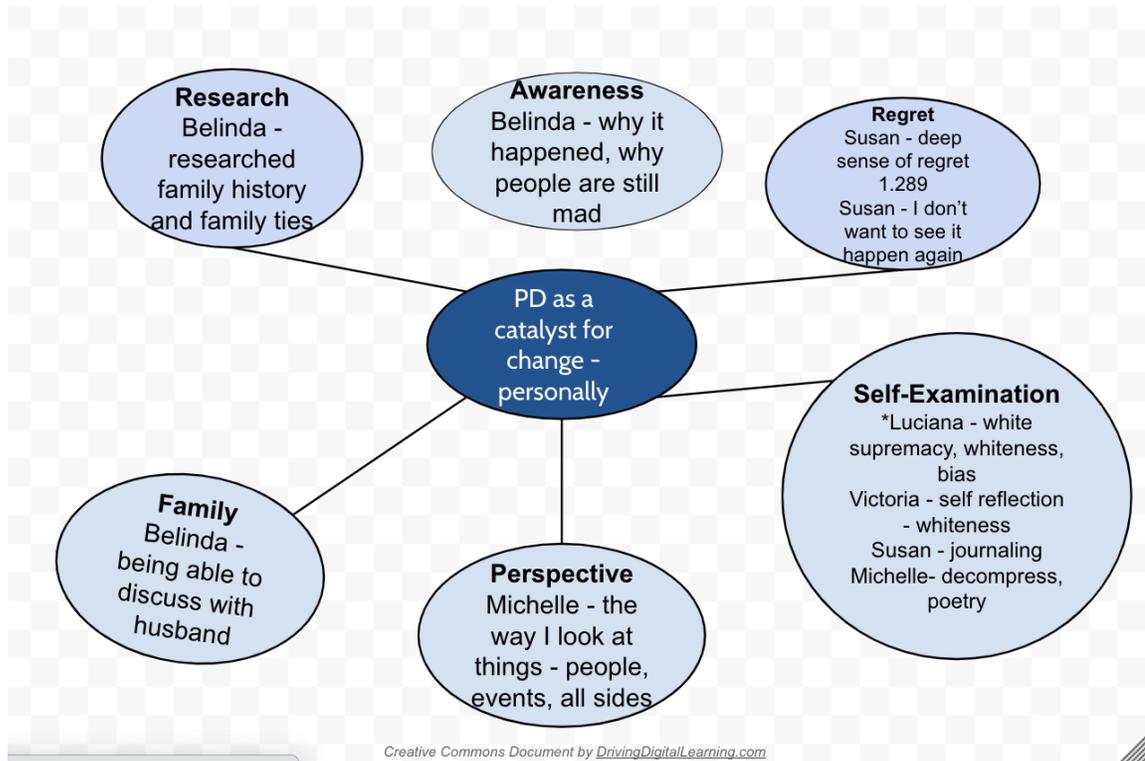
Coding forces a researcher to break the interviews that had been previously read in their entirety into smaller pieces and look at all the details (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). The first step in CCM is open coding. This occurred by again reading the entire transcript. The next step was to go through the data line by line, attempting to break it down "into pieces to examine closely, compare for relations, similarities and dissimilarities" (Khandkar, 2016). As I engaged in coding, I marked areas of interest or items that stood out, including critical incidents. This time of initial coding allowed me to closely examine the data, reflect on the contents, explore my thoughts, and make this work my own (Saldaña, 2016). After several data readings, data reduction followed from these many codes to the extent that I grouped these codes into chunks, concepts, or threads of information.

The next step in the coding process was axial coding. Axial coding involves data being "pieced together in new ways after open coding allowing connections between categories" (Kolb, 2012, p. 84). Making comparisons in the data is an integral part of axial coding. I looked for connections between the codes that I discovered during the open coding phase. I collapsed my original set of massive amounts of codes into 24 codes.

In continuing with the "playing" theme of working with my data, I took these 24 codes and created webs. The center of the web was the code that came out of collapsing my open codes. The spokes leading from the web had participant examples and sometimes quotes or page numbers (Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

*Example of Code Web*



Selective coding is the final stage of coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). During this process, I decided on the core categories, validating the relationships between the codes in the axial coding process. The primary function of selective coding is “to integrate the theory and render it dense and saturated” (Holton, 2010). In doing so, a closer look at the phenomenon is possible. In this final stage of the coding process, I created a codebook. According to Decuir-Gunby, et al. (2011), a codebook is crucial in analyzing qualitative data. It is a set of codes, definitions, and examples used to help the researcher analyze the data. I divided this codebook into before, during, and after the workshop since this is how I organized the questions. I also created a section of the codebook I labeled other that contained codes that did not fit elsewhere. Some of these “codes” were simply demographic information that I found pertinent to my research, i.e., how far from Tulsa did the participant teach? My codebook (Figure 10) contained

quotes that exemplified the code along with the source of this code. The source was beneficial as I later added Interview 2 and other artifacts to the codebook.

**Figure 10**

*Excerpt from Codebook 1*

Teaching			Luciana, Sakura
Books	I have tried to include more books that are multicultural. I bought some books with Hispanic characters for my ELL class. I bought a lot of Spanish books. I am just trying to incorporate more diverse texts.	V.1.414	Luciana, Victoria, Sakura, Ashley, Belinda
Strategies	The history and strategies in which I can teach the history have been very helpful. I also found the stories of real people and the importance of storytelling on history very relevant for my classroom.	V. E. 15	Luciana, Victoria, Sakura, Ashley, Belinda, Susan

Returning to the data analysis spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the next stage describes and classifies codes into themes. This stage moves a researcher from reading and coding to creating themes. The codebook created earlier plays a significant role in creating themes. At this point in the process, I had read Interview 1 so many times that I felt I had reached saturation. I

worried that if I continued working with this data that I would miss something important just because I was making assumptions about what I “knew.” I took a break and began going through the same steps mentioned above for the second round of interviews. As I went through Interview 2 – coding, mapping, and adding them to the codebook patterns and ideas inductively came together, and I discovered themes from this process.

After I conducted interview three and analyzed the data, I completed a cross-case analysis looking for common themes across all cases. For this, I created a new codebook that explored each theme present in all or most of the cases (Figure 11). For each theme in the codebook, I listed examples or quotes from each of the participants. I also recorded from which interview (one through three) the examples came. Creating these codebooks allowed me to write the narratives very quickly for the cases and the cross-case analysis.

**Figure 11**

*Excerpt from Codebook 2*

Code	Example	Source
COMFORT		
	We have a super tight community	DO.3.17
	Teachers have never been vulnerable enough to talk about that with their students and so I never felt I thought I was the only one that ever experienced	DO.2.4
	I honestly think the kids feel more comfortable in my class because I have had the same students for several years. They really do become like a family. They become like my kids. I have had some of these kids for four years and we are bonded.	L.3.10
	Before the workshop I didn't have the comfort or knowledge to talk about this [TRM] especially to students of color. I am a very white woman. Who am I to teach this? But now I know more and am more comfortable having conversations.	M.3.6

***Thematic Analysis***

At the time of the first interview, participants shared journals and lesson plans with me. I had copies of the workshop evaluation form and the final takeaways as a member of the professional development team. I analyzed participants' journals, the writings of their take-aways, and the workshop evaluation form using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is “not for purposes of generalizing beyond the case but rather for rich description of the case to understand the complexity thereof” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p.46). Thematic analysis is a way to look for

themes in the data set, make comparisons and find patterns. It is useful when looking for subjective information such as views and opinions in the journals, takeaways, and workshop evaluation forms. Only four participants shared parts of their journals, and five participants shared lesson plans. I had all seven workshop evaluation forms. Braun & Clark (2006) list six steps for thematic analysis.

1. Become familiar with the data
2. Generate initial codes
3. Search for themes
4. Review themes
5. Define themes
6. Writing up the report

To become familiar with the data, I first made hard copies of everything. Some participants gave me copies of lesson plans and journal pages during the first interview. Other participants emailed them to me. I grouped each participant's data individually, and then I read and reread the information I had. To generate the initial codes, I began making notes in the margins of the hard copies of the data. I also highlighted participants' words when they stood out to me. From this process, I generated themes. I integrated the themes I discovered from completing the thematic analysis to codebook one. This data added depth to the interviews.

### **Positionality Statement**

To ensure the integrity of my research, this section discusses the background and experiences I brought to the study. The researcher's positionality statement acknowledges their position on the world around them and the study, the processes, and participants (Holmes, 2010).

The researcher's identity includes background, family history, individual experiences, race, and gender and shapes the research from conception to conclusion (Ennser-Kananen, 2020).

I am a White female that grew up in a White town with predominantly White teachers. I attended a White church, and my friend groups were all White. The small, segregated town where I grew up had a small population of African Americans living within a six-block radius right in the center of town. This area was the only place in town where Blacks were permitted to live. Although I remember my father being openly racist, I did not have much experience with racially different people until college. For 23 years, I taught at the same elementary school I attended as a child. I now realize that I had a limited worldview.

When I began my Ph.D. program at Oklahoma State University, I realized just how limited my worldview really was. I experienced cognitive dissonance like never before. Discussions and readings during my coursework made me question everything I knew or had believed about race, privilege, religion, and even teaching. As a Ph.D. student, I learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre when I participated in OSU Writing Project. I was 50 years old at the time and had been a public educator for close to 30 years. Other than my four years of undergraduate college life, I had never lived outside of Tulsa County. Learning about this historical event was the impetus for this research.

As a White woman, I have grappled with my right to complete this research on a topic outside my reality. The Tulsa Race Massacre remains a sensitive topic to Tulsans and especially the Black community in Tulsa. I recognize this is a complex issue, and despite my reservations, I decided to proceed with this research to examine how educating people can change their perspective and when those people are teachers impact future generations. While I acknowledge I am complicit, it is challenging to teach something you have never heard of. If not for furthering my education at OSU, I would still not be aware of the Tulsa Race Massacre. I acknowledge that

I still have so much to learn from the Black community in Tulsa. I recognize that sometimes I just need to listen. I also realize there are White teachers just like me that struggle teaching racial topics, and just maybe they need another White teacher to come along beside them to share their story.

As a White woman, I also acknowledge my privilege and inherent bias that I bring to this research project. Racism runs deep in my family, and I recognize this and concede that I must intentionally counter these thoughts and actions. Since beginning my doctoral process, I have sought to actively break the cycle of racism in my family.

### **Validity and Reliability**

To ensure that my study is valid and reliable, I applied Bloomberg and Volpe's (2012) structure for addressing the validity and reliability. I addressed the biases I brought to this study through my position statement earlier in this chapter. In providing this statement of biases, I created an open and honest research process with the readers of this study. Validity and reliability are also judged by the researcher's credibility to provide evidence that my analysis and report findings are truly representative of my participants and the phenomenon explored (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I invited the participants to read and critique the narratives that I had written about them. I sought valid and reliable representation by asking them to read for accuracy and verify that I captured their thoughts fairly. I asked the participants to offer any feedback or comments on the narratives. I followed up on some of the comments with emails, phone calls, and some interviews.

Triangulation of data sources occurred using multiple participant interviews from various backgrounds, differing teaching positions, and experiences, representing different districts across Oklahoma. Further, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) suggest that using multiple data collection methods can also corroborate the evidence you have. I relied on multiple methods to collect data

for this case study by incorporating multiple artifacts, including interviews with each participant, journal entries, professional development evaluation forms, lesson plans, and student work samples.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a detailed description of the study's research design. I used a qualitative case study methodology to examine the experiences of Tulsa area teachers in professional development focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre. I explored how these teachers changed both personally and professionally after their experiences at the professional development. This case study focused on two years of data gathered from the participants. The participant sample consisted of seven teachers who self-selected to participate in the study. I collected several types of data artifacts, including interviews, journal entries, professional development evaluation forms, lesson plans, and student work samples. I analyzed the data using both the constant comparative analysis and thematic analysis. I also used vetted strategies to ensure the validity and reliability of my research.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONTEXT

#### **The Past**

##### **The Tulsa Race Massacre**

In 1905, before Oklahoma was even a state, the discovery of oil in the Glenn Pool oilfield changed the area's landscape forever. This oil boom brought wealth to Tulsa, sometimes called "Magic City," because of the influx of so much money (Bates, 2021). It was not just White Tulsans that had money. Black people came to the city during this boom, making Tulsa home to the second-largest population in the state by 1921 (Messer et al., 2018). Segregation relegated the more than 10,000 Black Tulsans to an area north of the railroad tracks known as the Greenwood neighborhood. This neighborhood grew and prospered and soon became known by its nickname Black Wall Street.

Greenwood was home to many businesses: restaurants, beauty salons, and hotels. There were pool halls, theaters, nightclubs, and churches. There were doctors, lawyers, teachers, and even a mortician. There were grocery stores, libraries, schools, and banks. Black Tulsans owned all these businesses. Black Tulsans also owned land, cars and built homes. The prosperity of Greenwood did not sit well with White Tulsans and in, a matter of eighteen hours over May 31 and June 1, all was gone - looted and burned to the ground.

**Figure 12**

*Dr. A.C. Jackson*



*Note.* Advertisement for Dr. A.C. Jackson, a Black consulting physician and surgeon. His practice was located in the Greenwood Community at the corner of Greenwood and Archer Streets, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

**Figure 13**

*Greenwood and Archer Streets, Tulsa, Oklahoma*



*Note.* The intersection of Greenwood and Archer streets viewed from the north in the Greenwood Community, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Buildings and cars are visible along with pedestrians and a man sitting on the curb. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

On May 31, a young Black man named Dick Rowland was arrested and held on the top floor of the Tulsa County Court House. He was arrested for allegedly assaulting elevator operator Sarah Page the day before. What exactly happened in the elevator is unclear. Still, the accepted story was that Rowland was getting on the elevator in the Drexel Building and tripped and accidentally grabbed Sarah Page, who let out a scream. Page was a young White woman, and Rowland was a Black man, and he knew he was in trouble, so he ran. The *Tulsa Tribune* ran a story that fanned the flames of racism already boiling under the surface in Tulsa. The headline read "Nab Negro for Attacking Girl in an Elevator (Figure 14). This story exaggerated the events that happened the day before, but White Tulsans were angry. They gathered outside the Tulsa County Courthouse and demanded Sheriff McCulloch (Figure 15) turn Rowland over to them. When the Black community learned what was happening, some men marched to the courthouse armed with guns and ammunition. Many of these men were veterans who had fought in World War I. They wanted to protect Rowland from what was sure to be another lynching.

**Figure 14**

*Headline in the Tulsa Tribune*

**Nab Negro for  
Attacking Girl  
In an Elevator**

A negro delivery boy who gave his name to the police as "Diamond Dick" but who has been identified as Dick Rowland, was arrested on South Greenwood avenue this morning by Officers Carmichael and Park, charged with attempting to assault the 17-year-old white elevator girl in the Drexel building early yesterday.

He will be tried in municipal court this afternoon on a state charge.

The girl said she noticed the negro a few minutes before the attempted assault looking up and down the hallway on the third floor of the Drexel building as if to see if there was anyone in sight but thought nothing of it at the time.

A few minutes later he entered the elevator she claimed, and attacked her, scratching her hands and face and tearing her clothes. Her screams brought a clerk from Rowland's store to her assistance and the negro fled. He was captured and identified this morning both by the girl and clerk, police say.

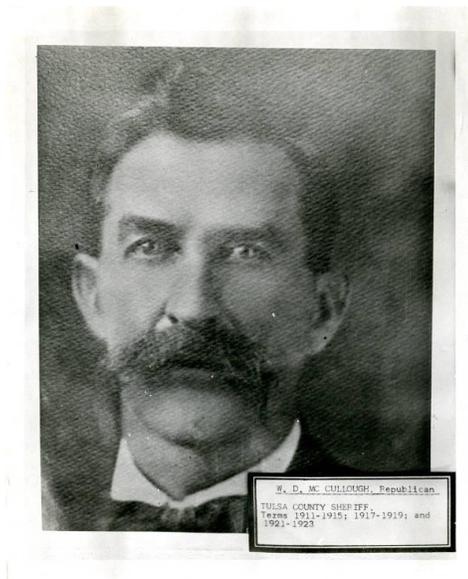
Rowland denied that he tried to harm the girl, but admitted he put his hand on her arm in the elevator when she was alone.

Treasurer of the Drexel building said the girl is an orphan who works as an elevator operator to pay her way through business college.

*Note.* From [https://tulsworld.com/tulsa-race-massacre-tulsa-tribune-story-often-cited-as-spark-that-led-to-massacre/article\\_a0c34131-af92-58a6-b857-e31620085d18.html](https://tulsworld.com/tulsa-race-massacre-tulsa-tribune-story-often-cited-as-spark-that-led-to-massacre/article_a0c34131-af92-58a6-b857-e31620085d18.html)

**Figure 15**

*Sheriff McCullough*



W. D. McCULLOUGH, Republican  
TULSA COUNTY SHERIFF  
Terms 1911-1915; 1917-1919; and  
1921-1923

*Note.* Willard D. McCullough, Republican, Tulsa County Sheriff, 1911-1915; 1917-1919; 1921-1923. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

There was a standoff in front of the courthouse between White Tulsans and Black Tulsans, and a shot rang out. Nobody knew where the shot came from, but the outnumbered Black Tulsans retreated to Greenwood. Throughout the night, skirmishes happened between the Whites and the Blacks, but soon a White mob, assisted by law enforcement officials, began setting Greenwood on fire. Planes dropped burning turpentine balls on the community, and when people ran out of their houses, the White rioters shot some of them. Others were rounded up and marched through Tulsa with their hands raised in the air in a sign of surrender. White rioters marched those rounded up to one of three internment camps in Tulsa – the fairgrounds, Convention Hall, and McNulty ballpark. Some stayed for only a few hours; others stayed days and even weeks. Detainees could only be released upon the request of a White Tulsan who had to agree to take responsibility for those they requested to be released. Those released from the internment camps had to wear identification cards on their clothing.

**Figure 16**

*Armed Civilian*



*Note.* A group of White men armed with rifles standing in the street from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. In the forefront a man wearing a cap, holds one rifle at his side and another rifle over his shoulder. Two other armed men are visible to the right. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

**Figure 17**

*Internment at Convention Hall*



*Note.* A group of Black men being marched into the Convention Hall to be held for detention from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. A line of White men stand along the route with several men visible holding rifles. Several men are watching from the window of the building. Photograph by Dr. C.L. Reeder. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa

**Figure 18**

*Internment at McNulty Ballpark*



*Note.* Blurred photograph of a group of Black men being marched to internment at the McNulty Ballpark and held for detention from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. The National Guard walks along. Caption on Photograph: "National Guard taking Negroes to ballpark for protection. Race riot at Tulsa June 1st, 1921." Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

Standpipe hill was used as a location for machine guns. As Black citizens ran out of the burning Mt. Zion Baptist church, they were met with gunfire.

**Figure 19**

*Standpipe Hill Destruction*



*Note.* Burned out homes and buildings on Standpipe Hill from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921 from a panoramic view. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

**Figure 20**

*Mount Zion Baptist Church Burning*



*Note.* Mount Zion Baptist Church burning as heavy smoke is visible. The church located at Easton and Elgin Avenue was dedicated on April 17, 1921, and destroyed in the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

Governor Robertson declared martial law, and the National Guard arrived. They assisted in putting out the fires in Greenwood. Twenty-four hours after the violence started, it was over, and 35 city blocks were destroyed. The Red Cross report stated that 1,115 homes were burned entirely while 214 homes and 315 businesses were looted but not burned. In 2001, an official Race Riot Commission was formed to review the details of the event. Their report estimated the property loss in 1921 to be 1.8 million dollars. Many in the Greenwood community filed claims, but insurance companies dismissed all but one claim. The only claim paid out was to a White Tulsan who had guns stolen from his shop. Nobody has ever been held responsible for the death and destruction of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Rowland was eventually released from jail, and the charges against him dropped, but the eradication of Greenwood was complete.

**Figure 21**

*Black District Aftermath*



*Note.* Burned ruins in the Black district of the Greenwood Community from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

**Figure 22**

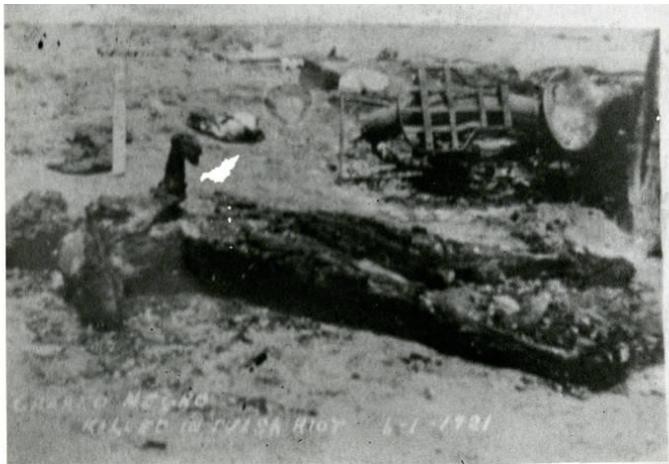
*Black District Engulfed in Smoke*



*Note.* Tulsa Black district engulfed in smoke as seen from the railroad tracks, with bystanders and cars on the street from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. Inscribed on the verso: "Oklahoma Eagle, Mr. Ed Goodwin." Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

**Figure 23**

*Burned Victim*



*Note.* A burned victim on the ground from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. Caption on front, "Charred Negro Killed in Tulsa Riot 6-1-1921." Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race

Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

**Figure 24**

*Slain Victim at Convention Hall*



*Note.* A slain Black man lying on an Oil Well Supply Co. flatbed truck parked in front of Convention Hall from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. An armed White man stands on the flatbed as another Black man is visible to the side of the truck. Civilians stand by while others are shown at the entrance to the hall. Photograph by Dr. C.L. Reeder. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

## **The Present**

### **Oklahoma State University-Tulsa**

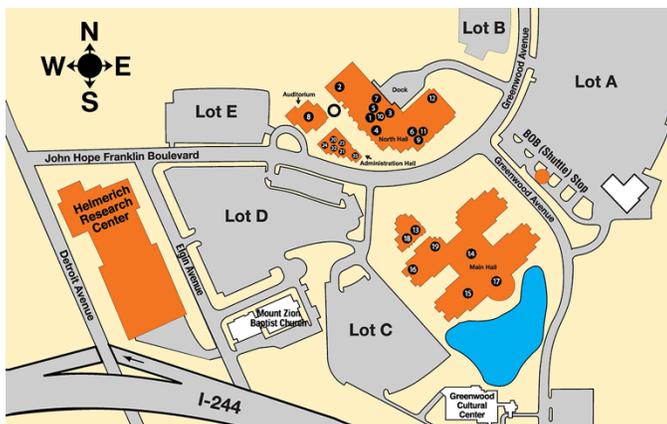
Founded in 1999, the Oklahoma State University-Tulsa campus is located in Tulsa's historic Greenwood district. In 1921, the land now occupied by OSU-Tulsa was home to Booker T. Washington High School, Tulsa's high school for Black students. Booker T. Washington was one of the few structures that survived the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. The Red Cross used Booker T. as a hospital and a safe place for those involved in the Massacre. Booker T. remained in this location until 1950 when it was moved two miles away to its current location. Standpipe Hill, where OSU-Tulsa has its Gateway Tower, was once home to Tulsa's first water tower, a

standpipe. This hill offered a view of Greenwood sprawled below, the destruction and the aftermath.

As you can see in the map below, the OSU-Tulsa campus surrounds Mt. Zion Baptist Church. The Mt. Zion Baptist Church congregation had just completed construction on their new building in 1921 when the Race Massacre happened. White Tulsans mistakenly believed that Black Tulsans were storing ammunition in the church, so they torched the building, which ultimately burned to the ground (Hinton, 2021).

**Figure 25**

*Map of OSU-Tulsa in the Greenwood District in 2021*



*Note.* Not pictured is Standpipe Hill. It is to the west of this map. The White rectangle is Mount Zion Baptist Church. Everything else is OSU-Tulsa.

OSU-Tulsa attempts to acknowledge the land and the history that the campus encompasses. At the bottom of Gateway Tower on Standpipe Hill is a monument to the Tulsa Race Massacre. The memorial acknowledges the lasting impact the Massacre had on the community. In June of 2021, the Black community added six jars of dirt to Standpipe Hill. The Tulsa Community Remembrance Coalition and the Equal Justice Initiative collected soil throughout Greenwood to memorialize unnamed victims of the Tulsa Race Massacre. During a

ceremony 100 years to the day that the Massacre occurred, Kira Boone of the Equal Justice Initiative said:

And we know that in the soil, there is the sweat of those who were enslaved. We know that in the soil, there is the blood of those who are victims of racial terror, violence, and lynching. We know that in this soil, there are the tears of those who labored under the indignation and humiliation of Jim Crow segregation. But in this soil, there is also hope, and there's also the opportunity for new life and new beginning and commitment.

(Trotter, 2021, para. 6)

Although many see the Gateway Tower as a beacon to Oklahoma State University's presence in Tulsa, others feel that there should be nothing on the Hill other than the acknowledgment of what happened there in 1921. Still, others acknowledge the presence of the OSU-Tulsa tower on Standpipe Hill but question why Langston University is not also part of the tower. Langston, a historically Black university, is also located in the Greenwood District. Some feel that the omission of Langton's name on the tower is just another attempt to silence Black voices (Bates, 2021).

The OSU-Tulsa campus also acknowledges the land they occupy with a memorial marker to Booker T. Washington High School. There is an Ellis Walker Woods Memorial located on the campus. Woods was the first principal of Booker T. Washington High School. In June 2020, OSU-Tulsa partnered with OSU-Stillwater and the OSU Center for Health Sciences to launch the 100 Points of Truth and Transformation. This initiative provided opportunities for students and the public to connect with the truth of the Tulsa Race Massacre. This initiative also focused on transformative justice. The Center for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation began in September 2021. The center focused on racial equity and created opportunities for programs that benefit the north Tulsa community. OSU-Tulsa has also hosted numerous courses, workshops,

presentations, and guest speakers trying to connect the local community with the events of the past and the hopes of the future.

### **Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Committee**

In March of 2018, Dr. Pamela Fry, then president of OSU-Tulsa, created a committee that would examine how OSU-Tulsa could recognize and honor the community and historical land that OSU occupied. The Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Committee was formed, with Dr. Donita Shaw serving as chair of the committee. Dr. Shaw reached out to me because of my research interest in the Tulsa Race Massacre and invited me to be part of this committee. The committee was comprised of seven Oklahoma State University faculty, one OSU staff member, and one graduate student. The committee met monthly beginning in August of 2018 to make plans for the Centennial Commemoration of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Plans included special topics courses taught at OSU-Tulsa, community workshops, deliberative dialogues, arts-based celebrations, and a seminar for Tulsa area teachers. Dr. Shanedra Nowell and I volunteered to formulate a plan for a professional development for the summer of 2019. This workshop was the first event hosted by the Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Committee.

### **What Brought Us Together: The Tulsa Race Massacre Professional Development**

Writing and Remembrance: Strategies for Teaching the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre was a three-day professional development designed to enrich teachers' knowledge of the events of the Tulsa Race Massacre, enhance their ability to teach about this event, introduce them to a variety of counternarratives, and provide them the experience of being in the place of the Tulsa Race Massacre. What follows is a narrative of the professional development.

## *Day 1*

As teachers entered the room on day one of the workshop, they made a name tent, got refreshments, and received journals and copies of *Tulsa Burning* (Myers, 2004) and *Dreamland Burning* (Latham, 2017). We asked the teachers to respond to the following questions in their journals:

- What do you know about the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre?
- What do you hope to learn over the next three days?
- Why are you interested in this event/topic?

Dr. Pamela Fry, then president of OSU-Tulsa, greeted the participants and introductions of the facilitators and the participants happened next. Dr. Shanedra Nowell led participants through a role-playing activity she called The Tulsa Race Massacre Dinner Party. She also presented background information of the Tulsa Race Massacre. The guest speaker for the day was Anna Myers, the author of *Tulsa Burning*. She spoke about the difficulties she had authoring this book when there was not much information available on the Massacre. Myers' daughter attended as well and sang the song "You've Got to be Carefully Taught" (Hammerstein II & Rodgers, 1958). The head librarian, Lynn Wallace, at Oklahoma State University-Tulsa, presented the archival materials about the Tulsa Race Massacre available on the OSU-Tulsa website and in the library. As day one ended, we assigned readings from both *Dreamland Burning* and *Tulsa Burning*.

**Figure 26**

*Anna Myers Speaking at the Tulsa Race Massacre Professional Development*



**Day 2**

Day two began with a read aloud of Kwame Alexander's (2019) *The Undeclared*. Teachers responded to this poem in their journals. I then introduced participants to strategies for sharing literature: the literature circle and novel in a day. Participants used *Dreamland Burning* and *Tulsa Burning* when participating in these activities. The guest speaker for day two was Jennifer Latham, the author of *Dreamland Burning*. She spoke to teachers about the importance of including diverse literature in their classrooms. She also described the difficulties she faced collecting information about the Tulsa Race Massacre and as a White woman writing about it.

**Figure 27**

*Jennifer Latham Speaking at the Tulsa Race Massacre Professional Development*



After lunch, the teachers took a walking field trip to The Greenwood Cultural Center. A docent led the teachers on a tour of the Center. She also facilitated an activity with photographs of the survivors. Each participant picked a survivor (Figure 28) and stood looking into the face of this person. The docent asked that they notice the survivor's eyes, the face of the survivor and the countenance of the survivor. She reminded the participants that these people were survivors, but they were so much more than just survivors. They were humans. They lived, breathed, and thrived in Greenwood. The Tulsa Race Massacre was not their single story.

**Figure 28**

*Venice Sims, Race Massacre Survivor*



Then participants toured the adjoining Mable B. Little Heritage House (Figure 29). This house was the only home built in the 1920s that still stood in what was once the thriving community of Greenwood. This house symbolized the wealth of the African American community that existed before the Tulsa Race Massacre destroyed it.

**Figure 29**

*Mabel B. Little Heritage House*



### *Day 3*

The final day of the workshop consisted mainly of a walking tour of Greenwood led by Dr. Dewayne Dickens. Dr. Dickens is a Teacher Consultant with OSU Writing project, director of Culturally Responsive Practices at Tulsa Community College, and on the board of directors at John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. The campus of OSU-Tulsa, where the workshop took place, is situated in the heart of where the Massacre happened. By simply walking out of the doors of North Hall, one is in Greenwood. The tour began with a stop at the monument to Booker T. Washington High School (Figure 30). This high school, located where OSU-Tulsa sits currently, was one of the few structures that survived the Tulsa Race Massacre. The American Red Cross used the school building to administer first aid to victims of the Massacre. Booker T. was moved two and a half miles to its current location in 1950.

**Figure 30**

*Booker T. Washington High School Memorial*



As the group walked along Greenwood Street to the heart of the Greenwood District, Dr. Dickens pointed out the plaques in the ground all along both sides of the street (Figure 31). These plaques marked the locations of the over 300 businesses that were destroyed during the Massacre. The plaque listed the name of the business/business owner and noted whether the business was able to be rebuilt.

**Figure 31**

*Plaque of Odd Fellow Hall*



*Note.* Odd Fellow Hall was rebuilt

As we continued the tour, we passed the historical Vernon African Methodist Episcopal Church (Figure 32). This church is the only standing Black-owned structure that survived the Tulsa Race Massacre. The doors to this church remained open despite the destruction all around.

**Figure 32**

*Vernon A.M.E Church*



Directly across from the church is the Black Wall Street Mural. As we were walking, one of the artists of the mural happened to be near. He spoke to the group. This mural, located at the heart of what was once Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a text that just begs to be "read."

**The Mural's Story**

*The Significance of Place*

The Black background for the letters that spell out Black Wall St. is painted on the north-facing wall of Interstate 244 in Tulsa's Greenwood District (Figure 33). In 1921, at the time of the Massacre, Tulsa was segregated. This wall became the dividing line between the Black part of town and the White part of town. In the 1960s, urban renewal began, and so did the decline of the Greenwood district. During urban renewal, homes and businesses that had been rebuilt after the Massacre were purchased and torn down to allow for highway infrastructure to further encroach



### ***Why was the Mural Produced?***

The Tulsa Race Massacre was an event that continued to be silenced in the Tulsa area. Kavin Ross (2011) called it a conspiracy of silence. As we approached the 100-year commemoration, people were finally talking about the Tulsa Race Massacre. This mural, spelling out the letters of Black Wall St., contained the artists' rendition of important events, including burning buildings, surrounding the Greenwood District. The mural was intended to draw attention and bring visitors to the Greenwood District. Another goal of the mural was to begin conversations about this area's past, present, and future. In an article for the Tulsa World mural artist, Sker Rogers stated:

While this (mural) is not going to take the place of a textbook or a proper study of what's happened in the past, there are different ways of learning and getting inspiration. We realized that we can't teach people by creating a mural, but we can inspire people to want to learn more (Marshall, 2019, paragraph 27).

### ***How was the Mural Produced?***

The Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission sponsored the installation of the Black Wall Street mural. The Greenwood Cultural Center commissioned Tulsa artists Sker Rogers and Bill White, and a Kansas City graffiti artist, Scribe Ross. They began work in the summer of 2018 and spent ten months producing the mural. The goal of the mural was to inspire dialogue about Greenwood, and to assist in bringing tourism to the district.

### ***Reading the Mural***

The mural spells out BLACK WALL ST. in all capital letters with street abbreviated. Each letter of the mural depicts different scenes representing essential events in the history of this area:

**B** – The B pictures the Williams Dreamland Theatre and represents the businesses that were once thriving in Black Wall Street.

**L** – The L contains an image of the Vernon AME Church. This church is one of two churches that have survived both the Massacre and Urban Renewal

**A** – Three musicians are depicted in the letter A. These three musicians symbolize the music that is so valuable to North Tulsa.

**C** – The C has the silhouette of a family. Family is the heart and soul of Greenwood. There is also a sign that shows the intersection of Greenwood and Archer. This signifies the intersection in the heart of Greenwood

**K** – Flames bursting out of the letter K draws the eye to this letter first. These flames show the destruction that happened during the Tulsa Race Massacre.

**W** – The W shows both a car and a dollar sign. Both symbolize the wealth that was prominent in the wealthiest Black community in the United States.

**A** – The second A shows a jazz musician. The accompanying plaque states that this is a symbol of Tulsa's painful past.

**L** – The L depicts an eagle flying away with the word Eagle in green lettering. This eagle stands for the Oklahoma Eagle, the only Black-owned Tulsa newspaper.

**L** – This L shows the letters GAP in all caps. These three letters honor The Gap Band. This band, originally known as the Greenwood, Archer, and Pine band (all streets in the Greenwood District), wrote and sang the song "You Dropped a Bomb on Me."

**S** – The S has piano keys and the word Juneteenth. Juneteenth, short for June Nineteenth, marked the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 – two years

after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, letting Texans know that slavery was abolished. In Tulsa, this is an important event that is celebrated yearly in the Greenwood District.

T – A giant hornet is shown on the final letter – T. The hornet stands for the Booker T. Washington High School Hornets. This school, which was once located in the Greenwood District has since been moved. Its original site is now Oklahoma State University.

Reading this mural as a text is important. All who read it will have different interpretations of what the wall says. Survivors of the Massacre would read this mural in a one. Descendants of the survivors would read the wall in yet another way. People from the community would interpret it differently as well, while people from outside of the community would have a different interpretation of this mural. This mural offers a counternarrative to the silencing of the Massacre. This mural restories "the history and collective experiences" of the people of North Tulsa (Riessman, 2008, p. 146).

The Black Wall Street mural "recovers a collective identity and suppressed history and tell[s] a new story" (Riessman, 2008, p. 146). The Tulsa Race Massacre certainly had a suppressed history that many still refuse to accept or acknowledge. This mural brings light to these overlooked stories and makes them unavoidable. When you see the amount of work the artists put into this artifact and read this story, the invisible becomes visible.

Just past the mural is another visible sign of the destruction of the Tulsa Race Massacre: burned and melted bricks surrounded and enmeshed within new bricks. Aside from the edifice of the Vernon A.M.E. church, these bricks are the only things that remained as a visible reminder of what happened in Tulsa 100 years ago (Figure 34). Instead of replacing the bricks, new businesses were built around them, leaving the scar visible to all that visit Greenwood.

**Figure 34**

*Burned Bricks in Greenwood*



The tour ended at John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. Dr. Dickens led the participants through the park, beginning at Hope Plaza (Figure 35). Hope Plaza contains three bronze statues representing scenes from The Tulsa Race Massacre. The statues are Hostility, Humiliation, and Hope. Hostility shows an armed White man. Humiliation depicts a Black man with his hands raised in the air representing how African Americans were rounded up after the Massacre and herded through town. Hope portrays Maurice Willows, the director of the Red Cross holding a baby.

**Figure 35**

*The Hope Plaza*



Participants were asked to hold their hands in the air while Dr. Dickens discussed the humiliation those who survived the Massacre faced. In keeping our hands in the air while Dr. Dickens spoke, participants were able to get the feeling of being forced to walk through Tulsa with their hands held in the air.

**Figure 36**

*Participants at Hope Plaza*



**Figure 37**

*Black Men Being Marched to Internment at Convention Hall*

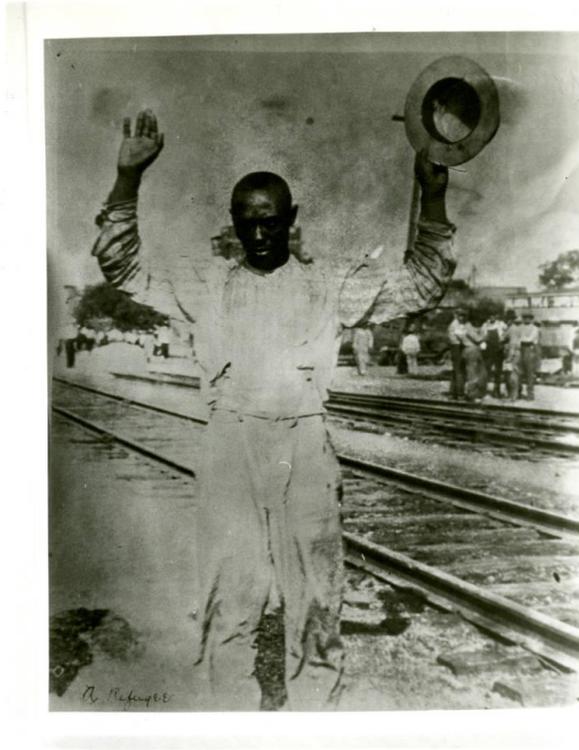


*Note.* A group of Black men with hands up being marched down the street at 1st and Boston towards Convention Hall to be held for detention as a crowd watches from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. Caption on photograph, "Captured Negroes on way to Convention Hall - during Tulsa Race Riot, June 1st 1921." Inscribed on the verso: "Ed Goodwin, Oklahoma Eagle."

Photograph by Dr. C.L. Reeder. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

**Figure 38**

*Surrender*



*Note.* A Black man holding his hat with arms raised in surrender near the railroad track from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921. Ruth Sigler Avery Collection - Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

After spending time at Hope Plaza, participants made their way to the Tower of Reconciliation (Figure 39). Created and built by Ed Dwight a Black sculptor from Colorado, this 25-foot-tall sculpture depicts the history of African Americans from slavery to the Trail of Tears and ends with the history of African Americans in Oklahoma. Surrounding this sculpture are granite structures with plaques attached. These plaques also tell the story of African Americans in

Oklahoma. The story is not only of the tragedy that happened in Tulsa in 1921 but also the triumph that has also occurred in the African American community in Oklahoma. Near the Tower of Reconciliation is a peace labyrinth. Visitors are encouraged to end their tour walking the labyrinth in silence as they remember the past and hope for the future. At the end of the tour, participants were asked to reflect in their journals.

**Figure 39**

*Tower of Reconciliation*



After lunch together, groups presented their texts sets which was their final assignment. Participants completed an evaluation of the workshop and the three-day workshop ended.

**Community's Response**

With the approach of the 100-year commemoration of the Massacre, the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development caught the attention of the local media. All three local television stations, the Tulsa World newspaper, and the OSU-Tulsa media attended all three days of the workshop. Once the television stations created their stories, they posted the video on their Facebook pages. The Facebook pages were public and open to anyone to view and to comment. I

was horrified by the attitudes and hateful rhetoric people spewed in these public forums. The comments strayed from just talking about the workshop to other issues prevalent in the community still today – all surrounding the hidden history and recently single story told of the Tulsa Race Massacre. I share these to give context to the environment that these research participants live and work in. I chose portions of comments from two Tulsa television stations—KTUL News Channel 8 and KJRH 2 News Oklahoma. The community response focused mostly on terminology of Massacre vs. riot, blame, and how teachers would teach about this historical event.

One point of contention seemed to be around whether this event should be labeled as a Massacre or a riot. In 1921, when this event occurred, White Tulsans referred to the event as a riot. A riot implies violence on both sides. Also, by calling it a riot instead of a massacre, the insurance companies could deny the claims of all the destruction to Black Wall Street. However, recently the term used is Tulsa Race Massacre. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2021) a massacre is “the act or instance of killing a number of usually helpless or unresisting human beings under circumstances of atrocity or cruelty.” This definition seems to apply to the events in 1921. However, some community members find it important to keep the label of riot. Following is an excerpt of this discussion.

Stacey: The media loves reminding everyone of the **race riots**.

Christina: It was a **massacre**, and it should be spoke on.

Kirby: The **race riot** was taught when I was in school.

Christina: It was a **MASSACRE**, not a riot!!!

Jimmy: You already know it's only gonna [*sic*] be viewed from one side by how they are calling it a 'massacre' instead of a riot.

Eric: Jimmy, were you born stupid, or do you have to practice?

The debate continued with more people entering the conversation, calling names, and leaving.

Much later, Drew added, "Jimmy sounds about White. I'll side with historians as opposed to hillbillies." Ashlie ended the conversation by stating, "it doesn't matter what you call it."

Choosing to continue to use the word riot, even after the explanation of why the word Massacre is now considered the right term, shows the words have "various shades of meaning and differing import" (Emerson, et al., 2011, p. 143). Despite the fact that Ashlie said, "it doesn't matter what you call it," it does matter. It matters deeply to the Greenwood community. "Reparative actions may not completely heal the intergenerational damage wrought by injustice" (Greenwood, 2015), but using language and framing the event as what really happened is a step in the right direction.

The blame game describes the second point of contention surrounding the events on the night of May 31, 1921. The way that people frame an event reveals pertinent information about them. When people "explicitly name, characterize, or summarize the meaning and import of some issue, event, or incident," they are formulating (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 138).

The people described and explained the events surrounding the Massacre in diverse ways. All the facts about the Tulsa Race Massacre are not known as some of the documentation has never been found. The number of deaths is disputed with some using the number of 30 from the original reports to over 300. Until recently, the Massacre has been missing from Oklahoma state standards and mostly left out of textbooks, so peoples' descriptions of the event are varied. Callie and Eric seem to blame Tulsa's White community for the event, while Jimmy's description blames the Black community. Callie stated, "The entire town was destroyed by 10,000 people from the neighboring town & about 300 people were killed." Eric added:

It was a bunch of klan hood-wearing White racists that were pissed off because their Black neighbors were far smarter and successful then they were. And their fragile racist

egos couldn't handle it, so they killed as many as they could and burned the town to the ground.

Jimmy countered with the simple phrase, "They came to the courthouse looking for a fight and they got one." The Massacre obviously happened to others, but the Facebook users had strong feelings and descriptions of the event. Emerson, et al. (2011) add, "Diverse versions provide insights into the way different members construct and make meaning of the same event as well as the meanings that they hope the telling of the story will convey to others" (p. 141). By commenting on a Facebook post, which is a public venue, and tagging other people in their posts, these folks wanted to make sure everyone knew how they constructed the story of the Massacre.

Finally, some members on the Facebook site commented about the workshop itself. A few members explained that they hoped that it is taught better than how Native American history has been taught. A few others explained how much of history has been taught incorrectly. Bunny stated, "Make sure the history lessons are correct because the Native American history that was being taught is an embarrassment of lies and trash." While Shelly said, "They don't have hardly anything in the new history books on Native Americans. So they need to teach that also." Tray continued, "Looking back now, a lot of historical moments were skimmed over." John was adamant about how the Race Massacre should be taught:

If it's taught as a grotesque event in a much different era of our history and not used as a method of either browbeating non-blacks or creating current-day victim mentality or entitlement to people who weren't even alive then, I have no beef with it. There's LOTS of history that negatively impacted ALL races at one point that we can all look at now and LEARN from. That's not meant to minimize what happened. But it should only be used as a method of illustrating where we WERE then as compared to progress and changes we have realized since then.

Discussions became heated at times, but everyone had an opinion about how teachers should (or should not) teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Two years later and not much has changed. Instead of arguing about how teachers teach the Massacre, the argument has deepened into how teachers are indoctrinating students with Critical Race Theory. Tensions are high in Tulsa and the surrounding areas, and this is the context these seven teachers enter into daily to teach their students.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the historical and current contexts surrounding the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. I portrayed the events of the Tulsa Race Massacre, described the land on which OSU-Tulsa is located today, explained the charge of the Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Committee evolved and its membership, and illustrated the three-day professional development. Finally, I communicated the community's response to the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop. In chapter 5, the data collected from the participants is presented as case narratives. This data collection developed over two and a half years, and every effort has been made to let the readers "hear" the voices of the participants through these narratives.

## CHAPTER V

### PARTICIPANT STORIES

Anthropologist Harry Wolcott (1994) suggested that qualitative researchers should arrange and describe their data before they present the analysis. In this chapter, I used what Wolcott refers to as progressive focusing. Likened to the analysis spiral I used to analyze the data, progressive focusing begins with a broad description of each participant then spirals into specific details and thoughts of the participant (Wolcott, 1994). This chapter presents the individual case narratives of the seven teachers who participated in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development and agreed to allow me to follow up with them in the two years following their professional development experience. They worked with students from third grade through 12th-grade students in schools in the Tulsa area. Their stories, taken mainly from three interviews and supplemented with supporting documents provided by the participants, seek to answer the following question:

- How is the journey of Oklahoma teachers impacted after participating in a workshop focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre?

I answer this question in this chapter as I tell the story of how each teacher wrestled with their identity and how to incorporate the Tulsa Race Massacre into their classroom pedagogy and practices.

The organization of this chapter was based on teacher identity. I divided the cases into two sections – White teachers and [White] teachers explaining the use of [White] teachers just before the section begins. I began each case with a description of the teachers’ background. I posit that a teacher’s background directly affects what and how they instruct their students. A description of their school environment follows the background. Place plays an essential role in the data, and I wanted to present a clear picture of where each teacher works. The bulk of each case is comprised of three sections: before the professional development, which discusses if and how the participants taught the Tulsa Race Massacre before attending the professional development; during the professional development, which explores what the participants found meaningful while they were participating in the three-day professional development; and after the professional development, which examines what if any professional or personal changes were enacted because of the workshop. Tables and figures throughout each case show general participant information and data sources in a concise format. Following the cases, I share the themes I discovered through the data analysis process, which I will discuss in-depth in chapter 6.

### **The White Teachers**

All the participants in the study were female, which is consistent with the demographics in the field of education. Five of the seven participants identified as White, again consistent with the field of education. These five teachers taught grades from four through twelve, and their experiences varied from two years to forty-one years. Two taught English Language Arts (ELA), one taught journalism and reading, one taught social studies and math in a special education classroom, and one was self-contained and taught all subjects at the elementary level (Table 3).

**Table 3**

*White Teacher Demographics*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>District/ Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years' Experience</b>
Belinda	White	6	ELA	20 miles	2
Ashley	White	4	All (Self- Contained)	30 miles	11
Michelle	White	9-12	SPED Social Studies/Math	30 miles	15
Victoria	White	8	ELA	20 miles	2
Susan	White	9-12	Journalism, creative writing, reading for pleasure	45 miles	41

To protect their identity, the names of the participants as well as the names of their schools and school districts have been changed.

**Case Study 1: Michelle**

*“Too often in social studies curriculum, we leave out the ugly bits, and I think it is important that we learn and teach the ugly bits.”*

*-Michelle*

**Table 4**

*Overview of Case 1*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>District/ Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years' Experience</b>
Michelle	White	9-12	SPED Social Studies/Math	30 miles	15

The first interview with Michelle took place in her classroom during the 2019-2020 school year. We met face to face after school. The interview lasted around an hour and was both

video and audio recorded. Due to a COVID-19 exposure, the State Department of Health placed Michelle in quarantine at the time of the second interview. As a result of the quarantine, I interviewed Michelle via Zoom. I also recorded this hour-long interview on Zoom. The third interview took place in the summer of 2021. I also recorded this interview on Zoom, which again lasted about an hour.

### **Michelle's Description and Background**

Michelle, a 39-year-old, White female was born in the Tulsa area. She grew up in Amity, a mere 20 miles from Tulsa. Her parents still live in her childhood home. Michelle attended Amity Public schools for grades kindergarten through her graduation from high school in 1999. She described the neighborhood where she grew up as not being remarkably diverse and that most everyone “looked just like me.” Amity Schools were a little more diverse than her neighborhood, but again, her friend groups typically looked just like her. Like many of the White participants, diversity was something Michelle “never really thought about.” However, having a graduating class of 918, Michelle said she met people on graduation night that she had never seen before. Hence, there was probably a diversity that she didn't even realize.

When I asked Michelle if growing up with people who looked just like her impacted the way she taught, she stated that she was not sure. She acknowledges that it probably had some effect unconsciously, but nothing that she recognizes. She adds that “my parents raised me to be open-minded and to question things.” She understands their encouragement probably prompted her to explore differences. She also accredited her interest in different religions and cultures with her father's conversion to Judaism when she was in high school.

Michelle went to the local junior college right out of high school. She acknowledged there was more diversity, “especially when I had classes at the downtown campus,” referring to downtown Tulsa. Michelle attended a university away from home but only went there for a

semester. She came back and finished her undergraduate degree in Tulsa. Michelle stated that her experiences in college were much like her experiences in high school – diversity was there, but her friend groups mostly looked just like her.

Despite growing up with people that looked just like her, Michelle has always felt a kinship with “those that have been pushed down – the others.” She has always had a passion for learning about history and was an avid reader of the history books her family kept in the house. She especially remembers a three-volume pictorial history of Tulsa that fascinated her. She even recalls taking this book to school to show to the teacher and other students when they covered different topics in class. These books were her first exposure to the Tulsa Race Massacre.

Michelle still lives in the town of Amity, which was where she grew up. However, her decision to buy her home in Amity was influenced by school districts. Depending on where your house was in Amity, your children attended Amity schools or Mayfield schools. Michelle realized that when she attended Amity schools, she had limited exposure to racial or economic diversity, decided she wanted to purchase her house in the area that would guarantee her children would attend Mayfield Schools. She stated:

I didn't want them to have the same limited experience that I had with who I grew up around. I wanted to find a school that has a demographic that is going to be more diverse than Amity's. I wanted to put them in an environment that will push them to be more accepting.

Further, Michelle wanted them to experience diversity because “That's the real world. The real world is not all White.”

## **Michelle's School Environment**

Michelle, a veteran teacher of fifteen years, has taught for two different school districts. Tulsa was the first district in which she taught. She taught at two different schools while there. Michelle began teaching at Rockford Elementary, which was a west Tulsa school. This school was where she said that diversity “smacked her in the face.” West Tulsa was a more diverse area of Tulsa – diverse both racially and economically. Working-class residents lived in this area of Tulsa. Rockford, where she taught 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade as a resource teacher, was her only elementary experience. Considered a pull-out program, Michelle brought the students out of their regular classroom to her class for both reading and math. At this school, she had “the most impactful experience” of her young career. Her mentor talked to her about the students and advised her to “make sure to never let them know you are better than them.” This comment upset Michelle because these are young children. They have done nothing wrong. “Of course, I am not better than them. I have made many mistakes. I just thought it was wrong for her to say something like that,” said Michelle. This incident formed her opinion on what was important in that school. At the end of that school year, Michelle accepted a position at another Tulsa Public School.

Michelle went from teaching elementary to teaching high school when she moved to Courtyard High School. Courtyard was a remarkably diverse school community with a high population of Hmong and African American students. Michelle taught math in a pull-out program. She also sponsored the Asian American club during her nine years as a special education teacher. After nine years, Michelle changed school districts from Tulsa Public Schools to Gould Public Schools, where she had what she called a “major culture shock.” She moved from a genuinely diverse environment to a climate where most of the students were White presenting. Michelle found the school community sometimes difficult as she talked about some of the racist tendencies, including a lot of “Confederate flag flying.” She has also found that

sometimes the students have difficulty talking about racial issues, although she encourages them to get outside of their comfort zone.

In Gould, the second school district, Michelle taught at one school, Gould Mid-High. A special education teacher, she earned subject area certification in math and “built a HOUSSE” (High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation) in social studies. To build a HOUSSE, Oklahoma considers coursework, years of service, professional development attended, and academic achievement. With the HOUSSE, Michelle became the teacher of record for special education students in social studies despite not having that certification.

Gould, Michelle’s current district, was a rural school district with a race and ethnicity makeup as follows: 70% White, 14% Native, 5% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 0% Black, and 9% two or more races/ethnicities (Census Reporter, 2019). The campus encompasses all the schools from pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The administrative offices, the IT department, the transportation department, ag education, and all the athletics are also located on this one campus. Michelle’s classroom was in the Mid-High building, but she also taught students from the High School building, directly across the parking lot. The school district was relatively small, with a current enrollment of around 1250 students. The average size of a graduating class from Gould was between 90 – 100 students.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the subjects Michelle taught included algebra, geometry, world of finance, Oklahoma history, US history, world history, and government. Due to COVID-19, the 2020-2021 school year looked much different for Michelle. While she was still responsible for the same subjects, she had a significantly lower number of students attending school face to face. Her largest class only had three students. While Michelle typically pulled the special education students out of class for instruction in her room, with fewer students in the

2020-2021 school year, Michelle found herself going into the classrooms and assisting teachers with other students along with those on her caseload.

When I questioned Michelle about the district’s curriculum for social studies, she replied, “I have no idea. I don’t use it. I’m sure the school district has a textbook, and I probably have it in the closet, and it’s probably falling apart because it is really old.” This discussion prompted Michelle to pull out the textbooks that she had in her classroom. The ages of the textbooks were appalling – the geography textbook was from 1988, the world history textbook was from 1990, and the government from 2001. Michelle laughed about the geography textbook still containing the USSR.

Since she does not use the district-adopted social studies curriculum, Michelle finds ways to meet the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS). She thinks her teaching position and administration allow her agency in finding and using her own curriculum. Much of what she uses with her students are materials that she gathers from the various workshops that she attends. Michelle acknowledges that as a special education teacher, she has more leeway with addressing standards than regular classroom teachers and knew if she was going to teach a topic, she wanted the ability to go much deeper. Michelle prided herself on teaching depth instead of breadth. She wanted her students to appreciate what they were learning and often gave them surveys to see what topics they were interested in learning.

### **Before the Professional Development**

Michelle grew up in the Tulsa area, and unlike most of my other participants, she remembers learning a little about the Tulsa Race Massacre in school, but most of what she knew she had learned from the books that she read on her own. Michelle stated that she was intrigued when she first heard about it and wanted to learn more. She remembers discussing it slightly in Oklahoma history, but beyond that, “I don’t think it was ever talked about again while I was in

school – neither high school nor college.” What she learned early on was just surface-level information and did not learn more about the Massacre until she was an adult.

She had been in the Greenwood area many times before attending the workshop. During her senior year, Amity Public School held its prom at the Greenwood Cultural Center. She remembers driving in the Greenwood area and noticing the homeless people and the darkness. She explained that she and her friends got lost while they were driving in downtown. All she thought about that area when she was young was that it was a scary place – a place where she did not want to be. She stated that she never associated this area with where the Tulsa Race Massacre had happened.

Before attending the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop, Michelle taught the topic “only briefly” using a few documentaries, but only teaching at a surface level. She responded, “I did not teach it well because I was lacking a lot of information, but they [her students] were exposed.” Her students tended to like learning about things such as the Tulsa Race Massacre and the Holocaust because they “like subjects that can be more controversial or racy or taboo. Apparently, anything with humans destroying other humans is really interesting,” Michelle added.

Michelle decided to sign up for the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development because it was a topic that she did not have much information. She wanted to attend the workshop to learn how to teach this topic to her students and to enrich her knowledge of this historical event.

### **During the Professional Development**

With her love of all thing’s history, Michelle found the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop to be the best workshop she had ever attended. The most valuable lesson Michelle took from the professional development was about perspectives. “From day one of the workshop, we learned

how important it is to hear everyone's perspective on an issue from the National Guard guy to the hotel owner to the son of an important Black Wall Street figure," reflected Michelle. She finds it essential that she teach her students that the people they learn about from the past do not have the luxury of hindsight. Many of the actors in the Tulsa Race Massacre were "legitimately doing what they thought was right even if in hindsight we look at it and say that was a bad decision." She further explained that not everyone that participated in the Tulsa Race Massacre was terrible. Some were doing what they thought was right at the time, some were just pure evil, but others decided to help the African Americans by hiding them and vouching for their employment. She values hearing multiple perspectives on any topic she teaches.

Along with valuing perspective, the human element was also crucial to Michelle. She was fascinated to hear the survivors' stories and realized that they were not just victims, but also humans. At the time of the third interview, Michelle had changed her words from victims to targets. Presenters at a Holocaust workshop that Michelle and I attended used the word target instead of a victim. Michelle acknowledged that the word target was more appropriate than victim. She explained, "Being a victim of something puts you automatically in a vulnerable state. It seems like a weakened version. When you say target, that seems more accurate because something happened to you; a perpetrator actually targeted you." Michelle thought learning about everyone's stories, the perpetrators, and the survivors was essential and will help make the events more real to her students. "It's really important to realize that humans are capable of really bad things. That doesn't necessarily mean they are bad people or have malice in their hearts. Every day we have to make conscious decisions about our behavior," commented Michelle. Knowing these are real people with real lives and real families was vital for her students.

The shared resources were also incredibly beneficial to Michelle. The books, the websites, the primary source documents, the photographs would all help her special education students learn this subject at a deeper level. The final project that the participants completed as

part of the professional development was creating a text set addressing something relating to the Massacre. The professional development leaders shared all the text sets in a shared Google folder. Michelle found these text sets to be invaluable.

Michelle also had a deep connection to the walking tour of Greenwood. From the walk, she was especially drawn to the plaques on the sidewalk that honor the lost businesses, the mural depicting the history of Black Wall Street, and visiting both John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park and the Greenwood Cultural Center. Michelle reiterated:

Prior to the walking tour, I was completely unaware of many of the markers that identify locations of businesses that were destroyed. There is a weight and certain indescribable feeling I got learning about events in the same locations that they originally occurred. It helped deepen the connection to the events we were discussing.

She added that when you see the burned bricks and realize what it looks like now compared to what it looked like then, it is just heavy. “It’s almost like those souls are still there. There is just a heaviness and a sense of connection,” Michelle continued. “There is just a connection to being where an event actually occurred.” In the third interview, she added that a deep sense of responsibility washes over her any time she was in the Greenwood area. She also experiences some anger, but more than anything, a deep sense of sadness – sadness that it happened and sadness that she did not truly know about it until she was an adult.

### **After the Professional Development: Professionally**

Since the workshop, Michelle extended learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre by reading the books introduced at the workshop. She has also “sought out information from African American sources on many of the topics I teach because a lot of history is whitewashed.” She acknowledged there was so much missing from history and that you have to want to seek out the information on your own. “Generally speaking, you are not going to find the hidden history in a

college history class. You will have to be willing to seek that information on your own,” Michelle commented. She suggested that African American sources have a more complete history and that she does not typically have to add anything to it as she does with her school curriculum.

Something she learned from the workshop was the importance of hearing the voices of those who are often silenced. She wanted to include all perspectives when she teaches. She reiterated that if she were teaching a Native American topic, she would seek Native American sources.

### ***Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre***

**Year 1.** In the first year of teaching after the professional development, Michelle taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre before the school closed due to COVID-19. Michelle explained:

This is the first year I’ve really delved into this with my students further than just saying this is what happened. This is the first time I’ve got them more involved in what we were doing, and we really talked about it. They were really interested because you know it has murder and mayhem.

She wanted her students to read *Tulsa Burning* (Myers, 2004) but had a tough time figuring out how to incorporate this novel in a social studies class. She hoped to eventually work with the English teacher so that students could read the book in that class and learn the historical aspects in her class.

Because many of her students are emergent or transitional readers, Michelle typically broached this subject through conversations. She brought in primary sources such as newspapers and photographs to share with the students and showed them two documentaries – one on lynchings in Tulsa and one on the burning of Tulsa. With these documentaries, produced from differing viewpoints, Michelle taught her students about perspective. Learning about perspective has also translated into how she deals with student issues. If students come to her upset with each other, she has encouraged them to look at the problem from both sides.

When asked about the response from students, parents, and administration Michelle commented that she never gets pushback from the parents or the administration. If she gets any feedback, it was usually from the students in class. She must deal with some racist comments and bullying from time to time, but she now feels more comfortable engaging in difficult conversations with her students than before the workshop. For one thing, she knows more. She was comfortable answering questions the students have. When some of her students experienced anger, she could work through these emotions with her students through conversations. She acknowledged that the events of the Massacre were awful and stressed to her students that something like this should never happen again.

Michelle knows that teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre was crucial whether it was part of the standards for her students or not. She stated:

This (Tulsa Race Massacre) is an important part of history that was covered up for so long. It is important that we not ignore the bad. You only end up hurting students if you pretend that nothing bad has ever happened or that the US was always on the right side of things because that is not the reality of what has happened in history.

She recognized that it was a neglected topic, and she wanted to make sure that she taught about it in a way that acknowledged the atrocity of the event but does not demonize people today.

**Year 2.** At the time of the second interview, Michelle had not yet taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students; however, she stated that she planned to teach it again this year. She even felt like she did not have a choice. Two of last year's students very much wanted to learn more this year, so she agreed to teach about it again this year. To build on what her students learned from the previous year, Michelle decided to read *Tulsa Burning* to them this year. She liked to connect history with literature and draw the students in with the emotional aspect of the Massacre. Michelle stated, "Once they learn the facts, you can draw them in with emotion. That's

how you really get them interested.” In the third interview I questioned Michelle about how viewing different perspectives could alter the facts. She replied that seeing different perspectives does not alter the facts, but it changes the way you interpret those facts. She stressed that everything was not black and white and that you must keep many things in mind when you examine perspective. Michelle used the example of Sheriff McCullough who arrested Dick Rowland. “You can be mad at him because he arrested Dick Rowland when he didn’t really do anything. Or you can look at the other side of the story and look at all he did to protect Dick Rowland,” Michelle commented. There are always more perspectives and to teach history, she realized that she needed to examine and instruct her students about all perspectives.

Because of COVID-19 and the Oklahoma ice storm, Michelle was unable to teach her students about the Tulsa Race Massacre as much as she would have liked. Most of Michelle’s students chose to be virtual when the school district went back to face-to-face learning. With only a few face-to-face students, Michelle went to her students’ classrooms for inclusive instruction rather than using a pull-out model. Because of limited time in February, Black History Month, she could do little more than just a small discussion of the Massacre. February was when the ice storm hit, closing schools for two weeks. She did not read *Tulsa Burning* this year either, but she still planned to share this book with her students in the future.

Michelle will continue to instruct her students about the Massacre using dialogue during year three. She claimed that was just more meaningful to talk about it than have her students fill in a worksheet. She planned to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre in February. “Since the Tulsa Race Massacre is not technically part of the U.S. history curriculum, if I do it in February, I can tie it to Black History month,” Michelle stated. When asked about the Tulsa Race Massacre not being in the curriculum, Michelle commented that it was more in the Oklahoma history curriculum, but only a small part.

## **After the Professional Development: Personally**

Michelle found that after the workshop, she needed some time to process everything she learned. The workshop was heavy, and she spent a week just decompressing from all that she saw, heard, and learned. Part of her decompression involved writing in her journal. The following was a poem that she wrote during her time of self-reflection.

*We burned it because we could  
Who was going to stop us?  
Not you, you're not numbered enough.  
Not the law, they're on our side.  
You needed a reminder of your place  
We needed confirmation of ours.  
We buried it because we could  
Who was going to stop us?  
Not you; your voice was silenced.  
Not us; we wanted to conceal the truth.*

She also furthered her knowledge about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She purchased more books about the topic and found herself watching documentaries. To get others' perspectives, she also joined groups on Facebook of diverse backgrounds. Michelle said the most important thing that she learned in these various groups was that as a White woman, she just needed to listen. This was not her place or time to talk. She just needed to listen – to other voices, to different perspectives.

Acknowledging her racist tendencies and biases was also a necessary part of her time of self-reflection. Michelle does not think she is racist, but she knows there are:

always going to be some inherent bias, and it is important that we learn how to recognize that. I do not want to even think a negative thought that could be construed as racist. It is important that I recognize these tendencies in myself.

She conceded that we, as White people, are probably going to do or say something wrong, but it was also crucial that she acknowledged this when it happens. She told this story:

Me [*sic*] and my fourteen-year-old went through a drive-through at Taco Bell one day. The guy at the drive-through was a Black guy. As he is handing me the food, I am handing it to my kid. I said to her, “Here, hold this slave!” I immediately thought oh my God. I was saying this as a joke to my child. I didn’t mean it in a bad way, but how did it come across? Noticing things like that is important.

When I asked her how her child responded, she said that her daughter pointed the comment out to her. Her children are very aware of racism. She stated, “They had the pleasure of growing up around it because their dad is racist.” She later told me that at the end of her marriage to her children’s father, he had joined the Ku Klux Klan. She openly discussed racism with her children and wanted them to know that it was not right. She stated that her children either ignore their father or make fun of his racist tendencies.

The most meaningful change for Michelle was in how she viewed others and the way she looked at incidents in her life – whether it was comments she read on social media, or in conversations with her family, or maybe even an argument between students in her class, she now found it essential to examine and consider all sides of an issue. More so now than ever before, Michelle found it important “to look at all perspectives and not just dismiss them because someone thinks differently than me.”

Michelle also learned to value fact-checking even more than she did before. She acknowledged that just because she thinks she knows something “doesn’t necessarily mean that it

is true. It makes me really think about when I fact check and that I need to look at the sources.” She went on to say that not only does she fact check, but “if I can only find sources that tell me what I want to hear, it’s probably not true.” She realized the critical nature of this issue, especially on social media. During the time of the workshop, news outlets posted about the events of the workshop. There were many negative comments about the seminar from people in the community. Michelle felt compelled to respond to some of the negative messages individuals made on social media. When I asked her why she felt the need to respond, she stated that it was a topic that she felt strongly about, and some of the comments from the community originated from a place of ignorance. Michelle reiterated:

I feel like it is important to comment on things like that because so many people that are commenting have no real knowledge or sources. It is also irritating to sit and see people disparage something that I think is amazing without having any real knowledge of what was going on.

She added that when she sees blatant lies on social media, she tends to respond.

### **Teacher as a Learner**

As was true with many participants, Michelle found it requisite to enrich her knowledge by attending a wide variety of professional development opportunities. The same summer, Michelle participated in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, she also attended a workshop on teaching about the Holocaust. I also participated in that workshop with Michelle. This workshop, sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., took place at the Jewish Federation in Tulsa. When I asked her why she gave up time in the summer to participate in the professional developments, Michelle promptly said, “Because it is stuff I love!” She included that so much of the professional development that the administration

requires teachers to participate in are things the district wanted them to know but were not necessarily of any interest to her.

After teaching for fifteen years, Michelle desired to enhance her knowledge by attending professional developments that she found appealing. She also knew that her students find these topics interesting as well. Michelle also stated that it was vital that she has background knowledge of these events. She wanted to be able to answer questions if her students had them.

With Michelle's agency with her curriculum, these professional development opportunities are where she discovered new sources that she wanted to share with her students. Michelle stated that the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development was the best workshop she had ever been to and added, "I can honestly say the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop was the first workshop that I have attended that I was excited to go back and learn more the next day." Michelle and I planned to attend another Holocaust professional development the following summer; however, the organizers had to cancel this workshop because of COVID-19.

In the second interview, Michelle mentioned that she had signed up to do some workshops the second summer, but the organizers moved then to a virtual platform. She really did not like the idea of attending PD on a virtual platform and realized that she typically "is not all there" during virtual meetings.

## Case Study 2: Belinda

**Being in Greenwood was “almost a religious experience. You are there. You feel it. You are walking the same streets that they walked. You are touching what they touched and seeing what they saw.”**

**-Belinda**

**Table 5**

*Overview of Case 2*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade Taught</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>District/Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years' Experience</b>
Belinda	White	6	ELA	20 miles	2

The first interview with Belinda took place in her classroom at Maynard Intermediate School during the 2019-2020 school year. We met face to face during her plan time. When I first arrived, the students were still in the classroom and were highly interested in why I was there. When she introduced me, the students said they loved learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre. The interview lasted around an hour and was both video and audio recorded. Due to COVID-19, the State Department of Health placed Belinda in quarantine at the time of the second interview. As a result of the quarantine, I conducted the interview via Zoom. I recorded the Zoom interview, which lasted about an hour. The third interview took place in the summer of 2021. Belinda wanted to meet face to face, so we met at a local restaurant for the third interview. This interview lasted about an hour and was audio recorded.

### **Belinda's Description and Background**

Belinda, a 47-year-old, White female was born in Tulsa. A native Tulsan, Belinda grew up and attended school in Bishop (20 miles from Tulsa) from elementary through her high school graduation. Her family was well off and tended to do things “the right way.” Because her neighborhood or school were neither racially nor economically diverse, her experiences with

these types of diversity were limited. The Jackson community, an all-Black community, was near where she grew up, and although they had their own “Black” school, a few of the kids went to school in Bishop. “There was maybe one Black person per grade if that,” Belinda explained. She also stated that her grandparents “were probably about as racist as they come.” In fact, her great grandfather participated in the race riot, and her grandfather would even refuse to watch the Cosby show. Belinda’s mom was an oil executive, and her father was a teacher and administrator in Bishop. She described her parents as more open and less racist than her grandparents and great-grandparents; however, they still warned Belinda about her friend groups. She described a time when she was in high school and had a “very dear Black friend named Taylor.” Her mom warned her that she knew they were good friends, but she needed to watch that relationship. Her family was “Christian (using air quotes) and didn’t even approve of my cousin’s biracial marriage,” Belinda exclaimed.

Belinda mentioned that she was more open-minded than the rest of her family and had been for about 15 years. She described herself as previously being “a raging right-wing crazy person.” In the second interview, I asked her what she meant by this, and she explained that she constantly listened to right-wing talk radio, read books about Southern heritage, and voted for people that did the same. Her husband told her that they were not rich enough to be Republicans, but she said, “that’s the way I was raised, and that’s what I believe.” She came from a home with socioeconomic advantages and could not relate to people with a different economic background. She always thought that people should just be able to pull themselves up from the bootstraps and get on with it. Working in the financial aid department in two separate colleges opened her eyes to the struggle of others, and she began to appreciate people who had to “work hard for everything they had.” Through building relationships with students, Belinda realized that people are not always in their situation because of their choices or any fault of their own. It took this experience and the relationships she built at this university to consider other perspectives. Belinda

acknowledged that she still finds it difficult to talk about race despite changing her outlook and her attempts to break out of her racist upbringing. In one of my observations, I noted that she started to cover her mouth and lowered her voice every time she mentioned the word Black or African American. She appeared to look to the door to see if anyone was walking by. Belinda seemed uncomfortable with the topic herself.

I asked Belinda how growing up with people that looked just like her affected her. She responded that being White was not something with which she gave much thought. She said, “I didn’t realize anybody had any other thoughts or ideas. This is just the way it is supposed to be. This is the way everybody does things, right?” She did point out that now she realized the importance of seeking out other’s points of view. “I realize that I don’t have those points of view myself, so I seek others out that might think differently than me,” Belinda explained.

Belinda holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. She began her higher education journey at Oklahoma Baptist University and then transferred to Northeastern State University. Because she was a single mom, Belinda finished her degree at the University of Phoenix, which gave her flexibility in attending classes.

Before she decided to become a teacher, Belinda had other jobs in the higher education setting. She worked in financial aid first at the University of Phoenix right after she graduated from there. She then worked in financial aid at a welding school in the area.

After marrying her current husband, Belinda decided to get a job about which she was passionate. To become certified, Belinda had to take the Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET) and Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT). While working on her alternative certification, Belinda sought employment in a couple of schools in hopes of “getting her foot in the door.” She began as a secretary at a for-profit school, but the school shut down after ten years

of employment there. Her next job was as the school attendance secretary at the middle school in Maynard.

After receiving her alternative certification, Belinda became a reading teacher at the same school where she was secretary. She taught sixth grade reading and felt that “the students didn’t learn anything because I didn’t know what I was doing.” To obtain the job, she also had to agree to coach volleyball. Despite not having any athletic ability, she decided to coach volleyball. The following year, which was the 2018-2019 school year, Belinda moved to the Intermediate school and became the ELA teacher. At the time of the first interview, Belinda had not even taken the Oklahoma Professional Teaching Examination.

### **Belinda’s School Environment**

At the time of the first interview, Belinda was in her second year of teaching at Maynard Intermediate School. She taught four sections of ELA to 85 sixth-grade students. Her teaching assignment changed slightly the following year when the second interview took place. She was still teaching four sections of ELA but had also added a section of computers. Her school needed a computer teacher, and despite having to give up her plan time, Belinda decided to take this position because of the extra pay she received.

According to Census Reporter (2019) the race and ethnicity of Maynard is: 71% White, 8% Native, 6 % Hispanic, 2% Black, 2% Asian, and 11% two or more races/ethnicities (Census Reporter, 2019). Belinda described Maynard as one of the poorest areas in the state, adding that she knew several students who do not even have hot water. The district has a high Native American population with a highly active Indian Education Department. Students can even take Creek as one of their foreign languages. She does not feel that she gets much support from the administration and the teacher turnover was frequent. She emailed the principal asking for permission to use *Tulsa Burning*, and being a new principal, he did not know how to respond and

told her to ask another teacher. The teachers she currently works with are all new teachers. Being alternatively certified, she had the impression that she has been left on her own and not fully prepared to teach.

### **Before the Professional Development**

Belinda, like many of the workshop participants, grew up in the Tulsa area. Despite spending her entire life in Bishop, she had not learned much about the Tulsa Race Massacre before she attended the workshop. As an undergraduate at Tulsa Community College, her sociology professor, who she described as a Black woman, “mentioned it in passing. It was the first time I had heard about the Tulsa Race Riots (this was before the name change) even though I grew up here.” When I asked her to describe the feelings she had as a Tulsa native that had never heard of the Tulsa Race Massacre, she simply replied, “Stupid.” When I asked her to explain that feeling of stupid, Belinda said, “I am a history buff, and this was something I should have known about. So stupid is the best word to describe it.” She was 23 years old at the time and pregnant with her first child. She stated that her entire world was selfish at the time, and she didn’t think anything else about it. Then in 2017, Belinda attended a reading conference on the OSU-Tulsa campus. A vendor was there who was selling copies of *Tulsa Burning*. Belinda purchased a copy of the book and took it back to her classroom. Every Wednesday, she read a book chapter to her students to get them interested in different books, so she shared the first chapter of *Tulsa Burning* with her students that year. Around this same time, media became flooded with the Tulsa Race Massacre stories as the 100-year commemoration neared. Belinda stated that at this time, she felt more curious than stupid. She wanted to know more.

Besides sharing the chapter out of *Tulsa Burning*, Belinda had not previously taught about the Race Massacre. She felt that she did not have enough background knowledge about the subject herself, so she did not feel comfortable teaching it to her students. While Belinda had

taught different topics during Black History month with her students, she had not included the Tulsa Race Massacre as one of those topics. So, she signed up for the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development in 2019.

### **During the Professional Development**

Belinda took as many workshops as she could to enhance her knowledge about a variety of subjects. She commented that she does not want her students to feel that an alternatively certified teacher was teaching them. “I want them to feel as if they are being taught by a professional teacher,” she added. Not knowing much about the Tulsa Race Massacre, Belinda was excited when she learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop. She explained that she loved history, and the professional development “changed her life.” She added, “I know that sounds cliché, but the workshop was life-changing.” Belinda’s most significant takeaway from the professional development was knowledge. “I learned everything about the Massacre. I didn’t know this information before, so learning the background at the workshop was invaluable,” explained Belinda. She said that learning about this event saddened her, but she was glad she learned what she did. The information she learned was from both the texts that we read and the presentations she heard.

The walking tour of Greenwood was also impactful to Belinda. Being able to see Greenwood for herself was an essential part of the learning process. Belinda stated that she could not help but feel a deep sense of remorse. She found the burned bricks on the side of the building to be a potent reminder of what happened in that very spot. Seeing the faces of survivors in the Greenwood Cultural Center brought to the forefront how important it was to know people’s stories. Being right in the middle of where the Massacre happened was meaningful for Belinda. She stated that she could just reach out and touch feel it. “I felt like I was being immersed in it. Being in this place made it real for me.” She recognized that sharing this with her students could

also make it more real for them. She acknowledged that there was so much left out of Oklahoma history when she was in school and wanted to make sure that her students learn their history.

Belinda was able to see Standpipe Hill, where her grandfather lived during the Tulsa Race Massacre. Again, when asked to describe her feelings, she quickly said, “I don’t feel guilty about it because it wasn’t me that did that. I just feel remorseful that this happened. Yeah, remorseful. That’s a great word.” Being able to see the church that survived the Massacre, Reconciliation Park, and the locations of the businesses were all impactful to Belinda. When I asked her to describe the feelings she had while there, she explained, “It’s almost like a religious experience. You are there. You feel it. You are walking the same streets that they walked. You are touching what they touched and seeing what they saw.” Belinda further said that as a Tulsa native, she has driven these streets many times but had never thought about the events that had happened right here. Now when she drives around this area, she looks at the houses and wonders if, like in *Dreamland Burning* (Latham, 2017), there as a body buried in the backyard. She stated that she looks around and “think [sic] about the history – what built this city and what and how it became what it is now. It has really changed my perspective.” After learning about the Massacre and walking those same streets, she will always see this area differently.

The final benefit Belinda mentioned was the conversations with other teachers. She learned so much by meeting with other teachers and talking about a subject that some knew about before the workshop. She appreciated the literature circles that we conducted with both *Tulsa Burning* and *Dreamland Burning*. Belinda said she valued the dialogue in the literature circles and wanted to replicate that with her students. She wrote a grant and will be hosting a book club with fifth and sixth graders at her school in the 2021-2022 school year. The book club will be an extracurricular activity at lunchtime for kids that choose to participate. Belinda learned and was excited to share other strategies with her students, including the Tulsa Race Massacre Dinner Party role playing strategy, the OPTIC strategy with photographs, and the jigsaw method. She

stated that she used the jigsaw strategy several times throughout the year with many different topics.

### **After the Professional Development: Personally**

Since the workshop, things have changed for Belinda, both personally and professionally. Belinda decided to learn more about her family history after hearing the stories of the survivors and others involved in the Tulsa Race Massacre. After discovering her great grandfather played a part in the Massacre, Belinda sat out to find out what she could about that dark past. She has only learned that her great grandfather lived near Standpipe Hill in Tulsa, and she was confident that he played a role in the Massacre. Standpipe Hill was a tall hill in the Tulsa area that was once home to Tulsa's first water tower. During the Massacre of 1921, the National Guard moved a machinegun to the top of Standpipe Hill sometime in the early morning hours of June 1<sup>st</sup>. "Whites took position on top of Standpipe Hill and shot men along Detroit and Elgin including towards Mount Zion Baptist Church" (National Park Service Department of the Interior, 2005). Whites lit the church on fire, and as men ran from the building, those atop Standpipe Hill shot them. Standpipe Hill now has a historical marker that acknowledged the lasting impact the Massacre had on the community. The text on the plaque reads as follows:

*In 1904 the City of Tulsa built a water tower in the shape of a stove pipe. Thus, Standpipe Hill was named. To the east, the Greenwood community would grow and prosper, providing the success of "Black Wall Street."*

*The Race Riot of 1921 resulted in the death of many African American people, the destruction of hundreds of homes, and the burning of churches and businesses in Greenwood. All of this could be seen from atop Standpipe Hill.*

*From the seeds of overwhelming destruction, African Americans moved back and rebuilt. But this rebirth of Greenwood would give way to suburban flight and urban renewal.*

*In the 1980s, a new vision was conceived. Land east and north of the hill was dedicated to public higher education for all Tulsans and the region.*

*More to come...*

*History Remembered and a Future to be Embraced*

*Dedicated June 2014*

*To what has been and what will be...*

She also had a sense of being freer in talking about race and racism. The Tulsa Race Massacre was a subject she had even broached with her husband, whom she said she “doesn’t think is racist, but he did question the need for talking about the past.” With the nearing of the 100-year commemoration of the Tulsa Race Massacre and the search for mass graves, this topic was often at the forefront of Tulsa news. Belinda’s husband doesn’t understand why “we keep having to hear about it.” Belinda felt that she could have these conversations with her husband as she learned more about it herself. She acknowledged that racism was still prevalent in Tulsa, and it was essential to discuss. Belinda mentioned a family history of racism at the first interview, so I asked her if she could discuss things with them now. Belinda said she tried to deal with it with humor, but it was hard to relate to some of her family members, and relationships can be complicated.

#### **After the Professional Development: Professionally**

One change that Belinda noticed since the workshop was feeling more comfortable talking about racial content. “Before, I feel like I was scared to death to teach that kind of thing as a very White woman who comes from a family with a different background,” Belinda explained. When I asked for clarification about these feelings, she simply said that she did not feel she had the perspective to talk to students of color about racial issues. Now she lets people of color speak for themselves, and she listens. “I have to stop talking, and I’ve got to let them speak for themselves. I want to experience things from their perspective.”

Belinda also realized the importance of perspective. She wanted to be able to hear the views of people that are not just like her. Some ways that Belinda has discovered other voices are through books, social media, and podcasts. Maynard has a large Native American population and an active Indian Education program, so Belinda has reached out to the director for assistance in finding books that share the Native American perspective in an appropriate way. The director met with Belinda a couple of times and gave her books and even offered to help her with lesson planning if she instructed her students about Native Americans. This help has been valuable to Belinda.

Belinda was determined to bring different perspectives into the classroom. She thought it was essential for her students to see that while everyone may present the same, there are many differences. The primary way that Belinda brought other voices to her students was through literature. Each month she reads a different book to her students. These books all have differing perspectives. During the second interview, Belinda listed the books that she had read this year. These included *Prairie Lotus* (Park, 2020), which was about the Asian American experience in the 1800s. The story revolved around a biracial girl who was half Chinese with a White father. She also read *Freak the Mighty* (Philbrick, 1993), which had a character in a wheelchair and another with a father in prison. *How I Became a Ghost* (Tingle, 2013) gave voice to the Native perspectives, and *House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1983). gave voice to the Latin American/Hispanic view.

Another professional change that Belinda made involved her classroom library. The leaders introduced the participants to diverse books with diverse characters, authors, and settings at the workshop. She had the goal of making changes in her classroom library and started by adding a few of the titles suggested at the workshop. She was also actively seeking out African American authors as well as Native American and Hispanic. Belinda stated:

I've tried to make more diverse choices in my books that I have for my students. I have tried to find a variety of authors and characters. I want my students to see perspectives that might be different from their own.

She added books by Jason Reynolds and Jacqueline Woodson to her class library. In the subsequent school year, she continued this quest by adding graphic novels, more books with male characters, and more books with transgender characters. She has also added more culturally diverse books. She stated that when she first moved into the classroom, she was in, the former teacher left her entire library. However, these books were mostly “the traditional books with White characters and ‘normal’ families,” Belinda reiterated. Specific titles she mentioned adding included *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World* (Blake, 2018), which showcased a girl's first crush on another girl, and *The Hate You Give* (Thomas, 2017) about the shooting of a young Black man by a White police officer.

Participants of the professional development received copies of *Dreamland Burning*. While Belinda loved the book *Dreamland Burning*, she did not think the book was appropriate for her sixth graders, so she did not include that book in her classroom library. “The content is too mature,” she explained. She was worried that if she shared this book with her students, she might have some pushback from the parents because “it is more mature and you know her buddy is gay,” whispered Belinda.

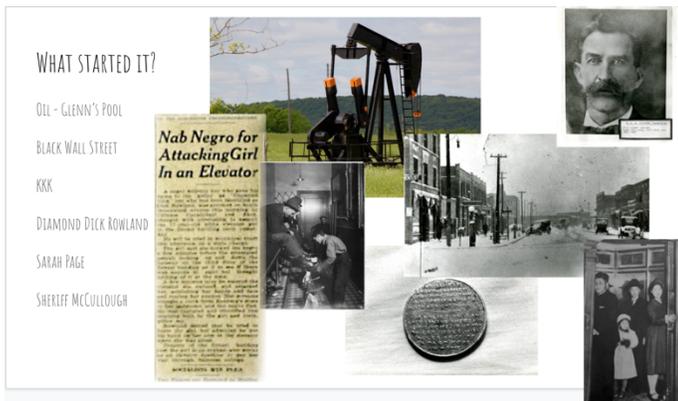
It was difficult to add the books that she would like to her classroom library without a budget. Most of the books she purchased have been ones that she had ordered from Amazon and paid for herself. The second year Belinda had a parent “adopt” her. This parent purchased several books for her classroom. The Indian Education director also gave her a catalog of Native American books and told her to pick out five for her classroom. She does what she can to get new books into her students' hands, but sometimes it was difficult.

## *Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre*

**Year 1.** Belinda was able to bring the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students the first year after the professional development. Unlike some of the participants, she was able to teach about it before COVID-19, so her students learned about the Massacre while they were still face-to-face in a classroom. Belinda introduced the students to the Tulsa Race Massacre by showing them a PowerPoint presentation (Figure 40) with pictures from the workshop and some of her own photographs. They also watched a documentary from The History Channel.

### **Figure 40**

*Screenshot of One of Belinda's Slides*



She also brought in the timeline panels from the Tulsa Historical Society and made them available for her students (Figure 41). These panels were a traveling exhibit offered by the historical society. The Tulsa Historical Society checked the panels out for display in schools, libraries, and other organizations in the Tulsa area. One side of the panels shared information about the Greenwood area, and the other side showed information about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She said that her students really engaged with them, and she already had them reserved for the following year. These panels were one of the resources shared at the workshop.

### **Figure 41**

## *Tulsa Race Massacre Traveling Exhibit*



She also incorporated the Tulsa Race Massacre into her discussion of the Civil Rights Movement. Belinda read *Tulsa Burning* aloud to her students, and she used quotes from *Dreamland Burning* as discussion starters. She audio recorded herself reading the chapters of *Tulsa Burning* and posted that to her Google Classroom page in case anyone was absent.

The students drafted essays during class about hatred and racism. They also watched documentaries and read primary source documents that Belinda garnered at the workshop. Belinda was also excited to share the pictures that she took herself on the walking tour of Greenwood and had a directed conversation about the burnt bricks. Belinda thought the unit was successful and had parents telling her they appreciated her teaching this topic. She planned to continue to learn more about the Tulsa Race Massacre herself and make the teaching of it even better next year.

When I asked if she had any pushback for teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre, she said she only heard from one parent who was incredibly supportive of her teaching about this. He told his daughter that she was lucky to learn this and that nobody teaches this to you. Before reading *Tulsa Burning* to her students, she emailed the parents to let them know what she was reading and that it did contain the n-word and themes of racism. She commented that she does not read the n-word aloud. She had one parent respond in an email that said, "Boy, you are a brave woman."

Other than that, she did not hear from any parents. Belinda talked to her students about the use of the n-word in the book. She let them know she would not say that word and that people used it at that time in history, but it was not an appropriate term today. After her first discussion, Belinda found that in an essay she had the students write, they used the word colored several times. Colored was also in *Tulsa Burning*. She then had to talk about the use of that word with her students. The second year she made sure to discuss both the n-word and the word colored. Belinda did have some pushback from one student that she described as highly racist. This student would not touch books about Rosa Parks, and in the book *Harbor Me* (Woodson, 2018), he wrote notes about how Indian people smelled. Most of her students were interested in the topic and were shocked when they heard about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She knew that teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre was vital because students must understand that “their perspective is not the only perspective.”

“This unit impacted my students more than anything else I taught all school year. They were so interested in it, and they wanted to know more,” Belinda stated. They were still talking about those lessons at the end of the school year. When I asked her why she thought the students were so fascinated, she replied that this event happened right here. She responded, “They know the place we were talking about. It is someplace they know. It is touchable.”

**Year 2.** Belinda had not taught the Race Massacre yet when interviewed for the second time during the following school year. She planned to introduce it during February, which I have found was typical. Most of the participants chose to teach “Black topics” during Black History Month. She had partnered with another teacher in her school who will teach the Tulsa Race Massacre alongside Belinda. The teacher she was working with was a geography teacher. Belinda attended another workshop about the Tulsa Race Massacre hosted by Oklahoma State University during that previous summer. At this workshop, she learned how another of my participants had used giant maps of Oklahoma to engage students to learn about the *The Negro Motorists Green*

*Book* (Green, 1936). The *Green Book* was a guidebook that African Americans used to find safe places to shop, eat, and stay if they had to travel the country during Jim Crow. She shared this with her geography teacher, who was going to bring this strategy to their school. She knew that she could teach about the Race Massacre even better that year. She learned more herself, was including more teachers in the plans, and had read the books multiple times, which made her even more comfortable in her teaching ability. Besides *Tulsa Burning*, Belinda planned to incorporate *Ruth and the Greenbook* this year, which was another book the leaders introduced the participants to during the workshop. She would also like to have Jennifer Latham, author of *Dreamland Burning*, Skype with her students.

Due to continuing problems with COVID-19 and an ice storm that had schools closed in February for two weeks, Belinda could not teach the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students as she had planned. She read aloud *Tulsa Burning* to her students and had some dialogue circles about the books. She also had the Tulsa Historical Society bring out the Race Massacre panels again, but she did not think she did a fantastic job teaching it this second year. She stated, “This year felt like my first-year teaching all over again.” She was looking forward to teaching the Massacre in the 2021-2022 school year. She noted that she would have siblings of the students she taught the Massacre to the first year and she and she thought they would be excited to learn what their brothers and sisters learned.

### **Autonomy**

Belinda had autonomy in the choices she made for her classroom. She had little guidance in her classroom and stated that her school district does not have a pacing guide. Belinda used novels to teach reading, a computer program called Write Reflections to teach writing, and Steps to Grammar for grammar instruction. She chose the books she used and the extent to which she used the other curriculum provided. The first year after the workshop, Belinda read aloud *Tulsa*

*Burning*. She only had five copies of the book, which she personally purchased. Belinda read this book to give context and depth to the Tulsa Race Massacre. She also used *Freak the Mighty* (Philbrick, 1993), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 1964), and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Baum, 1900). For these novels, Belinda has class sets. Specific grade levels read certain books so as not to repeat any.

Belinda participated in workshops because she wanted to be the best teacher that she could be. She loved to learn new ways to teach her students. She said she “doesn’t want them to feel like they are being taught by an alternatively certified teacher.” She wanted them to remember the lessons she taught them, so she gave up her own time and took these professional development opportunities in her summers. Besides the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, Belinda also participated in a workshop by Laura Searcy (she couldn’t remember the name). She learned about essential questions and interpreting the standards, which was crucial as an alternatively certified teacher. Being alternatively certified, Belinda did not have exposure to the Oklahoma Academic Standards, and she appreciated finding a workshop that assisted her in learning more about the standards. The following summer, Belinda attended two more workshops about the Tulsa Race Massacre – One in conjunction with OSU-Tulsa, and one with the Tulsa Race Massacre Commission in Tulsa. She stated that she wanted to keep adding tools to her toolkit that might help her reach more students.

Aside from taking workshops, she also took the initiative to learn more on her own about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She purchased some of the books presented to her at the Race Massacre workshop and has continued learning. One of the books she read was *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (2001) by Tim Madigan. She shared a story with her students from this book. The story was about a child who was around the same age as her students. In the story, the young boy hid under his bed during the Race Massacre. Sharing stories of real-life people, especially children, made the events more real. She also read on her own and

tried to become a more culturally responsive teacher. The books she read included *How to be an Antiracist* (Kendi, 2019), *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You* (Reynolds & Kendi, 2020), and *Between the World and Me* (Coates, 2015).

### Case Study 3: Victoria

*“You've got to be taught to hate and fear  
You've got to be taught from year to year  
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear  
You've got to be carefully taught.” ~ Rodgers and Hammerstein in South Pacific*

*Song used by Victoria to introduce the Tulsa Race Massacre*

**Table 6**

*Overview of Case 3*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade Taught</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years' Experience</b>
Victoria	White	8	ELA	20 miles	2

The first interview with Victoria took place in her classroom at Senna Middle School in the Searcy school district. We met face to face after school during the 2019-2020 school year. The interview lasted around an hour and was both video and audio recorded. Due to the restrictions of COVID-19, the second interview took place on Zoom during the 2020-2021 school year. It was after school, and she was still in her classroom. I recorded this Zoom meeting which lasted about an hour. The third interview took place in the summer of 2021. I conducted and recorded this interview on Zoom, and it also lasted about an hour.

### **Victoria's Description and Background**

Victoria, a 24-year-old White female, was born in Tulsa. She grew up in Searcy which was just 20 miles from Tulsa. Aside from Victoria's year at John Brown University in Arkansas, she always lived in the Searcy area. She attended Choteau Middle School, near where she was currently teaching, and graduated from Searcy High School. She described the neighborhood in which she grew up as not very diverse. Victoria explained:

I grew up in the Sands (Pseudonym) neighborhood which is the golf course area. The diversity was minimal. I have never been around many people of color, although my sister is actually mixed. We have the same mom but different dads.

Victoria began her undergraduate degree at John Brown University but returned to Searcy to finish her degree at Northeastern State University. Victoria was currently working on her Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction at York University online. She desired to eventually work in a school district designing curriculum.

### **Victoria's School Environment**

At the time of the first interview, Victoria was in her second year of teaching. She was teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Senna Middle School in Searcy, the first school and district where she taught. Census Reporter (2019) identified the following races/ethnicities for Searcy Public Schools: 70% White, 8% Hispanic, 6% Native, 5% Black, 3% Asian, and 7% reporting two or more races/ethnicities (Census Reporter, 2019). Victoria was an English Language Arts teacher. In her first year of teaching, she taught seventh grade, and at the time of the first interview she taught eighth grade. She did have many of the same students in class that she had last year which allowed her "to build close relationships with them."

The second interview took place during the time of COVID-19. Her school had been both face-to-face and virtual. Despite Searcy having one of the highest instances of COVID-19 in the Tulsa area, Victoria's school district began the year in a face-to-face setting. However, by

November, the district had gone to distance learning. When I did the second interview, the students had been back face-to-face for three days. She suggested that her school went virtual because of the lack of subs and bus drivers. Victoria also said she paid attention to the number of COVID-19 cases in the area and did not feel safe teaching face-to-face. Although there was a mask mandate in the schools, the students did not wear them correctly, and there was no way to social distance. The town of Searcy also refused to mandate mask-wearing. She said people looked down on you wearing a mask and had noticed some businesses with signs that said, “Masks not required.”

The second year of this study and her third-year teaching found Victoria teaching a mixture of seventh and eighth graders. She had five sections of ELA – three eighth grade and two seventh. When asked, she stated that her favorite would be her eighth graders.

Senna was one of five middle schools in the Searcy school district. According to Public School Review (2021), Senna ranked in the bottom 50% of public schools in Oklahoma, with only 14% of the students scoring proficient in math and 25% proficient in reading. 48% of the student body are children of color, with Hispanics representing the largest minority (Public School Review, 2021). Victoria described the school as being “low income and the English Language Learners site.” Any middle school student in Searcy that was an English Language Learner attended Senna whether it was their home school or not.

Senna school district has a pacing guide that follows the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS). The administration of Victoria’s school took the OAS and divided them into two semesters. So, Victoria knew the standards she needed to teach each semester, but she was free to teach these standards however she saw fit. “Senna is pretty open and allows us to teach pretty much what we want as long as we meet the standards,” Victoria described. The teachers know what each grade teaches so that they will not repeat any of the same books from year to year. For

example, the sixth grade ELA teachers used *Tulsa Burning* in their classes, so Victoria chose not to use this novel with her eighth graders. Since the Tulsa Race Massacre was not an Oklahoma ELA standard, Victoria incorporated it into her nonfiction study. She introduced her students to secondary sources and read articles and excerpts from nonfiction books.

Victoria described herself as a “school person” who always loved school. Her love of learning made her a great teacher. She loved her English classes and expressed that she was fortunate to teach this to her students. Victoria stated that stories are important, and the essential question for her class this year was, “Why are real people’s stories important when studying history?” Despite being an ELA teacher, Victoria felt strongly that stories and history go hand in hand.

### **Before the Professional Development**

Like all participants, Victoria was not taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre when she was in school in Searcy. She did not remember any of her teachers teaching about the Race Massacre. She recalled, “it was just something she learned on her own.” Something led her to look up the Tulsa Race Massacre, but she did not remember what that was. In her last semester of college, before she did her student teaching, Victoria discovered the book *Dreamland Burning*. She read the book and used it as the anchor text for her Unit Plan for Teaching English in the Secondary Schools. In interview three, I showed Victoria the emotions wheel to better understand how she was impacted by learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre later in life. After reading *Dreamland Burning*, Victoria explained that she was shocked and in disbelief. She also stated that she “felt betrayed a little bit, like people have been covering it up or something.” And that was precisely what had happened with the Massacre.

Victoria signed up for the workshop to better understand the event despite knowing a little about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She was not confident in teaching about this topic to her

students and wanted to grasp better the Tulsa Race Massacre and the stories surrounding this historical happening. I asked her if there were other topics that she was not comfortable teaching, and she replied with the Holocaust. Most of what she taught was skills specific, but she wanted to introduce students to the literature surrounding these topics, hence her desire to be more comfortable with them herself.

She wanted to share *Dreamland Burning* with her students, “but I didn’t know enough to teach it I didn’t feel like, and I was really interested in learning more about the Tulsa Race Massacre, so I signed up for the workshop,” stated Victoria. I learned in interview three that the school district decided to move *Dreamland Burning* to the ninth grade ELA department, so Victoria would not be able to use the book with her students. She also clarified that due to HB1775, the administration would not even allow the ninth graders to read the book.

### **During the Professional Development**

Hearing the stories was one of Victoria’s most significant takeaways from the workshop. To Victoria, stories were powerful, and she wanted to take the stories back to her students. She explained:

One of the writing assignments we have our students do is the personal narrative. I want to teach them that their story is important. Many times, students feel that they haven’t done anything, and they don’t have a story to tell. I want to remind them that we all have a story. Being able to share survivor stories brings home the fact that these were just people, real people, and one day someone will be reading about an historical event that happened to you.

During the workshop, the presenters introduced Victoria to resources where she could hear Massacre survivors’ stories from the survivors themselves. She also learned strategies for teaching her students how to read photographs. During the professional development, Dr. Nowell

introduced participants to the OPTIC method of visual analysis. The OPTIC method involves examining photographs by looking at an **O**verview (of the whole photograph), **P**arts (looking at different pieces of the photograph), **T**itle (any captions or words on the photograph), **I**mages, and **I**nterrelationships (how are people or objects relate?), **C**onclusion (conclude). She was excited to try this strategy with her students.

Another critical aspect of the workshop was the walking tour of Greenwood. “I had hardly ever been on Greenwood before and being able to walk on those sidewalks and see the plaques honoring the businesses that had been burned was important to me,” Victoria commented. She also mentioned that visiting John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park was a great reminder of “what was going on in Oklahoma before the Race Massacre.” The tour of the Greenwood Cultural Center also focused on the importance of photographs. The docent asked the participants to pick out a survivor and look at their faces. Victoria said, “Looking into the eyes of the survivors at the Greenwood Cultural Center made this event more meaningful,”

Finally, being exposed to the background information was beneficial to Victoria. “I knew about Dick Rowland touching some girl, but I really didn’t know the whole story. It is important that I learned about what was going on in Oklahoma before the Race Massacre happened,” explained Victoria. She added that as an English teacher, she liked to know the historical context of what they were reading. She wanted to understand what the climate in Oklahoma was like for an event like the Massacre to even happen. Knowing the whole story was essential to Victoria. She said it was necessary to know everything to be competent in teaching this to her students. If her students had questions, she wanted to answer them, so learning the entire story was necessary. At this workshop, she learned not just about the Tulsa Race Massacre but also the Red Summer of 1919, the effects of soldiers returning from World War II, along with the impact of urban renewal on the area of Black Wall Street.

### **After the Professional Development: Personally**

Victoria was the least communicative participant when asked if there were any personal changes she made because of the professional development. She mostly talked about changes she made professionally. However, like many of the participants, Victoria spent time in self-reflection. She commented that the workshop was heavy, and she had to spend time processing all that she learned. Some of the reflecting that she did was concerning her Whiteness. She commented that she had always been more open-minded than most, but she realized that she still has biases and privilege that she needed to work through. She did this through reading books such as *White Fragility* and *Stamped*.

She acknowledged that she learned more about the Tulsa Race Massacre which led to deeper conversations with family members. She specifically mentioned having conversations with her father who is more conservative than she. She liked to learn more information about a topic so she would be able to have an educated conversation. Her father, who was not from Oklahoma, commented that it could not have been that bad or people would have heard about it. He also doubted that there were airplanes involved because again, people would have heard about it. She was able to give her father more information, and, in her mind, she won the argument. She indicated that it would be helpful “if more people just listened. They need to be open-minded and listen to what really happened.” She continued that healing would happen if the city of Tulsa made reparations to the Greenwood community.

### **After the Professional Development: Professionally**

Participating in the workshop led Victoria to do some self-reflection. “The workshop really got me thinking about myself as an educator. Am I acknowledging the diversity in my classroom enough? Am I teaching the right things? I don’t want to perpetuate the stereotypes that were taught to me,” Victoria questioned. Victoria thought that self-reflection was essential for

educators. In the second interview, I asked her if she felt like she had reached the goals she had set for herself. She replied:

I think I am. I try to do little things to make all my students feel welcome. I try to practice culturally responsive teaching. I do this a lot with the books that I put on display from diverse authors. I also pay attention to what we are reading. I want to acknowledge different perspectives. I try to pay attention to the novels I suggest for students and the stories I pick for the class.

By focusing on these different strategies, Victoria was acknowledging the diversity in her classroom.

When I asked her how identifying as White had impacted the way she taught, Victoria replied, “I have to learn about my own biases.” She said that she had to do a lot of learning and a lot of unlearning. In interview three, I had her unpack what she thought she had to unlearn. She stated she recognized growing up that she had learned some inherent biases. She could not think of any specific examples. Still, she said, “I was definitely taught that America was the most perfect country on the planet and how everything that happened in history was for the progression of America, and that is really not the case.”

One way that she tried to learn about herself as a White teacher was through literature. She has read *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You* (Reynolds & Kendi, 2020), *We Got This: Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be* (Minor, 2018), and *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (DiAngelo, 2018). She also tried to listen to people that were different from her. She found it necessary to acknowledge others' perspectives, especially if they tell you something you have said or done was offensive. She wanted to learn from those instances.

She also wanted to continue learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She purchased several books that she discovered at the Race Massacre Workshop, such as Hannibal Johnson's *Up from the Ashes* (1999) and *If We Must Die: A Novel of Tulsa's 1921 Greenwood Riot* (2002) by Pat Carr. She read and learned as much as she could about the Massacre. The teacher as a learner was important to Victoria. She said, "As a teacher, you have to continually learn because things don't stay the same. When I attend workshops, I discover new things, and I like to model to students that you never really stop learning." She mentioned that she wanted to learn more about implicit bias, privilege, and being inclusive, so attending professional development assisted her in learning. She planned to participate in the TOLI workshop before COVID-19 hit, and the workshop went online. Since online learning was not something she learned well from, she decided to wait to take this workshop face-to-face. Like the Tulsa Race Massacre, Victoria realized she does not know enough about the Holocaust to teach it, so she wanted to attend that training.

Victoria was also more comfortable talking about race. She commented that she was introduced to some books at the workshop that she has since read. Some of these books led her to other books, and she just "feels more comfortable." She thought that having tough conversations with her students was essential. "Issues of race and discrimination are true and still happens, and I don't want to ignore these things even if it makes you uncomfortable," reiterated Victoria. She added, "It makes the kids uncomfortable, and I tell them they should feel uncomfortable by this. If they don't feel uncomfortable, maybe they should reflect on why they don't." She wanted to be comfortable having tough conversations and understood that it was essential that her students see her classroom as a safe place to dialogue about the tough stuff. She mentioned that many of her students were surprised with her openness and willingness to talk about topics that most of their other teachers were hesitant to discuss. When I asked her why she was willing to have conversations over challenging issues, she quickly replied, "It's important! If we don't talk about

it, things will never change.” The strategy that she used the most was to take herself out of the equation. She said, “I can take myself out of it. Nothing’s personal.” This attitude aided her in having difficult conversations.

As for the climate in the classroom during the 2020 election, Victoria mentioned that she encouraged her students to talk but does not share her political opinions. “I will listen to what they are saying, and I encourage them to talk, but I don’t want to be just another adult influencing their opinion. They are already influenced by too many adults,” said Victoria. The topic came up more frequently with her eighth graders than her seventh graders, and again, she wanted her classroom to be a brave space for anything the students desired to talk about or question. Victoria stated that an essential part of having a brave classroom was building relationships with her students.

Further, Victoria examined the library shelves in her classroom. She wanted to discover how diverse the books were that she made available for her students to read. For this school year, one goal she had was to “incorporate more diverse texts on my shelves.” She achieved this goal by purchasing more multicultural books. Because many of Victoria’s students were Hispanic, her focus for this school year was buying books by and about Hispanic Americans so her students could see themselves mirrored in those books.

Victoria recognized that as an ELA teacher, much of the literature her district uses ignored people of color. The literature anthology they have tended to focus on “old White men,” she said. She underscored that their classrooms were full of diverse students, and many are underrepresented in the curriculum. She also acknowledged that too many teachers do not try to include diverse voices. She used seventh grade as an example because they use *The Watsons go to Birmingham* as their one diverse book. Victoria tried to have more readings than just the “old White men.” When she taught seventh grade last year, she included *The Giver* (Lowry, 1993),

*The Outsiders* (Hinton, 1967), *House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984), and *Freak the Mighty* (Philbrick, 1993). When they read dystopian literature, which many “White guys author,” Victoria included works by N.K. Jemisin, a Black female fantasy author.

### ***Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre***

**Year 1.** Victoria taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students the first school year after the workshop. With her focus on the importance of stories, Victoria spent much of her class time sharing stories with her students – stories of important figures in Tulsa during this time and stories of survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre. She started her unit by playing a song that author Anna Myers’ daughter sang at the workshop, “You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught.” This song, written by Rodgers and Hammerstein (1958) for their musical *South Pacific*, introduced students to the idea that hate must be taught (see lyrics below). She gave the lyrics to her students, and they discussed why people hate.

You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught

South Pacific

You've got to be taught to hate and fear  
You've got to be taught from year to year  
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear  
You've got to be carefully taught

You've got to be taught to be afraid  
Of people whose eyes are oddly made  
And people whose skin is a different shade  
You've got to be carefully taught

You've got to be taught before it's too late  
Before you are six or seven or eight  
To hate all the people your relatives hate  
You've got to be carefully taught

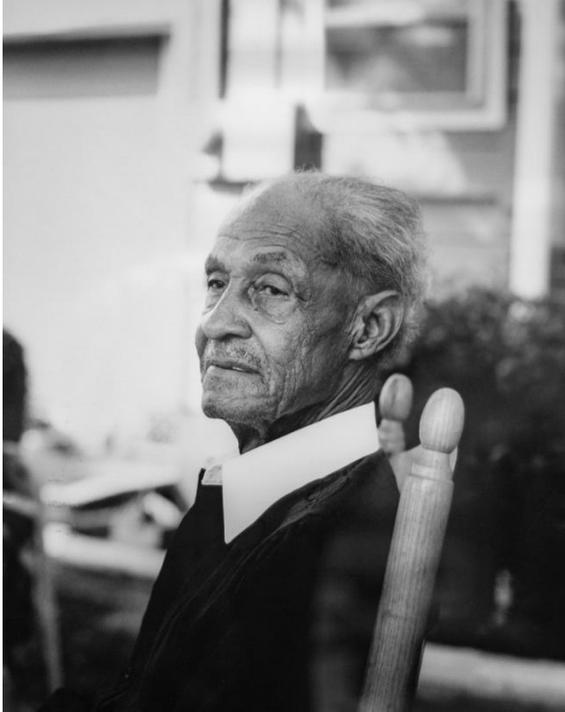
(Hammerstein II & Rodgers, 1958)

This discussion led to the unit Victoria taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Since this was a language arts class, Victoria's focus for this unit was on nonfiction, so she did not incorporate *Tulsa Burning* or *Dreamland Burning* into her curriculum that year. However, she planned to add them to her curriculum the following year. Using a PowerPoint presented at the workshop, Victoria introduced her students to facts about the Tulsa Race Massacre – followed by the stories – stories of survivors.

The importance of perspective was also something Victoria took from the professional development. Using her essential question of why people's stories are important when studying history, Victoria tried to show various perspectives from individuals involved in the Tulsa Race Massacre. She wanted her students to see the events of the Massacre from different participants' points of view. Her students listened to an interview with survivor Olivia Hooker. Students also read excerpts from *Riot and Remembrance* (2001) by James Hirsch. From this book, she chose the stories of survivors George Monroe, JB Stradford, and Venice Sims for her students to read. George Monroe (Figure 42) was a young boy of five when the Massacre happened. In his oral history, he described hiding under a bed. His fingers stuck out slightly, and a White rioter stepped on his fingers. In fear, he did not cry out, and the rioters never found him. After the Massacre, Monroe searched for pennies left by the rioters (Figure 43). This hunt for coins became a search for peace and survival (Gardullo, 2021).

**Figure 42**

*George Monroe*



*Note.* Photograph by Don Thompson found on The Victory of Greenwood website. Used with permission.

**Figure 43**

*George Monroe's Coins*



*Note.* Dr. Scott Ellsworth donated the coins pictured above to the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Reprinted with permission by Dr. Scott Ellsworth.

He went on to become Tulsa's first Black Coca-Cola truck driver.

Venice Sims (Figure 44) was seventeen at the time of the Massacre and was supposed to be attending her prom at Booker T. Washington High School. She had her new midnight blue dress proudly laid out on her bed. Instead of dancing at the prom, she witnessed the Tulsa Race Massacre.

**Figure 44**

*Venice Sims*



*Note.* Retrieved from <https://www.clusterview.com/tulsa-race-riot-massacre-survivor-venice-sims-remembers-may-31-1921/>

JB Stradford owned several businesses in Greenwood. His Stradford Hotel was one of the largest Black-owned hotels in the United States. He lost it all in the Tulsa Race Massacre.

**Figure 45**

*The Stradford Hotel*

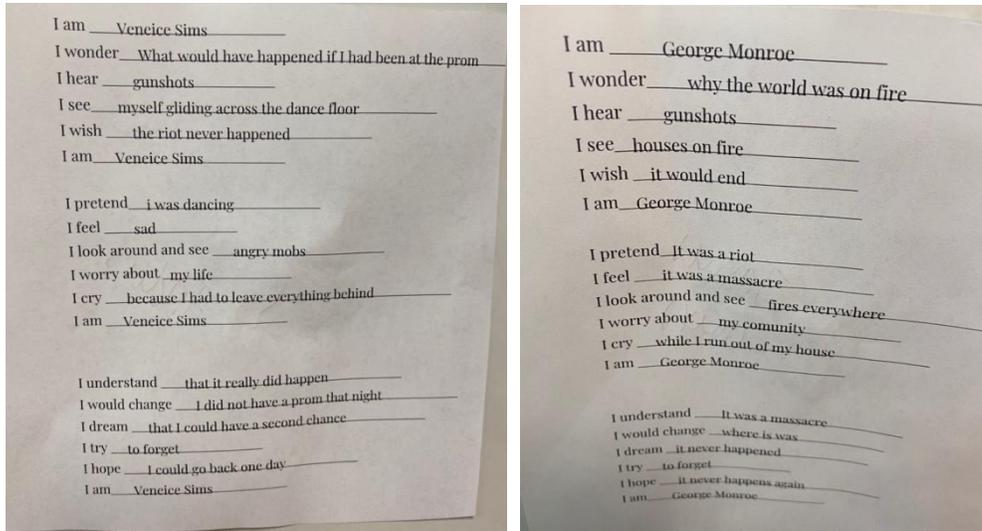


*Note.* Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/31/1001855753/how-tulsa-riots-shaped-todays-most-successful-black-ceos>

Victoria specifically picked these three survivors because they were all different ages, and their stories were vastly different. Victoria and her students discussed how age changed the perspectives and stories of the Massacre survivors. Students then chose one of the survivors and wrote I Am poems based on their lives (Figure 46).

Figure 46

*I Am Poems*



Another writing assignment that came at the end of the unit of study was an essay. Using everything the students had learned about perspectives, the eighth graders authored an essay about why people's stories were important when learning history. One student complained that this class was English, not history. Victoria replied, "English and history go together. They will always be together." During the second interview, Victoria added that the first year she taught the unit, aside from focusing on the stories of people, she also wanted to focus on the victories. Although Greenwood did rebuild, the survivors were not able to rebuild it to its former prominence. Despite this, Victoria wanted to not just focus on the tragedy but how the survivors that stayed rebuilt. She did not want to just teach about the atrocity because that was not the end. They talked about how people can rebuild, and that society can learn much from the rebuilding as well. "I think focusing on the survivors and rebuilding and focusing on the fact that people's real stories affect history is more important than just saying look at this horrible thing that happened." She added that she thought there needed to be a reason to talk about events like this or the

Holocaust. She stated that there needs to be a reason that you are talking about these events, “whether it is for growth, or development, or to just be a better person.” Their unit of study ended in a Tulsa Race Massacre Museum. Victoria explained:

I worked with the librarian, and we had the panels set up from the Tulsa Historical Society. We had a table with chrome books where students could take a virtual tour of the John Hope Franklin Center. There were videos of the group looking for mass graves in Tulsa. We had books out for the students to read... The kids enjoyed it and learned a lot.

She added that the librarian, who grew up in the Tulsa area and did not know about the Massacre, wanted to take the workshop if it was offered again.

**Year 2.** At the time of the second interview, Victoria had not taught the Race Massacre to her students yet. She planned to introduce the unit to her eighth-grade students in February. She planned to do many of the same activities that she did the first year, but she wanted to incorporate even more independent student research.

During the third interview, I learned that Victoria introduced her students to the Tulsa Race Massacre, but COVID-19 and the February ice storm limited the amount of time she spent on this unit to about two weeks. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, she was not able to bring the Tulsa Historical Society panels to school this year or have the museum day at the library. Also because of COVID-19, students could not go to the library or work in groups.

She used *You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught*, and *You Dropped a Bomb on Me* to introduce the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students. She also used the same narratives about George Monroe, Venice Sims, and JB Stradford with her students. Victoria taught this during her nonfiction unit, so she again used primary sources. She added an article by J. Kavin Ross, the former editor of *The Black Wall Street Times*, called *The Conspiracy of Silence*. It was an older article in which Ross talked about finding the graves of those killed during the Massacre one day.

Since Tulsa had been searching for and finding mass graves, Victoria also included this related current event.

The only pushback Victoria experienced was from students. Some students commented that they did not see the need to study this since it was 100 years ago. One student questioned, “Why are we living in the past? We just need to move on.” Victoria responded, “In order to move on, we have to acknowledge some things that happened in the past.” During the second interview, I asked for clarification related to the pushback from students. She added that some of the pushback was from her Black students, who said they did not want to talk about it because it made them sad. She said that after some conversations, these students were able to open up, and by the end of the unit, they were proud of their heritage. She received some positive responses from the parents. One parent was excited that they were learning about the Massacre and kept sending his child to class with questions to ask Victoria. There were also some connections with The Gap Band. Some of her students’ parents mentioned how much they had liked The Gap Band and were surprised they were listening to it in school.

The Gap Band (Figure 47) was a band formed in the early seventies by a group of Black men. They wanted to honor the legacy of Greenwood when they chose Gap for the name of their band. These letters stood for streets in the Greenwood District – Greenwood, Archer, and Pine. They were often asked about their name and were happy to share the story of the Tulsa Race Massacre. According to Alex Nobel (2021), The Gap Band were some of the only voices sharing the story of the Tulsa Race Massacre at that time. Often thought of as a reference to the Tulsa Race Massacre, the song *You Dropped a Bomb on Me* (The Gap Band, 1982) was about a love bomb, but the group said that if it got people talking about the Tulsa Race Massacre, they were okay with it. Victoria played this song for her students when she discussed the bombings that happened during the Tulsa Race Massacre.

**Figure 47**

*The Gap Band*



*Note.* Retrieved from [https://tulsaworld.com/entertainment/gap-bands-robert-wilson-remembered-for-talent/article\\_ef1fb82e-44e7-5a26-a496-4a5641fd5ee2.html](https://tulsaworld.com/entertainment/gap-bands-robert-wilson-remembered-for-talent/article_ef1fb82e-44e7-5a26-a496-4a5641fd5ee2.html)

Victoria administered an end-of-the-year survey after she taught the Tulsa Race Massacre for the first time, and the Tulsa Race Massacre unit was one of the favorites among all her students. They were fascinated learning about it, and most were surprised that they had not heard about it before.

Like her students Victoria grew up in the Tulsa area and had not learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre when she was in school. She found out about it independently and did a little research but did not know enough about the Tulsa Race Massacre to instruct her students adequately. Victoria asserted that textbooks were not the way to teach this to her students. She said:

I kind of distrust textbooks and big textbook companies, but after the workshop, it's kind of validated to me to really consider who wrote the textbooks. We know history is written by those in power, the wealthy basically. I have to really think about how I teach my students, and now I know so much more.

Victoria continued discussing why teaching this topic is so important. She stated, "This is something that Tulsa ignored for a really long time. Tulsa has a lot of work to do in terms of repairing race relations, and ignoring the past isn't going to help." Victoria stated that as we are nearing the anniversary of the Massacre, she was surprised by how many "people are still acting like it's not a big deal or have never heard about it." She added that many of those that never heard about it act like, "Well, it couldn't have been that bad since I never heard of it." This same attitude was even present in her father when she visited with him about the workshop and the Massacre. They were debating the use of airplanes to drop bombs on the Greenwood area. He said, "They didn't have planes because I would have heard about it if that had happened." She stated that as we near the anniversary that people, especially White people, just needed to listen. She also reiterated that reparations were necessary, but she was not hopeful that they would happen. About reparations, Victoria said:

I think if the leadership in Tulsa wanted to actually do more than say sorry this happened, and they wanted to actually show that they were sorry, reparations would go a long way. I don't think it would fix things completely because bad things are still happening in Tulsa even today, but it would be a good start.

### **Access to Literature**

Incorporating stories was an essential aspect of teaching ELA, and with Victoria's focus, she wanted to use literature to bring stories alive to her students. She wanted to be able to use *Dreamland Burning* with her students, but the biggest hurdle was funding. She stated, "The

struggle right now is that it's a new book. It's hard for me to find cheap copies." If she wanted the books for her classroom, she would have to provide them herself. She used *House on Mango Street* the year before, and since it was older, she could find the books for \$4.00 each. She was also able to find someone who would buy them as a gift. That was how she was able to get a class set of that book. Since her school had purchased books for the eighth-grade classes last year, she knew they would not buy books for them for another year or two. The book they bought for the eighth grade the year before was *Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, and they purchased it for a teacher that was no longer there. Victoria did not think that book was appropriate representation of the Holocaust and did not want to have her students read it. So, unless Victoria purchased books on her own, there were not any new books for her classroom for a couple of years.

#### **Case Study 4: Ashley**

*“I could tell you all sorts of things about Virginia history and Colonial Williamsburg, but I couldn’t tell you things about my own backyard.”*

*-Ashley*

**Table 7**

*Overview of Case 4*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade Taught</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years’ Experience</b>
Ashley	White	4	All/Self-Contained	30 miles	11

The first interview with Ashley took place in her classroom at Gould Elementary School during the 2020-2021 school year. We met face to face after school. The interview lasted around an hour and was both video and audio recorded. Due to restrictions of COVID-19, the second interview took place on Zoom. I recorded this hour-long interview. The third interview took place in the summer of 2021, was recorded, and took place on Zoom.

### **Ashley's Description and Background**

Ashley, a 34-year-old White female, was born in a large town in Missouri but grew up in Hackett, Oklahoma, not far from where she was currently teaching. She went to Hackett Public Schools through the third grade before moving to Gould Public Schools. At the time of this study Ashley taught at the same elementary school that she attended for fourth and fifth grades. She went to Gould Public Schools until she graduated from high school. She described the school she attended and then taught in and her neighborhood as having “zero diversity.” She explained, “Everyone looked like me. As far as that is concerned, the socioeconomic status too was remarkably similar. Everyone around us was very middle-income level.”

Ashley understood that she was fortunate to travel extensively thus able to experience a “wide variety of cultures.” Her parents raised her to respect other cultures and try new things that that were different from her lived situation. When she went to college at the University of Oklahoma, she stated there was more ethnic diversity than she expected, but it did not bother her. She explained, “I really wasn’t affected personally because I have always been in the majority. So, I’ve had the advantage, I guess, of everyone else looking like me or having similar backgrounds to me.” Her education courses did not introduce her to diversity either. The one that had the most significant impact was her social studies class. The professor, an adjunct instructor, focused on diverse perspectives. She engaged the students in role-playing activities that showed historical events from various perspectives. One specific activity she recalled was about privilege. The students drew a star out of a bag. Depending on the color of the star, you either had privilege, or you did not. Those with privilege receive extra things during this class period. Then they had a dialogue about their experience with having privilege or being in the group that did not have privilege. This exposure to diverse perspectives impacted Ashley and influenced her decisions to seek out the stories of others.

Ashley had not had any interactions with a person of color until she entered college. Her roommate was Black, and she was the first Black person Ashley had ever been around and, in her words, “let alone lived with one.” She said it did not bother her and that she learned a lot from her roommate. Her roommate was open to her asking questions about her culture and her personal life. She stated the most significant memory she had was about her hair. Ashley said:

She had beautiful long braids, and she would go get them done. When she would go home to Dallas, she would get new braids. I had never experienced that before, so I asked her, like does that hurt? What does it feel like? Do you pick them out? Do you buy them? How often do you have to wash your hair? Things like that.

Ashley added that she felt stupid asking these questions, but she just did not know. I probed further by asking if she also noticed any similarities between the two. She replied that they did have some common ground, such as being “poor freshmen” and both going to smaller schools in high school and then coming to the big campus of Oklahoma University. They stayed in contact through social media. This experience opened her eyes to people that were different from her. It made her more aware of the similarities and differences between her and people of color.

### **Ashley’s School Environment**

In her eleven years as a teacher, Ashley taught for two different school districts in two different towns in Oklahoma. Ashley began her teaching career as a fifth-grade teacher in Jackson, where she taught in a self-contained classroom in Saffell Elementary School. She described Saffell as remarkably diverse socioeconomically, with 75% of the students on free and reduced lunches and 25% in special education classes. There were “many high need families and situations, but not a lot of diversity otherwise,” Ashley said. She acknowledged that Saffell was more diverse ethnically than where she taught currently. She taught in this school district for eight

years before returning to her hometown where she taught in a self-contained classroom for the past three years. This school was the elementary school that Ashley attended as a child.

Ashley received her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from the University of Oklahoma and was working on a Master's in Library Media from East Central University. At the time of the first interview, Ashley was in her eleventh year of teaching and taught in a self-contained fourth-grade classroom at Gould Elementary, a Gould Public Schools school. Most of the teachers and students looked just like her. Census Reporter listed the races/ethnicities of Gould as 70% White, 14% Native, 5% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 0% Black, and 9% two or more races/ethnicities (Census Reporter, 2019). In this very conservative community, one could see Confederate and Trump flags flying. During the first year of this study, Ashley taught all subjects to 24 fourth graders.

### **Before the Professional Development**

Despite living in and around the Tulsa area for most of her life, Ashley, like most of the teachers I interviewed, did not learn of the Tulsa Race Massacre until she was an adult. She stated that she did not ever remember learning about it in school – neither K12 nor college. While teaching in Jackson a fellow teacher introduced her to the book *Tulsa Burning* and told her it was about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Flabbergasted, Ashley responded, “I don’t even know what you are talking about. I grew up in Tulsa, and I don’t know what you are talking about.” She bought that book, but she did not read it until years later, right after she signed up for the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop.

Ashley enrolled in the workshop because she loved history, learning about other cultures, and hearing different perspectives. She was frustrated by the fact that:

Before coming to the workshop, I knew essentially nothing about it. It amazed me that I had grown up here and never learned anything about it, and that was really disappointing

to me. How have I made it 30 some years and didn't know anything about this? How have I made it all this time, and I know nothing of my own history right here? I could tell you all sorts of things about Virginia history and Colonial Williamsburg, but I couldn't tell you things about my own backyard.

Ashley attended the workshop to learn about her history.

She also wanted to learn the history of the events that happened to share this with her students. It was essential to her to be able to bring this back to her fourth graders and "make it applicable to their lives." The Tulsa Race Massacre was important history. Despite not being in the Oklahoma Academic Standards for fourth graders, Ashley wanted her students to learn how this event impacted Tulsa and Tulsans and how it still impacted them today.

Before attending the workshop and learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre, of course, she had not taught it to her classes. She had explored other topics such as the Civil Rights Movement, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Holocaust with her students. She was interested in learning about the Massacre to add this event to the many she teaches to her fourth graders.

When asked about how her identity as a White female had impacted her teaching, she said that the White female perspective was all that she knew. Still, as she has grown in her confidence in teaching, she has become more open to talking about race and racism with her students. She said, "I just make it [race] more of a focus than I did before. I try to stress that this isn't my story. I haven't had to experience these things because of the color of my skin." We further discussed the privilege, and Ashley stated that until recently, she was "never really aware of my White privilege or my advantages that I was given just based on my skin." After reading *The Hate U Give* Ashley recognized some of her privileges as a White woman:

I never had to have rules about getting pulled over. I never felt like my life was threatened just for getting pulled over for speeding. Reading that book and thinking about

what happened just makes me more aware as an adult that I do have certain privileges just because of my gender or my socioeconomic status, or the color of my skin.

Acknowledging her privilege has been part of Ashley's growing process.

The focus on cultural relevancy in education has also impacted Ashley. Teaching at the school she attended as a child, Ashley wanted to make a difference. She was aware of what she did not learn when she was in school, and she wanted to make sure her students got a better education. When I asked her what she thought she did not learn, she responded with historical content. "I got to college and took a U.S. history course, and I did not know anything that was being taught. Nobody taught me this, and I felt really stupid. I don't want anyone else to feel that way." She added that she had coaches for her history classes when she was in high school and acknowledged that was a disservice. She recalled one coach would show them movies every class period – anything that even had Oklahoma mentioned in it, the students watched during their history class. When I asked her to list some topics she did not feel that her teachers introduced her to besides the Tulsa Race Massacre, she mentioned the Holocaust, the Civil War, the Osage Indian murders in Oklahoma. She added she knew a little about those things, but what she learned in college "blew my mind."

### **During the Professional Development**

Coming to the workshop with "zero" background knowledge, Ashley saw an opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge of an event that happened "in her own backyard" by attending the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. When I asked her what she learned, she simply replied, "Everything! Just everything!" As previously stated, Ashley had not known about the Tulsa Race Massacre until she was an adult. What she did learn on her own was just surface-level information. Taking a deeper dive into the events of the Tulsa Race Massacre was essential for her to get past that surface-level knowledge. She found it necessary to understand more than just

what you would read in a fiction book or the whispered stories about the event. She wanted to discover the “truth.” She stated that she did not want to instruct her students if all she knew was surface-level information, especially “if it is a tough topic.” She added that it was easier to tailor her lessons to a fourth-grade level if she had more knowledge.

Aside from learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre, she also learned why it happened and what had happened since. As an avid reader, Ashley also appreciated the visits from the authors. As featured guests, both Anna Myers, the author of *Tulsa Burning*, and Jennifer Latham, the author of *Dreamland Burning*, gave presentations at the Race Massacre workshop.

Both authors discussed their fictionalized accounts of the Tulsa Race Massacre and discussed the issues with writing about this event from a White woman’s perspective. Anna Myers wrote *Tulsa Burning* in 2002. She told the participants that she had a challenging time finding information about the Massacre to use in her book. The White community kept the information about the Tulsa Race Massacre hidden for a long time.

Not only did Ashley find it informative hearing from the authors about their fiction books, but she also learned information. The presenters introduced the participants to many primary source documents. Ashley explained:

The information that we learned was my favorite part. I enjoyed learning the facts versus hearing someone say, ‘I think this happened’ or even a historical fiction reading. I like knowing which parts are true and which have just been added on to make it a story.

Aside from the book knowledge, the walking tour was essential to Ashley. She explained:

I think the location and tour was [sic] profound. I have lived in the Tulsa area off and on for 30 years and had never walked around the historic site. To see the plaques on the ground and Reconciliation Park was an important part of learning about the event. I am a

hands-on learner and value seeing and being able to physically be in the space I am learning about.

### **After the Professional Development: Professionally**

Since completing the workshop, Ashley, too has continued learning more about the Tulsa Race Massacre on her own. She purchased books that she learned about at the workshop both for herself and her classroom. Some of the books she bought included *Ruth and the Green Book*, *The Undefeated*, and *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. In purchasing so many books, Ashley laughed and said, “I love to read. I’m a book nerd.” One thing she found herself doing post-workshop was examining the books she had on her classroom bookshelves. Realizing the lack of diversity present, Ashley wrote a Donors Choose grant to purchase more diverse books. She received \$545 from this grant to add 31 new books to her classroom library. Some of the books she bought with the grant included *Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13* (2018) by Helaine Becker, which explored how Katherine Johnson saved Apollo 13; *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child’s Story About Racial Injustice* (2018) by Celano et al., which followed two families as they dealt with the fallout of a police shooting; and *Granddaddy’s Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box* (2015) by Michael S. Bandy and Eric Stein which examined one family’s struggle for voting rights in the South. Ashley’s goal was to find books about people of all races, ethnicities, professions, and socioeconomic statuses. She realized her students needed books in which the characters “didn’t look just like them.”

Because of the sensitive nature of the Tulsa Race Massacre, Ashley wanted to wait until after spring break to introduce this to her students. Building relationships with her students and their parents was essential to Ashley. She wanted both her students and parents to be comfortable with her and each other before discussing the tougher parts of history. She wanted to “wait until

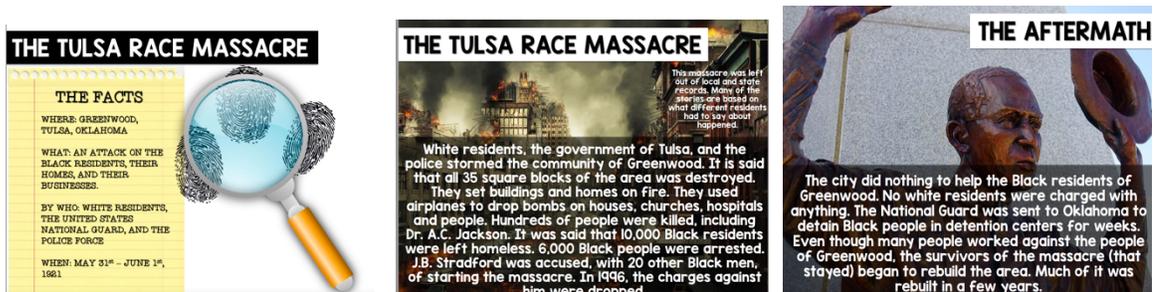
we had built that foundation of it being a safe place and a place where we can discuss openly how we feel about things.” Being able to have those conversations in a brave space was imperative to Ashley.

### ***Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre***

**Year 1.** Ashley taught fourth grade and realized that the topic of the Tulsa Race Massacre might be a little heavy for her students, so she sought out ways that she could teach this to her students without “scaring them. I didn’t want to come out with guns blazing,” Ashley commented. She found a resource on Teachers Pay Teachers (Figure 48) that she felt was more on a fourth-grade level with fewer graphic pictures, but it still presented the information to her students. She purchased this lesson plan which included a financial aspect that would incorporate math into the teaching. She lamented that there was not a picture book on the same level as *Ruth and the Green Book* (Calvin, 2010) that would make it easier to introduce the lesson. Since the first interview, Najah-Amatullah Hylton and Quraysh Ali Lansana published *Opal’s Greenwood Oasis* (2021) and Carole Boston Weatherford wrote *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre* (2021), two picture books about the Massacre. Ashley purchased both.

**Figure 48**

### ***Teachers Pay Teachers Presentation***



Teaching historical topics that involve race to fourth graders was a sensitive topic that Ashley thought was important to examine with her students. They discussed what racism was, and she stated that she had to be extremely specific. She gave the example of a student that said, “Hand me that black pencil,” and another student replied, “That’s racist.” So, she explored what racism was with her students. She began this discussion with a brainstorming session where students talked about what they thought racism means. They discussed what made something racist and spoke about derogatory terms and words no longer being used, such as the n-word, colored and negro. She used the book *Tulsa Burning* to assist in teaching about these words. Using literature was a safer way to talk about tough things. She explained to her students that these are derogatory terms, and that people should not use them. She acknowledged that they are in many of the primary documents she used and in *Tulsa Burning*, but she reiterated these are inappropriate terms to use today.

They talked about different characters from the book and using evidence from the book, they talked about which characters were racist and which were not. She also stated that she talked about the vernacular of the time – specifically, the n-word, colored, and negro, which are all in the book. She explained to her students that these were derogatory terms, and that people should not use them. “I just want to educate them more than anything,” replied Ashley. I clarified this in the third interview, and she added that she wanted them to recognize differences in everyone and know that it was okay to talk about and ask questions. She wanted to expose them to the diversity that she knew she lacked when she attended this school.

Because of the presidential election, the 2020 school year happened in a more political climate and navigating it as a teacher in a very conservative town was difficult. Ashley commented that many of the assignments students would turn in had Trump 2020 on them, and students would randomly holler out Trump 2020. She knew that her political beliefs were

different from many of her parents, mainly because of things her parents posted on social media. She said:

With the current political climate, I have had to tread lightly. I will confront students if they are commenting on something that I know is not true. I tell them if there is no evidence, you cannot say that in my room.

Ashley taught the election to her students but did it in a “friendlier” way. They voted for Pepsi or Coke in their classroom election.

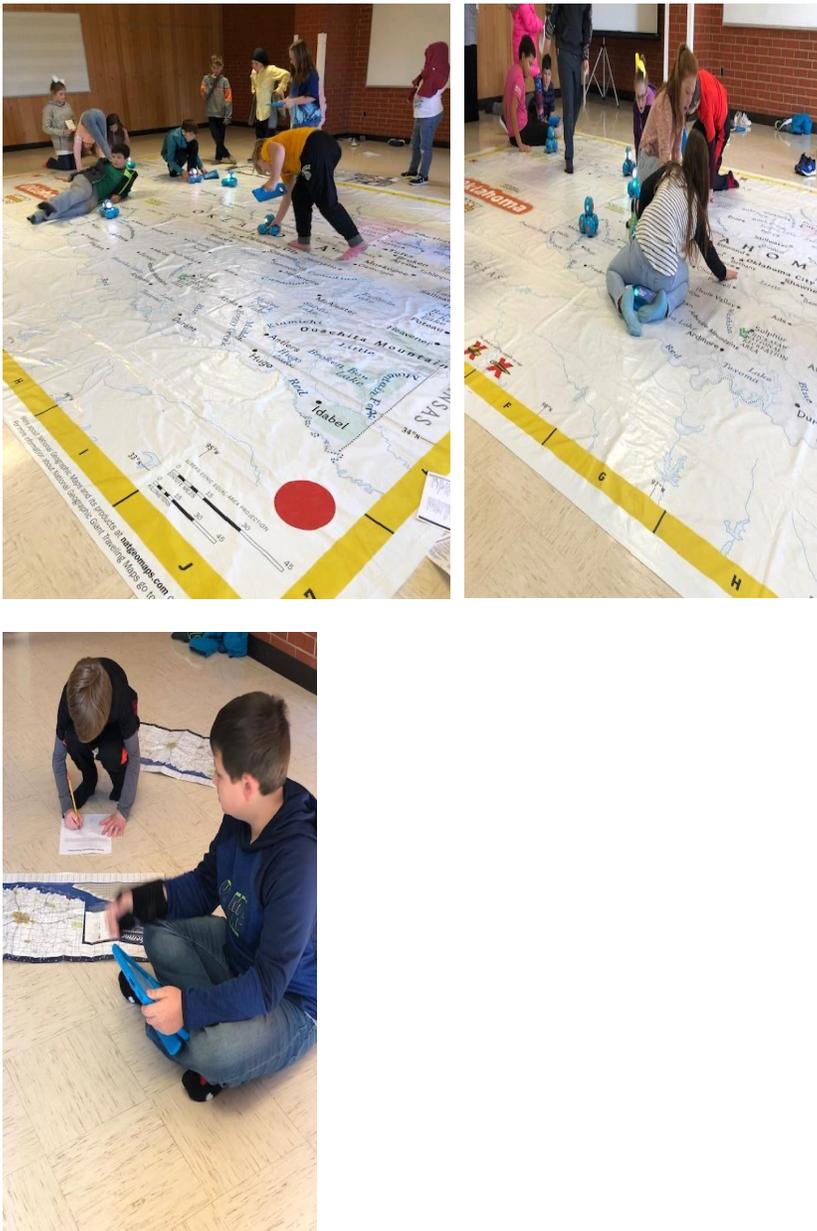
Ashley began her study of the Tulsa Race Massacre in February with an introduction to the Civil Rights Movement. At the workshop, the presenters introduced her to the *The Negro Motorist Green Book* through a picture book titled *Ruth and the Green Book* by Alexander Ramsey Calvin. “I had never heard about the *Green Book* until that workshop,” Ashley explained. She purchased the book to share with her students. She also bought a replica of the original *Green Book* and used resources gained from the professional development to find pages of a *Green Book* that she could print for her students. The pages she printed were those applicable to African Americans living in Oklahoma. She then worked with the Oklahoma Geography Alliance to provide a room-sized map of Oklahoma for her fourth graders.

Ashley read aloud *Ruth and the Green Book*. She then put her students into family groups. She assigned each family two towns in Oklahoma – one where they lived and one as a travel destination. Using the *Green Book*, the families planned a route from one city to the other, found locations where they could safely stop to eat (at least three times), get gas (at least twice), and sleep (at least once). Ashley borrowed a floor sized map from the Oklahoma Geographical Alliance that allowed her students to see where the cities were located (Figure 49). The students expressed shock by traveling so far out of their way just to eat safely or buy gas. Ashley led the students in a discussion about how their lives were so different from African Americans during

the time of Jim Crow. The students talked about how they could just stop at a convenience store and get gas or a drink whenever they wanted without worrying about their safety. Ashley claimed the students found it “interesting, and I think it was really eye-opening for all of them as well.”

**Figure 49**

*Ruth and the Green Book Mapping Activity*



*Note.* Photographs belong to the participant. They are used with her permission

Unfortunately, COVID-19 happened, and she did not teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre in the 2019-2020 school year. When asked about her plans to include in the 2020-2021 school year, she responded, “I am definitely including it in my plans for next year.” Ashley knew that teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students was essential. She acknowledged that many of her students come from homes with a very narrow perspective, and she wanted to broaden their perspectives by talking about the importance of everyone’s point of view, not just theirs. She found it necessary to teach her students to be respectful and inclusive of everyone, even if they are different from them.

**Year 2.** Ashley was able to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students in the second year. She notified the parents by email of her intent to teach it and let them know of the books she would be using with her students. She did not hear anything from any of the parents, so she continued with the unit. She began teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre by reading the book *Tulsa Burning* aloud to her students. Before reading the book to her students, she told them that it was not a very upbeat book. She also alluded to the fact that she did some self-editing when she read the book to her students. There was some vocabulary that she thought was a little harsh or inappropriate for her students.

Although she used *Tulsa Burning* as a read aloud, she carried that book into reading lessons that she taught to her students. For example, when they talked about character motivation in reading, she used the characters from *Tulsa Burning* as examples. Ashley indicated that character motivation was an OAS for fourth-grade ELA. For the lesson, Ashley discussed each character from the book and talked about their motivation. Students discussed whether the character was racist or nonracist. Students also had to use textual evidence to support their reasoning. She mentioned that it was evident with characters in the book if they were racist or

not. She used the example of the sheriff. The students immediately knew that he was racist. Vivian Chase, Nobe's mother, on the other hand, was different. She was not outwardly racist like the sheriff. However, Ashley asked her students:

Since mom doesn't really commit to being one way or another, does that make her racist? Does the fact that she doesn't stand up to the sheriff and allows him to be mean make her a racist? She allows her son to have a Black friend, so is she racist?

She said that they had a great discussion about this and that her students were interested. They loved the book. Ashley said it was their favorite read aloud the entire year.

She also instructed her students about what else was going on in the world in the 1920s. They read a story in their Storyworks→ Magazine, which was the curriculum her school district adopted for reading, about the Women's Suffrage movement. Ashley read several books to her students about voting and spent some time talking about women's voting rights. In a second Donor's Choose grant, Ashley purchased books on voting and women's rights that she used this second year of teaching.

After reading *Tulsa Burning* to her students, Ashley introduced the Tulsa Race Massacre using the PowerPoint that she had purchased last year from Teachers Pay Teachers. The students also took a virtual tour of the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. She stated that many of her students were familiar with the park because of its proximity to the Tulsa Drillers Stadium.

They ended the unit with the *Green Book* role-playing activity. Although she did not get the large floor-sized map of Oklahoma, they still did the mapping activity. Students were each given their own personal map of Oklahoma that they could eventually take home with them. The students participated in the same actions by locating places on the Oklahoma map and using the *Green Book* to find places to eat, get gas, and spend the night traveling through Oklahoma. She

said this group of students were also amazed that there were very few places that an African American could safely stop in Oklahoma. She added that her students experienced some frustration when they had to go so far out of their way just to get some gas to continue their journey. She led the students in a group discussion after this activity about the frustrations they experienced.

The students were fascinated with this unit of study. Ashley said, “They were hungry for information. They wanted there to be a sequel to *Tulsa Burning*.” She thought her students were so interested in the Tulsa Race Massacre because they knew the place they were learning about, which was different from what they usually learned about in their textbooks – faraway places that have no meaning for them.

#### **After the Professional Development: Personally**

Ashley shared the knowledge she gained at the workshop with her students, other teachers, and family members. Now that she knows about this history in her own backyard, she wanted to make sure others knew what happened as well. “It’s important to know where you’re coming from and where you’re home came from and what this place has been through to get to where we are today,” Ashley said. She posted on social media about attending this workshop and was surprised by the sheer number of people who had not heard about the Massacre before. As we neared the 100-year commemoration, people became more aware, and many came and asked her questions. She also loaned out her books and encouraged others to read on their own and find out more about this event.

Ashley was taken aback by some of the pushback she received. She mentioned that some people denied that the Massacre even really happened. Someone also responded with, “I’m really tired of getting blamed for all of this.” I asked Ashley what the person meant, and she replied with the Tulsa Race Massacre. Around the time of the Centennial of the Massacre, social media

was flush with negative posts about blame and not understanding what happened. Ashley said, “You still get that resistance from some people that don’t want to accept the dark history.” Her response to any pushback was, “It’s important that we talk about it, so we don’t repeat it. I don’t want this to happen again to anybody.”

**Autonomy**

According to the Oklahoma Academic Standards for social studies (2019) fourth-grade students learned about regions in their social studies class (Figure 50). When talking about the fourth-grade standards, Ashley commented that she found them dry, so she taught the standards during her social studies time, but during her reading block, she added that enhanced the social studies content. “More than anything, I always use my reading block to teach social studies,” she explained. During this time, Ashley often brought in historical fiction books or primary sources to teach social studies to her students.

**Figure 50**

*Oklahoma Academic Standards for Social Studies 4<sup>th</sup> Grade*



**Oklahoma Academic Standards for Social Studies 4<sup>th</sup> Grade (4)**

<p><b>4.2.3</b> Explain how people create regions using common geographic characteristics.</p> <p><b>A.</b> Identify and describe the major physical, cultural, and economic regions of the United States, comparing one’s own region to the other regions.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Explain how and why regions change over time by comparing regions in the past with life in the same regions in the present.</p>
<p><b>4.2.4</b> Describe how physical processes of the Earth’s surface impact humans and their environment.</p> <p><b>A.</b> Identify and describe the different climates in the United States using maps, globes, and graphs.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Explain how climate and natural processes including floods, wind, and storms impact how we live.</p>
<p><b>4.2.5</b> Identify and locate on a political map the fifty states and the United States capitol.</p>

*Note.* From the Oklahoma Academic Standards retrieved from <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Oklahoma%20Academic%20Standards%20for%20Social%20Studies%205.21.19.pdf>

When asked about the curriculum that her district required her to use, Ashley simply replied, “We don’t have a set curriculum. I mean, our curriculum would be the Oklahoma Academic Standards, however we can do that.” She mentioned that they did have some old social studies books, maybe twenty years old, but she did not use them. She was excited because they had just adopted a new social studies curriculum for the 2020-2021 school year. The new adoption was the Savvas Social Studies Textbook and Curriculum. Besides having a workbook for each student, the series also came with readers, including many biographies and historical fiction books—these books excited Ashley the most.

Even though the Tulsa Race Massacre was not in the fourth grade Oklahoma Academic Standards, Ashley acknowledged this topic was important enough to share it with her students. She had the autonomy to teach this to her students even though other teachers in her school were not addressing this event.

### **Teacher as Learner**

Ashley spent her own time attending professional developments that would enhance her teaching. The summer after her first year of teaching, Ashley learned about the Colonial Williamsburg Teaching Institute. After spending two weeks in Williamsburg attending the Institute, Ashley applied to become a peer facilitator and curriculum writer. After working in this capacity, she was invited to become a Colonial Williamsburg Master Teacher. This required another week of on-site training. As a Master teacher, Ashley traveled to Williamsburg every other summer to assist in teaching other teachers and helped to write the curriculum. Ashley said that as a child, she was obsessed with the American Girl doll Felicity who lived in Williamsburg, and she loved learning and reading about that time. She signed up when she discovered the Williamsburg workshop and learned that Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence hosted the trip.

They covered the cost of the entire two-week workshop in Virginia. Ashley had been involved with this program ever since.

In the second interview, I asked Ashley about the cultural sensitivity of the Colonial Williamsburg workshop. Ashley stated that the seminar was very culturally sensitive. The organization works hard on their programming and:

They have made such an effort to include multiple voices in their workshop. Obviously, they include African American voices, but they have gone so far as to include them in the planning, making sure to note that not all African Americans were slaves. They are working to include people from the community into the sessions they teach. They have recently added the Native American voices to their program, and they aren't using actors for these sessions. They are working with a local Cherokee tribe to bring in their cultural traditions and norms.

Ashley stated that she had seen a change in the last five years to be more culturally responsive and add more perspectives.

After her experience with the Williamsburg Summer Institute, Ashley began to seek out other history education workshops. She had the goal of learning how to teach history better and make it applicable to elementary students. Ashley especially looked for workshops that take place where events happened. She has attended training at Mount Vernon, a John and Abigail Adams training in Elmhurst, Massachusetts, and now the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop in Tulsa. Participating in workshops focused on a place was a unique experience. She sought them out because it was powerful to walk the same streets and experience the same things that the people in history did.

The summer following the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, Ashley participated in two more professional developments – one about the Tulsa Race Massacre and one

about the Holocaust (TOLI). Both workshops focused on strategies that teachers could use in their classrooms to teach these topics. The TOLI workshop had a component that compared the Tulsa Race Massacre to the Holocaust. Attending these workshops had “literally changed the way I teach,” Ashley exclaimed.

**Case Study 5: Susan**

*“I was horrified. I couldn’t believe this had happened so close to my home. I’m disgusted and I’m so so sad.”*

*~Susan*

**Table 8**

*Overview of Case 5*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade Taught</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years’ Experience</b>
Susan	White	9-12	Journalism, creative writing, reading for pleasure	45 miles	41

Susan was a late addition to my research. One of my participants retired in the middle of the school year, so I added another participant. I presented at a workshop that Susan attended, and she approached me about my research. She told me how much she enjoyed the workshop, so when one of my participants retired, I sent her a message on social media to ask if she wanted to participate. I combined interviews one and two in the first interview with Susan. The interview took place over Zoom after school during the 2020-2021 school year. It lasted about an hour, and I recorded it. The second interview also took place on Zoom during the summer of 2021. It lasted about an hour, and I recorded this session.

## **Susan's Description and Background**

Susan, a 63-year-old White female, was born and raised in Bacliff. Bacliff was 45 miles from Tulsa. Susan attended Bacliff Public School from kindergarten through her graduation from high school there in 1976. At the time of the interviews, she taught at the high school she attended as a teenager. When Susan was growing up, people like her in ethnicity and socioeconomic status, filled her schools and neighborhood. Aside from a small Native American population, White people made up most of the residents of Bacliff.

In the second interview, I asked Susan how her community had changed since she began teaching. She stated that her community had changed drastically. "Our demographics have gone down the toilet. We used to have a wealthy community that was very resourceful and supportive of schools. Now we have a whole lot of poverty." She added that there are only a few people that she considered upper echelon.

Reflecting on growing up in the seventies, Susan realized that her parents were racist. She remarked that her parents used offensive language and many racial slurs, and by the time she attended high school, she felt like she was "living with Archie Bunker." Susan stated that her mom was a little more refined, but her father was blatant with the racial slurs he used. This sentiment seemed to permeate her community which she described as prejudiced against minorities. Susan said that she has grown past the racism she grew up with and has come to the point as a teacher that, "when I have a child of a different ethnicity, I don't even consciously think they are different. I actually forget sometimes."

Susan attended the University of Oklahoma and, for the first time, was around a diverse group of people. She said that until she went to college, she "didn't realize that I had never been around very many diverse people." She acknowledged that her parents had sheltered her, and she did not realize it until she got to college. She stated that college opened her eyes to so many

differences. She mentioned meeting students not only from other parts of Oklahoma but also from the Middle East. She became aware of the LGBTQ community for the first time when she was in college. When Susan returned to her hometown, she stated that nothing much changed in the community for at least thirty years. “Everyone was White and middle class. That was the dominating factor for the longest time,” Susan added.

Susan received her Bachelor’s in Journalism Education from the University of Oklahoma. She returned to OU later to finish her Master’s in Journalism and Mass Communication. After forty-one years in education, Susan expressed the possibility of going back to school to get another Masters in English.

### **Susan’s School Environment**

Susan began her teaching career at Prairie High School but only taught there for one year. When Susan found out that her journalism teacher retired, she “came home to teach, which was my goal all along.” At the time of the first interview, Susan had taught at Bacliff High School for the past forty years. Although for most of Susan’s time in Bacliff, the education system, students, and faculty, were White, things have changed in Bacliff over the past ten years. The Census Reporter notes the races/ethnicities of this school district as: 73% White, 8% Native, 7% Hispanic, 3% Black, 3% Asian, and 6% with 2 or more races/ethnicities (Census Reporter, 2019). She mentioned that her school had Muslim students and Hispanic Americans, which she said was quite different from when she was a child. There was also a more significant percentage of African American students than before.

At Bacliff High School, Susan taught 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. At the time of the first interview, she taught Journalism 1, Advanced Media, Photojournalism, Creative Writing 1 and 2, and Reading for Pleasure. For the first time in 41 years, Susan was also teaching 9<sup>th</sup> grade English. She was also a co-sponsor of the Gay/Straight Alliance and the Young Democrats.

### **Before the Professional Development**

Susan, like many of my participants, learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre as an adult. She remembered the summer vividly that she learned about the Massacre at the age of 53. Like me and one other participant, Susan learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre as part of the Oklahoma State University Writing Project Summer Institute. During interview two, I showed Susan the emotions wheel previously mentioned and asked her to describe her feelings when she first learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She immediately replied, “I was just flabbergasted. I was horrified. I couldn’t believe this had happened so close to my home. I’m disgusted, and I’m so, so sad.” Susan added that she was blindsided when she found out about this historical event, especially since she had a minor in history. She stated that she was in the honors program at OU, which allowed her to have small class sizes and close personal relationships. Even though she minored in history, the Tulsa Race Massacre had never come up in any of her classes. She was horrified when she learned of the Massacre and reflected, “What is this they were talking about? Here I was just an hour from Tulsa, and I had never heard about this before – not in school, not in college.” Susan said she never taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre before attending the workshop, although she may have mentioned it in her advanced media classes.

Susan’s interest in social justice and the Tulsa Race Massacre topic drew her to the workshop. She stated that she had been fascinated by the subject since she discovered it, and she strongly desired to learn how to teach it to her students. The Tulsa Race Massacre was an effective way to incorporate social justice into each of her classes.

### **During the Professional Development**

Susan appreciated attending the workshop and commented that most of what she learned was new information to her. Something that she did not previously know was the connection between Tulsa and The Ku Klux Klan. The story of the newspaper article that fanned the flames



Something else valuable to Susan was just being with a group of educators who shared common interests. She benefitted from the literature circles she participated in at the workshop. She appreciated hearing how other teachers planned to implement them into their classrooms.

As a journalist, Susan also appreciated the photographs and the OPTIC strategy for looking at photographs. This strategy offered a framework to interpret images. These strategies taught Susan how to include photos in teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre and other topics she teaches. The visits by Anna Myers and Jennifer Latham were also impressive to Susan. As a journalist, she welcomed hearing the processes they went through to write their books. She would like to write a Donor's Choose grant to purchase a class set of Latham's *Dreamland Burning* to share with her students.

#### **After the Professional Development: Professionally**

When I asked Susan what had changed for her professionally since the workshop, she simply replied, "Responsibility." She acknowledged that as an educator, she felt that teaching this to her students was imperative. She stated:

We need to face the things we've done poorly and the cruel side of our nature as people, as well as celebrate the happy things. If we are ever going to get this world any better, we've got to face these things, teach these things, and analyze them and learn from them.

She added that she wanted to know more so she could instruct her students better. She also brought up the Massacre in many discussions with her students. She acknowledged that racism and prejudice were still rampant today, and she wanted to teach this to her students, so something like this never happened again.

### *Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre*

**Year 1.** After the Race Massacre workshop, Susan focused mainly on dialogue with her students in the first year of teaching. She talked to her students about the Tulsa Race Massacre and gave them a chance to ask questions and dialogue with each other. Susan was also interested in the fact that no other teachers, not even the history teachers, included the Tulsa Race Massacre. Aside from having discussions with her students, Susan also involved her classes with the photographs she learned about during the professional development. She elicited responses from her students about their reactions to the photographs. The students worked in groups to analyze the photographs Susan assigned them. They then reported information to the class.

**Year 2.** In the second year of teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre, other teachers were on board. Susan assumed that more teachers would be teaching the Race Massacre with the increased focus on the Massacre centennial in 2021. She wanted to partner with the social studies teachers. Her interest also included finding if there are any connections between Bacliff and the Tulsa Race Massacre. She heard a story that there was a road outside of Bacliff that was known as Gap Road. Susan heard the rumor that before it was Gap Road, the road's name was the “N-word Road.” The legend said that people called this the N\*\*\* Road because “a bunch of the Black people from the Race Riot were brought here and hung on the trees on that road,” Susan explained. She never verified the story. I looked it up and found that this story was a legend in this area. There was also a story that if you drive to the hill and put your car in neutral, the ghosts of those hanged will push your car up the hill ([www.hauntedhouse.com](http://www.hauntedhouse.com), 2016).

Susan planned to have the students in her advanced journalism class that published the school newspaper produce a special newspaper issue dedicated to the 100th anniversary. This newspaper went to every student and member of the faculty. Susan also sent the paper to some locations in the community. With her Journalism 1 students, she planned to explore the impact

that the media had in 1921. She planned to have her Reading for Pleasure class read the book *Dreamland Burning*, and she wanted to do memoir writing with her creative writing students. Before writing their memoirs, Susan planned to have them listen to the oral histories of Race Massacre survivors. At the time of the first interview, the school district restricted field trips because of COVID-19, but if they remove the restrictions in the spring of 2021, she wanted to take her students to the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park.

Due to continued COVID-19 restrictions, an Oklahoma ice storm, and uninterested students, Susan did not accomplish her goals for the 2020-2021 school year. During the second interview, she lamented that her magazine class folded due to a lack of interest. She shared the photographs from the OSU-Tulsa Ruth Avery collection and a History Channel documentary with her students. She did not have any written assignments but instead focused on group discussions. She stated that the students read *Dreamland Burning* in their sophomore ELA class, and the history teacher also instructed students about the Massacre. With other teachers teaching about the Massacre in their classes, Susan acknowledged that this was the first year the students had a foundation for more open discussions. When I asked her why she thought the students were more honest in her class than others, she stated, “My kids know that I sponsor the Young Democrats at school. They know I sponsor the Gay-Straight Alliance. I think they know I’m open-minded and approachable.” She added that many teachers are not willing to have tough conversations, but she was ready.

### **After the Professional Development: Personally**

Susan experienced a deep sense of regret after participating in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. She stated that she had to do some deep thinking and reflect on herself as a White teacher and someone who lived near the event and did not know about it. Susan commented that she was working on acknowledging the parts of her that still have some racist

tendencies. She said, “I thought I was a non-racist person, and I’m not, not completely. I consciously try to live as a non-racist, but sometimes I catch myself saying or thinking something that is racist.” To her, this was a process she needed to go through.

Susan also wanted to continue learning as much as she could about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She, like Belinda, participated in the 2021 Racial Justice Institute hosted by the Tulsa Race Massacre Commission. She met with this group once a week for twelve weeks on Zoom. Using literature and discussion, the lessons concentrated on the Massacre, privilege, White supremacy, and anti-racist teaching. The Tulsa Race Massacre Committee gave the participants books and resources to use in their classrooms. Susan read *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* (Reynolds & Kendi, 2020), *My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies* (Menakem, 2017), and *The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre: A Photographic History* (Hill, 2021).

Because Susan learned many stories about people involved in the Massacre, she decided she wanted to know more about her story. She began researching the history of her family. She began working on a genealogy project and took a DNA test. This test allowed her to go back 23 generations with her family history. The results gave her a map of where her relatives lived. She discovered that some of her family from 23 generations back were from Japan. She stated, “I am much more multi-racial than I realized. And when you think about that, it gives you a whole different perspective on prejudice.” She admitted that not all her family was interested in their background. When she told a relative that they have a “little Black” in their DNA, this relative was “horrified.”

### **Agency**

Like many of my participants, the Tulsa Race Massacre was not part of the standards for Susan's classes; however, she acknowledged that this topic was essential to teach. As stated

earlier, Susan taught in this district for forty years. When I asked her about the curriculum, she used she stated, “I have always written my curriculum, which is just the way I like it.” She said that her administration was incredibly supportive of what and how she chose to teach.

She was comfortable teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students and reported that students needed to learn this important history. She knew that many of the students were growing up as naïve as she was and wanted the “kids to know and understand and to see the research and realize that there aren’t conspiracy theories going on. The Tulsa Race Massacre really happened,” stated Susan.

### **Teacher as a Learner**

Susan continued to pursue her education on a variety of topics by attending professional developments. Her focus in the past had been on teaching about the Holocaust to her students, so she participated in several different Holocaust workshops. Susan had taken students to the Jewish Federation in Tulsa and, one year, even took a group of students to the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. When she discovered the Race Massacre workshop at Oklahoma State University, she eagerly signed up to attend. That same summer, Susan signed up to attend TOLI (Holocaust) training in Tulsa; however, due to COVID-19, the presenters moved it to an online format, so Susan chose not to attend. She said that attending these trainings was just teaching her more ways to bring information to her students. These trainings allowed her to have “open discussions that are pertinent in our world today, and it allows me to use history as a springboard for these kinds of talks.”

### **The [White] Teachers**

As mentioned in Chapter III, the two women who did not currently identify as White had different stories related to identity than the teachers who identified as White. Both women grappled with their identities and related stories of not ever feeling like they fit in anywhere.

Sakura related times of invisibility, while Luciana discussed hiding her Hispanic identity so she could fit in. Both women experienced times of microaggressions related to identification as White. These microaggressions surfaced again and again in a way that made their [White] identity an integral part of their stories, therefore, to delineate these experiences from the women who identified as White, I chose to bracket [White] signifying words added by someone other than the original speaker, typically to clarify a situation. Sakura’s story is an example of this definition. White was added to her identity by an outside person trying to make Sakura fit into a box. This person, despite protests by Sakura, labeled her as [White]. Further, bracketing happens in qualitative research. While the bracketing that happens in qualitative research does not include physically putting brackets around a word like I did, it does involve acknowledging the researchers’ values, preconceptions, interests, theories, and emotions (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Both women taught for Cove Public Schools (CPS). CPS had a race/ethnicity makeup of 52% White, 18% Black, 17% Hispanic, 5% Native, 2% Asian, and 7% with two or more races/ethnicities (Census Report, 2019). Their stories are below.

**Table 9**

*[White] Teacher Demographics*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years’ Experience</b>
Luciana	Biracial	4/5	ELA/Social Studies	10 miles	2
Sakura	Asian	6	Accelerated Language Arts	10 miles	37

## Case Study 6: Luciana

**“I feel a deep obligation to my community members to also show the resilience, ambition, and joy that embodies the Greenwood spirit and honors the courageous people who created a place to be all of those things,”**

**-Luciana**

**Table 10**

### *Overview of Case 6*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade Taught</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years' Experience</b>
Luciana	Biracial	4/5	ELA/Social Studies	10 miles	2

Luciana was one of my later interviews. By the time of the first interview, COVID-19 was in full force, and most schools had gone to a virtual platform. I conducted the first interview via Zoom during the 2019-2020 school year. I also conducted the second interview via Zoom as she was still teaching online. During the first two interviews, Luciana talked from the corner in her bedroom that she had set up as her classroom. Because she had small children, Luciana had to set office hours and spend time in her bedroom with the door shut. During the first interview, I could hear a child yelling, and Luciana said a tiny hand stuck under the door. We had to stop the discussion for a few minutes while she cared for her child's needs. I also conducted and recorded the third interview on Zoom. It took place during the summer of 2021 at her school. She was the principal for summer school that summer.

### **Luciana's Description and Background**

Luciana, a 34-year-old multiracial female, was born and raised in the Tulsa area. As a Tulsa native, Luciana grew up in a White middle-class neighborhood. She related a story about

her father, who was dark brown. He was always so friendly when he was outside. He smiled and waved at everyone. She said she now realized he was doing that to make sure everyone knew he was safe and belonged there. As a young girl, Luciana attended Bailey Elementary School. Bailey was a neighborhood school that educated students from all around the city of Tulsa. The building was in an affluent part of town but with children from various economic backgrounds. This school no longer existed in Tulsa. Luciana attended Washington Middle School and Hughes High School that both had “a really diverse population of kids. So, I think from early on I’ve been exposed to a variety of cultures,” explained Luciana. For example, the school district designed Hughes High School as a magnet school with diversity in mind. Forty percent of the student body came from Hughes High School’s historic district, which was primarily African American. The other 60% of the population came from all over the Tulsa area with diverse ethnicities and races. When Luciana was in school there, the application process to attend this magnet school was much more intense than it is now. Students still must apply, but the process was not as strenuous. The school had a diverse population. Despite this, Luciana stated, “Even though we had this idealistic melting pot of races and ethnicities and neighborhoods, you still saw groups be separate in the school.”

Identifying as multiracial, Luciana knew that her background “gives me a level of empathy and understanding in some situations that others may not have.” Despite attending what she referred to as schools with diverse populations, Luciana felt that it was no different than attending an all-White school. She described the schools as having “segregation within a diverse place.” In the third interview, I asked her to unpack this phrase. She explained that they designed the school to be diverse. Despite this, the school remained segregated. She gave the example of the cafeteria. The White kids sat together in the cafeteria, the Hispanic kids sat together, and the Black kids sat together. She added that sports were the same way. White kids played soccer, and the Black kids played football. I asked her how she dealt with the cafeteria since she identified as

White, but she was not White. She stated, “I identified as White, but I also played basketball. I kind of bounced around between different groups, but I never found one that was distinctly mine, that I felt like I truly belonged.”

In the first interview, she said that she interacted with diverse cultures at a level. Still, as a teacher, “I can’t say I can truly identify with someone who grew up in deep North Tulsa or an impoverished community because that’s not my truth. That’s not my story,” In the third interview, I asked her to discuss what it meant to interact with diverse cultures “at a level.” She explained, “For me, even though I am biracial, to go into the Black community, there was a limited place where I could go where I felt comfortable and accepted.” She added that it was the same in the White community. She could be in the White community to an extent, “But there was a certain level where I didn’t feel like I truly belonged. I kind of existed in this middle area – this purgatory.” I could see the struggle that she still experienced as she explained this to me.

After spending time working in a wide variety of jobs, Luciana earned her bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Oklahoma State University, at the age of 32, where she attended classes on the OSU-Tulsa campus. For several years Luciana was an intake person for a personal injury law firm. She also managed a retail store for many years. After her father's death, Luciana decided she would go back to school, so she quit her job and became a full-time student at OSU-Tulsa. When I asked her why she decided to go back to school to become a teacher at 32, she said her dad was a teacher, and it was something that Luciana knew all along that she wanted to do. Her dad spent his career teaching Spanish to students in several different districts in Oklahoma. The death of her father and the birth of her son were what gave her the motivation to complete her teaching degree. When I asked about the influence of her son, she said:

He has been on an IEP since he was in third grade the first time. We held him back one year but seeing how the special ed services were set up at the time, and interacting with

his teachers, and seeing how school was going for him, I was like, yes, I need to go back to school. I want to help fix the problem.

Luciana acknowledged that OSU did an excellent job weaving multiculturalism throughout all her courses, and she was prepared to teach to a multicultural population. Her professors at OSU introduced her to *Tulsa Burning* and *Dreamland Burning* during her time there. The elementary social studies course she took focused on diverse topics and how to teach these subjects in a diverse classroom.

### **[White] Identity**

When Luciana completed the demographic survey, she noted that she was biracial. As with the White teachers, we talked about racial identity and how this impacted the way they taught. As a biracial female, Luciana opened up about how her identity influenced her throughout her life. She stated that until recently, she had not thought too much about her identity. “My racial identity did not become a prominent issue for me until later in my adult life,” Luciana mentioned. She stated that she was half Puerto Rican, and now she identified as Hispanic but growing up, she identified as White. Pointing to her face and straight brown hair, Luciana, stated that she looked White, so she identified as White until adulthood because she said, “It was easier. I’m not ashamed of my ethnicity, but I definitely played into the Whiteness around me because it was just easier.” I asked her to clarify what was easier by identifying as White, and she replied that the privileges that come with being White just made it easier. She never had to worry about the police pulling her over or getting in too much trouble because she was White. She added, “When people said I was White, I didn’t correct them. I didn’t say no; I’m half Puerto Rican. I just let it go.”

In the third interview, she explained the difficulties she had in trying to identify herself. If she must fill out a form, she marks Hispanic for her ethnicity and White for her race. Pointing to her hair and face, she said, “This doesn’t read a person of color, so it was easier to navigate as

being White.” She went on to state that until she became a teacher, it did not occur to her that your “personal identity had that much of an effect on your pedagogy and the way you teach, but it does.”

Teaching in a diverse community and acknowledging her own racial identity has been crucial to Luciana. She stated that she could see herself in her diverse students. She had more empathy with them and now realized that what her students went through as far as being children of color or any of the microaggressions the kids experience, she experienced them also. She added, “I never said anything about it to anyone because I thought I was alone in that feeling.” I asked her to describe some of the microaggressions she faced as a child, and she referred to experiencing confusion and microaggressions when she was with her dark-skinned dad. She did not want to answer any questions about her family. The biggest microaggression she talked about had to do with her hair. She has curly hair, but as a young person, she would spend time straightening her hair. When she did that, her friends would comment on how great she looked. She even experienced this with her mother still. Luciana chose to wear her hair naturally curly now, but her mother, who was White, “is the biggest perpetrator of microaggressions with my sister and me.” She continually encouraged them to straighten their hair.

Luciana continued the conversations by stating it was essential for teachers to acknowledge their racial identity but, “teachers have never been vulnerable enough to talk about that with their students.” Luciana wanted to change this and freely discussed identity and culture with her students. This was also true with her own children, with whom she has started talking about their Hispanic heritage. In doing so, her children identified more with their Hispanic heritage and the Puerto Rican culture. She talked about the culture with her children and included them when she was cooking food from that part of her heritage. She also introduced them to music from their culture. Luciana had a 99-year-old grandfather who still played the Spanish guitar. She also introduced her children to the language. She did not speak Spanish, but when her

father was alive, he used several Spanish phrases, so she tried “using those in conversation, so it’s natural for them to hear.” Luciana stated that she wanted to pass the culture on to her children and that it was vital for all kids to have those experiences with their culture.

Luciana described her husband as “just White, plain White, of European descent.” He was good about listening when she talked about her culture and that of her biracial son, who was from a previous relationship. She described her son as very deep brown. He was also a large boy, so as a family, they have discussed how he behaves and reacts when he was away from the family. She said:

It has been interesting to see my husband respond to those conversations through the lens of a parent of a young man of color who is a very large young man and us having to parent someone who is constantly in danger and under suspicion.

She described her son as being a person of color in an all-White presenting family, who attended a primarily all-White school and had friend groups that are all White. Luciana said that she realized she had not done an excellent job building his own personal identity when she found some text messages where friends were using the N-word. She was outraged, but it did not seem to bother him. Luciana sensed that he must experience some disconnectedness from his identity and began an open dialogue with him and the rest of her family. She had seen her son change and mature, especially when deciding which high school he wanted to attend. He could choose from two schools – one where most of his friends were attending or one with a more diverse population. They toured both schools, and her son ended up choosing the diverse high school. Her son explained that he felt like an “other” when he was touring the school all of his friends were going to attend.

During our final interview, she mentioned that her son was getting his driver's license that year. She stated that she must have conversations with her son about driving that she will not have to have with her White presenting children. Luciana said:

We have the conversation often – kind of like a fire drill – what are the steps you are going to take if you get pulled over? What do you do? What do you not do? Those kinds of things.

Her mother and sister even encouraged her to put a decal on his car, like a fireman decal or the decal of his school, but Luciana did not want to do that. Having tough conversations with her son and her husband confirmed to Luciana how important it was to acknowledge her true racial identity and “do the work of racial equity.”

### **Luciana's School Environment**

At the time of the first interview, Luciana was in her second year of teaching. She was teaching fourth and fifth grade Language Arts and Social Studies. As stated before, the first two interviews took place over Zoom. She spoke very fondly of the school where she completed her student teaching and got her first teaching job. Birch Elementary, formerly Sterling Price Elementary, was a Pre-K - 5th-grade elementary school located near Tulsa.

As Luciana began her student teaching at Birch, the school was going through a tumultuous time. Birch was one of four schools in the vicinity of Tulsa that changed its name. The board of education originally named the school for a Confederate general in the Civil War, but when White supremacist protests began in Charlottesville, Virginia, the school district reevaluated its school names (Ellis, 2018). This evaluation of school names caused a “huge divisiveness between our school community,” Luciana sighed pensively.

The name change had a profound impact on Luciana as she was completing her last semester of college. She told the story of the name change like this:

So, our elementary school was founded in 1918 and has always been Sterling Price. As of about four years ago, there were some members of our school community who brought it to the administration that it was a really offensive name. They were kind of, you know, sometimes we revere our school heritage, but they would give cupcakes out on Price's birthday. They used to be the Rebels. There were pictures of him and Confederate flags everywhere within our school building. So, a parent and a small group of people went to the school board and started to petition to have the school's name changed, and that got the ball rolling. Like I said, it was really divisive between our school community but also our school board, because initially, one of the school board members for our section said that he would change the name, but he only agreed to change it from Sterling Price to Price, and the school board agreed to do that. Then, after all the backlash and having a week or so to think about it, they came back and said, you know that's not right. We can't take a school name and change it [this way] and expect that to have the effect that's needed. So, we are now Birch Elementary (pseudonym).

The new name, Birch, comes from the Birch tree located near the school building. This tree was where a Native American council first met in 1836 after the government forcibly resettled them in Oklahoma. Luciana believed the new name was appropriate and:

Has a really amazing story that when Native Americans were coming through the Oklahoma Territory from the Trail of Tears and other areas, numerous tribes gathered at this [Birch] tree, and that was their point of meeting and point of community and just a place of comfort.

The tree still stands and remained a place of comfort to the community.

This time was both divisive and healing. Many of the teachers wanted to keep the name the same for nostalgic reasons or because that was the way it had always been. Luciana and her mentor teacher at the time experienced backlash from some of the staff. There was even a time in a staff meeting where someone said, “I wouldn’t want you teaching my children.” This staff member insinuated that they were indoctrinating children to believe a certain way. She wanted us to “leave the past in the past.” Hearing comments like these in a staff meeting was an interesting experience for Luciana, a student-teacher. She commented that she felt everyone was close at the beginning of her time there, but when “something happens that hits your core values, those relationships just kind of disappeared.” After the name change, those that did not agree with it either retired or relocated to another school. Birch Elementary got a new principal and several new staff members, and according to Luciana, there was a fundamental paradigm shift. The staff shared the same vision, and Luciana shared that there was less animosity now. That shared vision included “being culturally responsive and thinking more critically.” When I asked how the students responded to these events, she said:

The kids are super resilient, and they just transitioned well. We talk about how if a classmate is offended by something that even if it doesn’t affect me, I am here to support my classmate – we have empathy. We stand together and do what’s right, and the students are all okay with that.

### **Before the Professional Development**

As a Tulsa native, Luciana had learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre as a middle school student at Washington Middle School. Her teachers just touched on the subject and remembered it was:

never in any textbook. If it was brought up, it was because a member of that community brought it up. It wasn’t something that was spent a lot of time on, but being in that

community – Washington Middle School, where I went was on Greenwood. So, it was just stuff that was talked about but not necessarily studied.

Before the workshop, Luciana “loosely taught” the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students. She began teaching the Massacre in her student teaching semester when she shared the book *Tulsa Burning* with her fifth-grade students. Her focus at the time was more on the literature and not on the event itself. She read this book with her students at the time the school was going through the name change. “Teaching *Tulsa Burning* at that time sparked a lot of emotions and a lot of implicit bias that even people who had attended that school didn’t realize were there,” reminisced Luciana.

Despite knowing a bit about the Tulsa Race Massacre, Luciana decided to attend the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop. With the centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre approaching, Luciana stated that many teachers were hearing about this event for the first time. She said, “It’s kind of become a buzz event now, and teachers were learning about it, but only at a surface level.” It was important to Luciana to go deeper than just a surface level and learn how to grow as a teacher and teach this topic to her fourth and fifth graders.

### **During the Professional Development**

Despite knowing a little information about the Tulsa Race Massacre, Luciana deepened her knowledge at the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop. Luciana indicated that she had:

the opportunity to look more deeply into the aftermath of the Race Massacre. Whereas before you know you learn about it. You learn about Greenwood, and then the Race Massacre happens, and then that’s it. But at the workshop, it was really great to bring those sources out and show what happened afterward, who was involved, and even before.

Learning about the mindset of those involved at the time was also important to her. Luciana stated that it was interesting to understand why this event happened. She thought a complete picture was helpful for her to teach it to her students.

Dialogue and the opportunity to talk to other educators was another benefit of the workshop. Luciana shared:

So, we got together and did *Tulsa Burning*, and me, having read it a few times before, you know, I had things to bring to the table, and I think the women who were in my group also had really powerful things to bring to the table. For me, it was really impactful to hear those stories, those realizations that they had around the same thing that I've been looking at – just seeing new perspectives.

The walking tour was also meaningful to Luciana. She indicated that:

Going on the tour of Greenwood and going to Reconciliation Park and the Mabel Little House is a really strong element of being able to put yourself in that position. In that setting, I was really able to step back and look at Greenwood and see the burned bricks and really take time to look at the plaques that are in the sidewalk of the businesses, hear the stories of the people. I think that's where you make the biggest connections when you tie an event to a human story, a human element. So, I really enjoyed being able to see those places and experience those places with the knowledge that I had from that workshop.

### **After the Professional Development: Personally**

After finishing the workshop, Luciana spent some time in self-reflection and digging deeper into the Tulsa Race Massacre. She read some of the books that we suggested at the workshop and did some of her own research on the Massacre, just to learn as much as possible.

The time spent delving into the Race Massacre during the workshop was heavy and having a chance to think and reflect was essential to Luciana. She stated:

There's a really personal element for some of our students and their families that you can do emotional harm, and you can really inflict some trauma if you don't know how to come in and teach it.

Luciana added that she did grow up in Tulsa, she went to school in North Tulsa, she had Black friends, and her son was biracial, but even with all of that:

It didn't change the fact that I didn't have the same experiences as all of my students. So, for me to come in and tell a certain community of people about themselves is ludicrous. As a teacher, it is a very slippery slope I have to navigate.

These thoughts encouraged her to begin working through equity.

Luciana began her equity work a couple of years ago by following certain people on social media and completing a book study by Layla Saad (2020) called *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*. According to Amazon this book:

Challenges you to do the essential work of unpacking your biases and helps White people take action and dismantle the privilege within themselves so that you can stop (often unconsciously) inflicting damage on people of color, and in turn, help other White people do better, too.

At the time of the second interview, she had just finished reading Betina Love's (2020) *We Want to do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. This book allowed her to explore the perspectives of other teachers – teachers that were not White. Luciana noted that something she noticed in being part of workshops and panels talking about

teaching the Race Massacre was that White people often do the talking. She asked, “Why are they [Black teachers] not part of the conversation?”

She also mentioned that she used her mom as a sounding board when working through these issues. Luciana described her mom as White, liberal, and open-minded. However, when Luciana tried discussing some of the problems, she said her mom “got angry and experienced guilt, what we know as White guilt when anything was mentioned insinuating that people now should take responsibility and try to write wrongs that happened in the past.” She thought the main issue that her mother had was an issue that many people have – it has been one hundred years, I was not involved, why do I have to feel bad about it? She added that she found it interesting how that guilt or anger seems to be a natural response. She has had to be intentional as she has worked through her issues and biases. After several conversations with her mom, she was also able to move past the anger reaction. Luciana continued to talk about the importance of teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students and her family. She concluded by saying, “I don’t think that people truly understand how especially in Tulsa, there are families who are experiencing generational trauma and inherited stress from an event like the Tulsa Race Massacre.”

### **After the Professional Development: Professionally**

The most meaningful change for Luciana was her ability to intentionally teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre at a deeper level than ever before. She touched on the Massacre in the past but mainly on a surface level focused on *Tulsa Burning*. However, after receiving the resources from the professional development, Luciana had more tools to bring this information to her fourth and fifth graders. Luciana had a personal connection to the Tulsa Race Massacre because she grew up in the area. Luciana noted that she spent much of her adolescence in the Greenwood area, and now her children are growing up in this same area. She found it necessary to

acknowledge not only the atrocity that happened on June 1, 1921, but she also “feels a deep obligation to my community members to also show the resilience, ambition, and joy that embodies the Greenwood spirit and honors the courageous people who created a place to be all of those things.” She wanted to teach about the oppression of the Black community and the tenaciousness, joys, and successes of the Black community and Black Wall Street. Luciana commented:

If you read the comment section of any news article, you see the hatred every day. Black people are still being oppressed. You have to trudge through hatred every day just to survive, and so I think highlighting the joy and the success of that specific community within Tulsa is much more important than harping on the fact that White people burned it to the ground. Greenwood lived on after the Massacre and was very successful for a long time. There are a lot of successful people who have come through this Black community, and I don’t think they get highlighted enough for the amazing things they have done.

Therefore, Luciana found teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre important even though it was not in her standards.

One skill that Luciana found important to include in everything she teaches, not just the Massacre, was perspective. English Language Arts OAS (2016) 5.1.R.3 stated:

Students will engage in collaborative discussions about appropriate topics and texts, expressing their own ideas clearly while building on the ideas of others in pairs, diverse groups, and whole-class settings.

She encouraged her students to examine anything in the news or any historical event from perspective. She taught her students to question, “Who is telling us the story? Whose point of view are we hearing this from? What are they trying to teach us?” It is important to Luciana that

students look carefully at sources and question what others are telling them – parents, peers, and teachers. She added that the workshop opened this up and made it more transparent for her.

### *Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre*

**Year 1.** The curriculum given to Luciana followed the Oklahoma State Standards. In social studies for her fourth graders, she stated that it was more geography-based and focused on Native Americans. For the fifth graders, the focus was on Jamestown through the Revolutionary War. Luciana had the agency and support of her administration to teach how she wanted. She said, “When you talk about social studies, I go rogue. I teach the standards, but I also teach material that will include the Tulsa Race Massacre.” She often taught history woven into her ELA class. She stated that often textbooks are boring or hard to read, so including historical fiction has allowed her to:

Cover some events over the course of history with some really complicated undertones. The students have really grasped the concepts when we focus on a character – a person they can identify with and see this event at this time through the character’s perspective.

She added that students made a more significant connection to history when they see it through a person’s eyes.

Luciana gave several examples of literature that she used with her students to teach about historical information. She used *Refugee* (2017) by Alan Gratz to cover a variety of topics such as the Holocaust and Wet-Foot Dry-Foot policy in Cuba. The three main characters were from different historical eras. There was a boy in the Holocaust, a girl who lived in 1990s Cuba, and another boy in present-day Syria. Not only did she incorporate history with her literature, but she also integrated math by having the students build a refugee camp. Luciana read *Amal Unbound* (Saeed, 2018), whose main character was a Muslim girl. Amal had the dream of becoming a

teacher but must deal with rules about women in Pakistan. With this book, her class discussed gender roles in South Asia and across the world.

Along with talking about the culture, they also discussed gender roles. They discussed homelessness, disabilities, and global warming when they read the book *Bridge Home* (Padma, 2019). Luciana has a very supportive administration at her school, and she stated that the team she taught with was great about exploring topics that were often just glossed over.

For the first time, Luciana included teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre to her fifth graders on a deeper level than just reading a book. Like many teachers across the United States, COVID-19 disrupted her teaching plans, and teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre moved to an online space. With school online, Luciana only saw her students twice a week, so she had to figure out how to share about the Massacre with her students in a way that they could grasp what happened and why it was necessary. She wanted to give her students context and not just spring a new topic on them, so she began her study with a look at the Great Migration, specifically why were “African Americans migrating from the south into other parts of the country?” She used a book from Epic online called *Push and Pull* that described what pushes and pulls brought African Americans to Oklahoma.

After giving her students context, Luciana had to find interactive ways to present the information to her students virtually. Students participated in a web interactive from *In Motion: The African American Migration Experience* that taught her students about “Black people migrating into Oklahoma and Westward Expansion for African Americans.” They also took a virtual field trip to John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park, where they completed a scavenger hunt virtually. She also shared excerpts from primary sources, books, and an NPR interview with Olivia Hooker, a Tulsa Race Massacre survivor. One of the readings she shared with her students was from the Oklahoma Historical Society. In this piece, students read about Black Oklahoma

and All-Black towns. Luciana acquired these resources during the workshop. Luciana was lucky enough to have a class set of *Tulsa Burning* because the author Anna Myers had spoken at her school, and they purchased a class set, but since the school was online, the students did not have their own copy. The first year using this book with her students, she made a recording of her reading it aloud set to dramatic music. Students listened to a chapter at a time from their homes. Luciana stated that one advantage of teaching online was that she had several families that listened to *Tulsa Burning*, not just the student.

Luciana assigned a wide variety of student responses to the readings addressing the themes of hatred and revenge. One response was an opinion paragraph. In this paragraph, students discussed whether Nobe, the main character in *Tulsa Burning*, was justified in stealing from the telephone company. In another response, students videoed themselves on Flipgrid comparing and contrasting the hatred of some of the characters. Figure 52 displays examples of another reflection the students completed after reading in chapter five of *Tulsa Burning* where Lester said he was Black, not brown.

## Figure 52

### *Examples of Students' Reading Responses*

#### Answer the following question:

Given what you've learned in the Tulsa Burning Day 2 slideshow today, what do you think Lester means when he tells Lida Rose, "Little girl, I ain't brown, I'm black."? Why would he say that to her? Answer in 3-5 complete sentences.

I think that Lester told Lida Rose that he's black because when people refer to different races, usually black is more of the term that people use to describe people with dark skin. When we think back to earlier in the story, he said that his son had died because of white people, and he can't seem to forgive himself. He also seems to mention that he is black, and white people are bad. He treats himself very poorly just because of his color, and little Lida Rose is still really young and doesn't understand.

#### Answer the following question:

Given what you've learned in the Tulsa Burning Day 2 slideshow today, what do you think Lester means when he tells Lida Rose, "Little girl, I ain't brown, I'm black."? Why would he say that to her? Answer in 3-5 complete sentences.

I think what Lester means when he tells Lida Rose "Little girl, I ain't brown, I'm black." is that black is his race. He is probably annoyed that the little girl didn't understand that it's not the actual, literal color of your skin, it is the race that you are born into. He probably feels disrespected because he can't sit in the front of the restaurant and he has to listen to the Mom explain the unfair rules to the little girl about why things are the way they are. He is not happy in general because of the way he gets treated and the way his family has been treated.

*Note.* Examples provided by participant.

Analyzing photographs using the OPTIC strategy was something else that Luciana taught her students despite being online. Dr. Nowell shared the OPTIC strategy at the professional development. Using this method, students first looked at a photograph and summarize the action.

This was called the **O**verview. Next, you divide the picture into sections and look at the **P**arts. Students then examine the **T**itle or other words on the picture. **I**mages and their relationships are analyzed, and students come to a **C**onclusion. Luciana gave the students photos taken during the Tulsa Race Massacre. She then asked her students to investigate the photographs using the OPTIC strategy. She was surprised by how the students engaged with the pictures, given that they were doing this at home instead of in the classroom.

Luciana realized the necessity for teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students even though it was not in the Oklahoma State Standards for the grades she taught. The neighborhood in which the school was located, Birch, had direct ties to the Tulsa Race Massacre. This neighborhood grew with the oil industry in Tulsa. The people who built their homes in this area made their wealth in the Tillar oil strike of 1912. These newer, larger homes needed live-in help. Black residents of Tulsa's community provided this help; therefore, Bates had several Black residents (Ellsworth, n.d.). During the Massacre, some residents of Bates hid their Black workers. Others went to the holding sites to "claim their Blacks." Some of Luciana's students had family ties to the Massacre through this neighborhood. Unlike other participants' schools, many of these students had grown up hearing family stories. The stories have all been from vastly different perspectives, so Luciana wanted to make sure students knew about the Massacre. She was more comfortable and knowledgeable about this event since attending the workshop.

The administration at Luciana's school was incredibly supportive of her and her choices in teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre. There had been some pushback in the two years she had been teaching at Birch, but not too much. Luciana recalled a comment from a student during her student teaching. One girl remarked, "My mom wants to know why we never learn about White history." Luciana laughed as she told this story. That same year, her mentor teacher received an email from a parent who did not like using the term Tulsa Race Massacre instead of Tulsa Race Riot. Parents have also accused her of pushing a liberal agenda when teaching about

the Tulsa Race Massacre. These incidences are the only pushback she received. She said that since the school's name change, parents seem to have an open mind.

**Year 2.** Luciana was excited when I conducted the second interview. Her school district was in the middle of developing a curriculum to include the Tulsa Race Massacre at some level in grades Kindergarten through twelfth grade. At the time of the interview, they had not yet released the new curriculum, but they had a framework started in anticipation of the centennial event. Because of changes in staff within the building, Luciana was only teaching social studies to fourth and fifth graders. She was a little sad not to be teaching the ELA sections, but she loved social studies and said that she was up for the challenge. As for the curriculum, Luciana stated that she had pushed her way onto the committee to be part of writing the curriculum. She said that she did not like how the curriculum writing was going. At the time of the interview, "They were trying to peg it into what our standards are, and that is hard to do. This is a sensitive topic, especially for kids in Tulsa," commented Luciana. The Tulsa Race Massacre was not part of the Oklahoma State Standards for fourth and fifth grade, but Luciana's district wanted their teachers to include the new curriculum for all grades beginning spring of 2021.

The interview took place in the fall of the 2020-2021 school year; they had not finalized their plans. They had not provided any resources for the teachers yet, but simply had a basic outline of how they would incorporate the Massacre into the already existing state standards. Luciana was a little frustrated with the focus for her fourth and fifth graders. She stated that the plans seemed a little simplified to her. She acknowledged that she had more training and knowledge about the Tulsa Race Massacre than many teachers, so this may be the reason for the oversimplification of the curriculum.

At the time of the third interview, Luciana's school district had published its curriculum. This curriculum was intended for teachers to use in every grade K-12 (Figure 53).

**Figure 53**

*Excerpt of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Tulsa Race Massacre Curriculum*

5th Grade	a) Oklahoma Content Standards  5.5.3 Describe the responsibilities of United States citizens  b) Essential Content: Tulsa Race Massacre  c) Social Justice Standards Justice 13 JU.3-5.13 I know that words, behaviors, rules and laws that treat people unfairly based on their group identities cause real harm.  Justice 15 JU.3-5.15 I know about the actions of people and groups who have worked throughout history to bring more justice and fairness to the world.	<a href="#">5th Grade Pacing Calendar</a>  <a href="#">Lesson 16- Our Role in Government</a>  In this lesson students follow an inquiry process to identify a local issue and suggest solutions in a multimedia presentation.	In this lesson students will look at the role of leaders in rebuilding Greenwood following the Tulsa Race Massacre and advocating on behalf of the African American community, the resilience and joy of the Greenwood community and culture.  Then students will follow the inquiry process from the TCI lesson which will look at a local issue, suggest a solution, and complete one of the leadership steps they learned from the Tulsa Race Massacre lesson.
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**Teacher as Learner**

Like many participants, Luciana freely gave up her personal time to attend workshops to further her knowledge. The summer after the original Tulsa Race Massacre workshop, Luciana participated in a seminar I also attended. The workshop, *Teaching and Learning the Narratives, Places, and Legacies of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre*, was hosted by OSU Writing Project, OSU-Tulsa, and The National Network for Folk Arts in Education, and the American Folklore Society. Luciana received more resources and learned the importance of oral histories at this workshop. Luciana had also been part of a panel about the Tulsa Race Massacre at Gilcrease Museum. She participated in workshops because she was “always searching for all of the perspectives. I don’t feel like I can teach this well if I don’t consider the perspectives of everyone involved,” Luciana stated. She added that these workshops provided her with different teaching strategies and techniques to use. It also:

Gives me a sense of community. I get to meet with other educators across the state, which also widens my perspective. We have conversations, and I realize I am not alone in my desire to teach tough topics to my students.

## **Classroom as a Brave Space**

Luciana was passionate about including topics in her classroom that many classrooms fail to address. She wanted a classroom where students could talk about issues in their lives or issues that were important to them. At the time of the second interview, Luciana mentioned that the climate that school year had been a little more intense. 2020 was an election year; the summer was a tumultuous summer of racial issues, and the students wanted to talk about what they had seen on the news and what they heard. They brought those issues with them into the classroom, and Luciana wanted her classroom to be a brave space, a space for students to talk about what mattered to them. She stated:

Some teachers want their classrooms to be a place where you can forget about all of that, and I am the opposite. I want my classroom to be a space where you can project all that or talk about it or just a place to get rid of the feelings that these issues bring up. Feelings are coming up because of what is happening in the community and the world, and so I really want my classroom to be a place where we can work it out together in a supportive community.

She added that her students had a lifetime of dealing with these problems, and she wanted them to have the skills to resolve conflict and be critical thinkers. She wanted to teach them:

where to find information, how to use their voice, and how important it is because there are so many who don't have this or haven't been taught this. If they don't come out of fifth grade knowing how to divide fractions or write their words in a row, that would be fine with me if they come out with the skills to be successful adolescents.

Whether she knew it or not, Luciana was describing critical literacy.

## Case Study 7: Sakura

**“To this day, we bear the scars and the burdens of injustice and hate,”**

**-Sakura**

**Table 11**

*Overview of Case 7*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grade Taught</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proximity to Tulsa</b>	<b>Years' Experience</b>
Sakura	Asian	6	Accelerated Language Arts	10 miles	37

I conducted all three interviews with Sakura over Zoom. When I interviewed Sakura, COVID-19 had closed campuses and her school district transitioned to a virtual platform. Sakura was in her home office at the time of each interview. I conducted the first interview during the 2019-2020 school year and the second interview during the 2020-2021 school year. Both interviews were about an hour long, and I recorded them on Zoom. When I contacted Sakura to set up the second interview, she told me that she decided to retire at the end of the first semester because of COVID-19. I debated continuing the interviews with her because she would not be teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre, but I decided Sakura's story was important and she needed to share. I conducted the third interview during the summer of 2021 on Zoom and recorded it.

### **Sakura's Description and Background**

Sakura, a fifty-eight-year-old Japanese Filipino female, was the only participant that did not grow up in Oklahoma. She was born and raised in Pearl City, Hawaii, where her father was an accountant turned math teacher who ultimately went to seminary and became a missionary. She

grew up in a remarkably diverse community where there were “many races represented. There weren’t many Black children or White children, but many of the cultures of Hawaii were represented.” Sakura was third-generation Japanese and explained that her classrooms were full of “Japanese children, Chinese children, Hawaiian children, and then a mixture of all of those.” In later years, there were many Thai and Laotian students in her classes. She graduated from Pearl City High School, which she referred to as Tokyo High because of all the Japanese students.

Sakura’s father was Japanese, and her mother was Filipino. She explained that as a third-generation Japanese person, she does not know much of the Japanese language. Third-generation Japanese “speak English. We don’t have a lot of culture, so the Hawaiian culture was adopted. The fusion culture became my culture.”

Sakura moved to Oklahoma as soon as she graduated from high school. She began attending classes at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa. Sakura earned a bachelor’s degree from Oral Roberts University in special education and English, a master’s degree from Northeastern State University, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies from Oklahoma State University.

### **[White] Identity**

When Sakura completed the demographic survey, she noted that she was Asian. Sakura came to Oklahoma as a college freshman at Oral Roberts University. I asked her why she chose to attend Oral Roberts University, and she replied that her father, as a missionary, had seen it on television and told her that he thought that would be a good place for her to go to school. When she arrived in Oklahoma, she thought, “What have I done?” In the third interview, I asked her to unpack this phrase. She commented:

I felt confused – visually confused. I wasn’t sure what I was looking at. The surroundings were unfamiliar to me. Then I experienced the heat. I had not experienced that before I got off the plane. When they opened the door, I am smacked in the face with this intense

Oklahoma heat. I felt stifled. I felt like I couldn't breathe... Then there was a little bit of confusion and bewilderment at the way everyone looked. I assumed that the people in Oklahoma were like the people in California, the only other state I have visited. Well, that couldn't be farther from the truth. I guess I kind of had an ignorant expectancy that things are going to be great. I'm just going to love it. And I think when I got hit in the face with the heat, and I couldn't escape it, I thought, okay, I have definitely stepped into another place and another type of experience that I know not of. So now I'm on this unexpected journey where I don't even really know what I don't know.

When talking about her experiences in college, Sakura said her professors did not teach about diversity or multiculturalism. As a matter of fact, she felt like she was the diversity. She was the only Asian person in her class, and she was intimidated by that fact at first. She stated that people did not understand her dialect and could not even pronounce her name correctly and, "as far as racial diversity it was almost nonexistent, unacknowledged actually." She described her undergraduate and graduate classes as being full of White teachers. At the time of the second interview, I asked her to unpack that experience a bit. These were her words:

This has been a personal journey for me. When I was in Hawaii, I didn't see myself as different because there were more people that looked like me. So, I didn't really recognize diversity until I came to Oklahoma. When I stepped off the plane all of a sudden, I'm around all of these people who don't look like me, and they don't understand me because I am still speaking in a sing-songy pigeon. It was quite alienating, but I was determined. I had the self-determination that I was going to make it. I really stuck out, but I also felt invisible. I did not get close to my professors, and unlike many other students, I was not invited to their houses. I didn't glean a lot from my professors, and there seemed to be a barrier there. I don't really know if that was race-related or me-

related. I was invisible, but that is not uncommon for Asian women. We tend to not draw attention to ourselves.

Sakura was very matter of fact when she described her experiences at Oral Roberts University.

She stated that she did not have many friends and living in the dorm was a nightmare. She was far from home, and she felt invisible and different. She mentioned that the girls in the dorm were loud, and she could not find a quiet place to study. She said it took her two years before she felt comfortable at ORU. Even then, she still felt invisible. She recounted one story about not having transportation to go to classroom observations. One student agreed to give her a ride, but this girl did not show up. She added that a good thing that came from ORU was her future husband. Like Luciana, Sakura described herself as being between and not fitting in with any specific group. She did not fit in with White people, nor did she fit in with Black people. When Sakura first became a teacher at Cove Public Schools, she was young and inexperienced. This became apparent when asked to identify her race/ethnicity early in her career. Below was her story:

As a young teacher, I was called to the office by the school secretary. The secretary was filling out of form for the State Department of Education. This form was collecting data about the races of the teaching staff of each of the Cove Public Schools. The secretary had me look at the form, and there were only two choices: Black or White. So, I said I am neither of those. If I have to be one or the other, I want to be Black because my husband is Black, and when I have children, they will be black. The secretary said, you can't be Black, and she marked me down as White. So basically, anyone who didn't have dark skin was labeled White. I guess I accepted that because I turned around and went back to my classroom. The Sakura now would chastise the Sakura then.

She realized her more experienced self would have asked more questions. She should have explained to the secretary that she was married to a Black man and would someday have Black children and forced her to change it to Black. Reflecting on this incident, Sakura acknowledged that this event made her feel terrible. It was something that she often told some thirty years later., Sakura related another story that again still bothers her:

Many years later, I am a CPS mentor for new teachers. One thing I liked about this job is that they had a lot of equity training for us. They were showing us how to coach new teachers. One particular training was by the Cove Public Schools Equity Department – which by the way, is run by a lot of White people. They were walking us through some of their protocols, and at one point, they had us break up into racial groups – however you identify. I stood by myself in that meeting while everyone else was in small groups talking and laughing. I realized at that moment that I was alone. Nobody in the room looked at me to see that I was alone. Finally, one friend who is sensitive to racial issues, who is Black, came over to stand with me. Nobody else realized that I stood by myself for forty-five minutes. My friend told me, Sakura, you need to speak up on this issue because no one will recognize it if you don't. Then she said, I am your ally.

This was the second time as a public-school teacher that Sakura felt invisible because of her identity. She clarified, “I am not as much of a wallflower now as I was when I was in my twenties. I speak up. I am visible.” She added that this event made her angry, but it also brought her to a realization. Sakura stressed:

There are these pivotal times in our lives when something happens, and it really brings to the surface what has been tamped down or what I myself have been unable to recognize. On that day, I realized I am alone sometimes, and if I don't say something, I will continue to be alone.

She had a second realization when this event happened. She said:

White people and privilege don't see this (pointing to her face). They don't see this (pointing to her face). They don't look out and see you are standing by yourself. They don't say What? Why are you standing by yourself? There were two half Japanese teachers, and even they were standing with the White folks.

Unfortunately, Sakura continued to experience microaggressions in her professional life. The following year, the district mandated another equity training. Sakura was sitting with a new teacher. She happened to be full Korean. The leader of the training asked a question, and Sakura raised her hand to respond. The leader called on Sakura but used the Korean woman's name. When she realized her mistake, she commented, "Oh whatever. You guys all look alike." Sakura continued:

The room fell silent. Talk about voice. I didn't have one. I was shocked. I looked at a colleague who was half Japanese. She just shrugged her shoulders as if to say, that's your problem. She was not going to come to my defense.

Sakura went on to say that her Korean colleague had a tough time dealing with what happened at this meeting. Even though the director made the offending woman read articles about White privilege, the Korean woman could not let go of this event. She left the training and did not return. She also could not be in the same room with the woman for months. This event had brought things to the surface that she had kept bottled up, especially the fact that she was different. Sakura explained:

I was angry in a different way. I was upset with the leader who should know better than to make these kinds of statements. But my friend was upset about the burgeoning realization that she's not like everyone else. She had just then come to the understanding that she is different.

Sadly, microaggressions from her peers were not the only ones Sakura experienced. She also experienced them from community members and her husband's family. Sakura was married to a Black man, but the Black community was not welcoming to her. She received pushback from Black women who lived in the same community as she and her husband. She said they were not shy about sharing their opinions about a Black man married to a non-Black woman. She recounted one day:

My husband and I were driving down the street. We had the windows rolled down because we did not have air conditioning in our car. There were a bunch of Black girls in a car, and they just started yelling at us. They harassed and harassed us. They wouldn't stop. We had to stop at a stoplight, and they continued yelling. They said things like, "Why you with that Black man?" They even called him Uncle Tom. That was traumatic for me.

She stated that she had never experienced anything like that before. When I asked her about her experiences with her husband's family, she said his mother never accepted her because she was not Black. At first, people had a tough time pronouncing her name, and she must correct them. After being married to her husband for 35 years, she said that his mom, no matter how many times she corrected her, still mispronounced her name. When this happened, she felt dismissed and isolated. His mother was letting her know she will never really be part of the family. Again, referring to the old Sakura, she commented that the old Sakura would not try to correct people, but the new Sakura:

realized after the death of my mom in 2012 that I wanted to honor the name she gave me. She did not give me this name for someone to butcher. So, I began to pronounce my name the way it needs to be pronounced. That became a priority for me. I realized if I

allow people just to call me whatever they want to call me, then that's on me. The Sakura of the past would remain invisible, ashamed, and guilty.

Seeming frustrated with the "old Sakura" she added that she still experienced some anger at the "old Sakura" for allowing herself to be treated that way. She continued, "Evidently, it was more important to fit in than have my name pronounced correctly."

All these experiences influenced who Sakura was as a person and a professional. She stated that her identity had shifted and changed over the decades as she gained more confidence in who she was. She has also gained a better understanding of students who are not White and privileged. "It has made me a more compassionate teacher. A teacher who is better able to accept and understand," Sakura remarked. She described this as an evolving teacher self. When she was forced to be White early in her career, Sakura tried to be White. She tried to fit in. "I just tried to be the same, but now I have the freedom of not being the same, and that is okay," Sakura concluded.

### **Sakura's School Environment**

During the study, Sakura was back in the classroom for the first time in over six years. During her thirty-seven years in education, Sakura taught in various positions and several different schools in Cove. For the past six years, Sakura had been an instructional coach for Cove Public Schools. At the time of the first interview, Sakura taught sixth grade at Drake School in Cove, Oklahoma. This was the third time that Sakura taught at Drake. Drake was a magnet school located on 44 acres in the center of Cove (from website). CPS designated Drake as a college preparatory middle and high school, and students must apply, and Drake must accept them into one of the coveted spots to attend. Students also take pre-AP and AP courses and must maintain a GPA of 2.5. Failing classes or not maintaining the GPA could result in a student not attending Drake the following year.

Since she was returning to the classroom after several years away, Sakura admitted that she was learning right along with her students. The curriculum was new, and she was learning the material just ahead of the students. Online teaching impacted how she taught, and Sakura struggled to figure out how to introduce challenging concepts online. CPS also required her to learn both Google Classroom and Canvas.

At the time of the second interview, the administration had moved Sakura from teaching sixth graders to teaching eleventh graders at the same school. She said the administration came and asked her if she would change grades, and she agreed. When asked about the difference between teaching sixth graders and eleventh graders, Sakura had difficulty describing what she was getting from her students. Unlike last school year, this school year began and has continued to be virtual. She has not had an opportunity to make a physical connection with her students. She had only seen them through the computer screen, so it had been hard to judge, especially when many do not show up to the Zoom meetings or have their computer screens off.

During the second interview, while students were virtual, teachers at Cove Public Schools were required to be in the buildings and teach from their classrooms. Sakura was still concerned about COVID-19 and requested special permission from her administration to continue working from home as she finished the semester. He agreed to allow her to work from home since her replacement was working in the classroom. Sakura decided to retire at the end of the semester due to COVID-19 concerns. She said, "I did not have complete confidence in Cove's plan for me as a teacher and how they were going to keep me safe." She added that she has 150 students on her roster and when they are in the classroom, they are basically on top of each other, and she did not like the plan Cove Public Schools had in place to protect her. Sakura knew that she would return to education in some capacity at some point, but for now, it was time for her to move on. She started drafting a book about her mother and planned to spend time working in her garden. Gardening provided her with some much-needed self-care.

## **Before the Professional Development**

Sakura was the only participant that did not grow up in Oklahoma. She did not come to Oklahoma until she began her undergraduate degree at Oral Roberts University at the age of 18. Before coming to Oklahoma, Sakura had not learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Still, she did not know of the event during her higher education experiences, both for her undergraduate and master's degrees. It wasn't until Sakura began her Ph.D. program at Oklahoma State University and taught in Oklahoma for several years that she learned of the Massacre.

The first class that Sakura took for her Ph.D. program in 2012 was OSU Writing Project's Summer Institute. During the Summer Institute, the teacher consultants introduced her to the Tulsa Race Massacre. This introduction was "revolutionary" for her. She learned about "multicultural issues such as diversity in literature, diversity in teaching, and how to introduce this type of literature to my students." During this course, she also took a walking tour of Greenwood and had the opportunity to discuss the Tulsa Race Massacre with other area teachers.

At this point, Sakura had been in Oklahoma for thirty years. Using the emotions wheel, I asked her to describe her feelings of being a Tulsan that did not know this history. When I used the word Tulsan, she was taken aback. Then she admitted that she was a Tulsan. She was more Tulsan than Hawaiian. She had recently taken a trip back home. She said:

I had this romanticized view of home, and I get there, and I am confused and bewildered because this doesn't look like the same place I knew. I began to realize I am not a native of there anymore because I don't understand where I am. I even had to use a GPS while I was there. So, at this time, I began to realize, yes, I am a Tulsan. You know my home is here.

Looking at the emotions wheel, she added she felt angry and frustrated when she learned about the Massacre. She said, "I didn't feel guilty. I don't know that I felt guilty. I felt sad and

remorseful, but I did not feel guilty. I felt more like I can't believe that we are able to keep these secrets." Despite learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre during OSU WP Summer Institute, Sakura still did not teach this topic to her students. Sakura included the Holocaust in her ELA classes and has taken several workshops to enhance her teaching of this topic. She mentioned that the Holocaust was one of her big teaching units and wanted the Tulsa Race Massacre to become one as well.

### **During the Professional Development**

Despite already knowing about the Tulsa Race Massacre and had participated in a walking tour of Greenwood before, Sakura deepened her knowledge about the event through this workshop. Hearing from Anna Myers, who wrote *Tulsa Burning*, and Jennifer Latham, who wrote *Dreamland Burning*, was "very powerful. I learned how they think about their writing and how I should teach their work." She mentioned that the authors uncovered a personal identification with the history, which she found was important for her students to learn to make those same connections. Learning about the literature and how "history needs to be interwoven with literature" benefitted her. She added wanting to know more begins with a good base of history which she got when she attended workshops and professional developments.

Learning about the different perspectives was also crucial to Sakura. She found "the personal identification with history and how it needs to be personalized especially as I teach children about that time" profound. Gaining a knowledge base about the Tulsa Race Massacre so "I can be more well informed to teach my students" was also relevant for Sakura.

Sakura also connected with the walking tour of Greenwood. Visiting Reconciliation Park and the Mabel Little home was meaningful to her. Despite having taken this walk before, she described it as more in-depth and gave her a deeper understanding of this event. She appreciated "having more of a discussion of what was here and hearing some of the historical stories which

are narratives that I don't always hear." She stated that being able to walk on the site of the Tulsa Race Massacre impacted her and desired the same for her students. She added Tulsans are literally living on top of the devastation of other people, and all that matters "is what I do in this space."

### **After the Professional Development: Professionally**

After the workshop, Sakura decided that she needed to get serious about teaching not only the Holocaust but also the Tulsa Race Massacre. During the seminar, she was exposed to so much literature that she wrote a grant to purchase books for her classroom. Sakura received the grant and bought a class set (40 copies) of *Tulsa Burning*. She also purchased historical fiction and nonfiction books about the Civil Rights Movement and the Tulsa Race Massacre. Historical fiction uses actual events and contextualizes with the fictional narrative using historically accurate events as part of the setting. She planned to write another grant to purchase a class set of *Dreamland Burning*.

Since the workshop, Sakura also developed a goal of teaching "compassion, care, and understanding for this generation and the generations these students touch." She planned to work on improving her teaching so she can see this in her classroom and her students.

### ***Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre***

**Year 1.** Like many teachers across the United States, Sakura's year was interrupted. She "had big plans to teach the Tulsa Race Massacre, but I was forced to move my classes online for the remainder of the school year." While she introduced her students to the Civil Rights Movement and the Harlem Renaissance, she had yet to get to the topic of the Massacre. Before they were quarantined, Sakura introduced her students to the book *The Gold Cadillac* (Taylor, 1987). This book followed an African American family traveling south during the 1950s and their segregation

on their journey. She used this book to introduce her students to the historical context of what society was like at the time.

During our interview, she mentioned that she read *Ruth and the Green Book* by Calvin Alexander Ramsey to her students over Zoom. She also purchased replicas of the actual *Green Book* and shared a link with her students to view the *Green Book* archives. At the time of our interview, she tried to figure out how to share *Tulsa Burning* virtually with her students. She realized that she probably would not be able to teach the topic as in-depth this year, but “when I teach it next year, it is going to be so much better.” Sakura wanted to be able to lay a foundation for her students at least. She wanted them to understand what Oklahoma was like at the time and gain an understanding of Jim Crow laws. She also planned to write another grant next year that would allow her to purchase the book *Dreamland Burning*.

Despite not teaching the Massacre to her students during year one, Sakura recognized the importance of making her students aware. “Awareness of other people, awareness of where we live, awareness of what we have not talked about, awareness of what is hidden including people’s souls are all necessary.” She realized that students need to “understand the interconnection of history and how history, time, and place influence what we do today. It affects how we treat other people and how we view other people. She concluded by saying:

Now more than ever, this [Tulsa Race Massacre] needs to be taught so that we don’t forget who we are as Tulsans and where we have come from and what our city has been through. We need to realize why our city looks the way it does, why there’s still racism, and why people still suffer. They need to be aware of their own history.

She acknowledged that this topic has been silenced for too long. It was time to uncover the past. Sakura continued her questioning, noting that this history “has really affected our landscape. I realize now how history and our present landscape are really interconnected. This is why South

Tulsa is so different from North Tulsa.” She added that now more than ever, this needed to be taught. She thought students were more aware now than ever before, and they needed to be taught what Tulsa had come from and why issues such as racism still existed in Tulsa. “To this day, we bear the scars and the burden of injustice and hate,” concluded Sakura.

At the time of the second interview, I learned that Sakura had not been able to teach the Tulsa Race Massacre to her students that first year. Since it was the first time her district had gone virtual, they developed a curriculum that they required all the teachers to use. Like schools across the nation, Cove Public Schools went to a virtual platform in March of 2020 after the COVID-19 outbreak. Typical of the schools at the time, Cove Public was thrust into this online situation with no warning and no plan. They spent spring break devising a plan to get them through the school year. Many teachers and administrators spent the summer revising teaching plans and by the time school started in August, and they were still virtual, the administration had a better plan in place. To finish the school year in 2020, they were in survival mode, and basically, the students had assignments that they would turn in to Google Classroom, but there was no way for them to “meet.” By the time school started in the fall, classrooms were meeting via Zoom.

**Year 2.** Despite her best intentions, Sakura was not able to teach the Tulsa Race Massacre in year two. She had already garnered the resources, organized the literature, and had planned to introduce the Massacre in February of 2021. However, instead of teaching the Massacre, Sakura decided to retire.

### **Agency and Children’s Literature**

As a veteran teacher, Sakura had her administration's support and was confident writing her own curriculum. Amplify was the online curriculum chosen by her school, but in her words:

I've taught a long time, so I write my own curriculum. This allows me to see who I'm teaching and to make modifications based on who I am teaching and how I am teaching. There are always certain things that I teach, but I may approach the teaching differently.

Sakura began teaching about the Holocaust to her students fifteen years ago and spent quite a bit of time teaching about this to her students. One way that she taught about this topic was through literature. She used books such as *Refugee* (Gratz, 2017) and *Devil's Arithmetic* (Yolen, 1988) to introduce them to the Holocaust. At the time of the COVID-19 outbreak, her students were in the middle of a writing contest sponsored by the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art and the Jewish Federation of Tulsa. The students did not get to finish this writing. Sakura also had access to a literature book for her students that she picked and chose which pieces she used in her classroom. She also used literature incorporated into mini lessons to teach grammar, usage, and other conventions.

Using literature was how Sakura liked to introduce complex concepts in her classroom. She shared:

By using books like this (holds up *Ruth and the Greenbook*) students can make a connection with a person more than just an event. To understand the soul of what is going on during that time, they need to hear the stories.

To understand Martin Luther King Jr., Sakura shared poetry from the Harlem Renaissance. To understand Jim Crow laws, Sakura shared *Ruth and the Green Book*. She planned to use *Tulsa Burning* and *Dreamland Burning* to introduce her students to the Tulsa Race Massacre. Other literature that she shared with her students included Sojourner Truth's (1851) speech *Ain't I a Woman?*, Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (1963) and *Why We Can't Wait* (1964). Using literature, Sakura shared that connection between historical events, literature, and the power of stories.

## Summary

In this chapter, I utilized narratives to help the reader understand the research participants on a deeper level. These narratives were based on the three individual interviews that I completed with each participant. The narratives provided insight into the teachers' background, their teaching before the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. They also provided insight into how the participants made meaning of the experiences at the professional development. Further, it provided insight into how those experiences translated into their classroom and their personal lives. Each participant acknowledged changes in themselves both personally and professionally. In the next chapter, I discuss the themes I uncovered as I compared the cases through cross-case analysis.

## CHAPTER VI

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### **Common Themes Discovered from Cross-Case Analysis**

I treated each of the seven participants as individual cases. As I analyzed the data, there were common themes present across multiple cases. Through repeated readings of the transcripts, organizing the data in separate files, coding, creating webs, creating a codebook, combining and collapsing codes, and simply playing with the data, I identified the three themes listed below. This cyclical process suggested by the Data Analysis Spiral discussed in Chapter III aided me in identifying these themes. I list the themes as well as the subthemes that I discovered from the teachers' experiences below:

1. "Evolving teacher self": Professional Development as a Conduit for Change
  - a. Brave Spaces and Tough Conversations
  - b. Diverse Literature
  - c. Perspectives
  - d. Teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre
2. "Life-changing"
  - a. "Everybody looked just like me."
  - b. Exploring Identity
  - c. Tough Conversations

3. "I didn't know the history in my backyard."
  - a. Knowing Local History
  - b. Power of Place

I will discuss each theme in greater detail in this section. The themes discussed below answer the following research question:

- How was the journey of Oklahoma teachers impacted after participating in a workshop focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre?

### **Theme 1 – "Evolving teacher self": Professional Development as a Conduit for Change**

Attending a professional development was how I found out about the Tulsa Race Massacre for the very first time. This professional development was a conduit for change in my life both personally and professionally. Being able to assist in presenting the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development was the impetus for this research study. This three-day professional development pushed some of the participants out of their comfort zone, teaching them about the Tulsa Race Massacre for the first time. Even though six of the participants grew up in the Tulsa area, most of them found out about the Tulsa Race Massacre as an adult. Michelle and Luciana learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre briefly during their middle school years – Michelle through her readings and Luciana as a member of the Greenwood Community. Despite knowing about the Massacre early on, both women considered what they learned only surface-level information. All the participants acknowledged that they learned things about the Tulsa Race Massacre that they did not know before participating in this professional development. All the participants realized that the professional development was an impetus for change in their classrooms. Sakura described this as an “evolving teacher self.” She likened teaching to a dynamic and moving organism that changed and grew over time. “It is very spiritual and very living. The teacher self is not stationary,” she added. This evolving teacher-self happened in response to professional developments in which these teachers had participated. All seven

participants acknowledged changes they made personally and professionally because they participated in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. Each participant also commented on the importance of professional development as teachers and discussed other professional developments in which they have participated.

Besides attending the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop, five of the seven participants participated in workshops based on teaching about the Holocaust. Ashley, Michelle, and I participated in Holocaust training the same summer as the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. The following summer Melissa, Ashley, Sakura, and I participated in an online Holocaust professional development, and this summer, Ashley, Sakura, Michelle, and I took part in The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies (TOLI) seminar titled Social Justice Lessons in the Heartland: Exploring the Holocaust and Human Rights in Oklahoma's History. This week-long workshop examined both the Holocaust and the Tulsa Race Massacre, drawing parallels between the two events and giving resources and strategies for teaching about these topics in the classroom. For fifteen years, Sakura taught about the Holocaust, attended training every summer, and served on the Holocaust Educator's Committee through the Jewish Federation.

Six of the seven participants have taken other workshops about the Tulsa Race Massacre since participating in the original Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. A local museum asked Luciana to be on a panel of professionals speaking about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Ashley has taken part in several trainings that have taken place "on location." She had been to Colonial Williamsburg, Mt. Vernon, and Massachusetts taking part in historical workshops where significant historical events happened. She said, "It is powerful to walk the same streets and experience the same things that the people in history did." She became a teacher facilitator at the Colonial Williamsburg seminar.

Sakura, Susan, and Melissa participated in Oklahoma State University Writing Project's (OSUWP) Summer Institute. As an affiliate of the National Writing Project, the OSUWP sponsors an annual SI alternating location between the main campus in Stillwater and the Tulsa campus, including as many teachers as possible in the northern half of the state. The University of Oklahoma Writing Project focused on the southern half of the state, although teachers from anywhere can and do participate. Like myself, Sakura and Susan first learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre during their SI experience. At the beginning of her Ph.D. program, Sakura took the SI, and two participants took it as classroom teachers. Sakura and Susan participated on the OSU-Tulsa campus, and Melissa participated on the Stillwater campus, although the group in Stillwater traveled to Tulsa twice during the two-week institute to learn about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Belinda commented that the SI was another powerful workshop she attended provided by OSUWP. She said, "I am excited and inspired."

Each of the seven participants mentioned a variety of other workshops in which they had participated. Some school districts required attendance at professional development; however, these teachers chose to take most of these professional development opportunities independently. The teachers gave myriad reasons for attending workshops, including acquiring perspective, knowledge, and new strategies. Luciana, Michelle, and Belinda all mentioned that they regularly attended workshops to learn more about history and to be able to get all sides of the story. Luciana said, "I'm always searching to hear all of the perspectives. I don't think I can teach history well if I don't consider the perspectives of everyone who was involved." Belinda commented more than once that she was an alternatively certified teacher, and she did not have the support of the administration or her peers that she wished she had. She attended workshops to gain as much knowledge as possible and learn new ways to reach her students. Ashley also attended workshops to find new ways to instruct her students:

I am hungry for information and want more of the story. I want to bring accurate information back to my students. If I go to a workshop, I get actual lessons I can take back to my classroom. I find if I go to workshops, I learn information that is more memorable than just reading it for myself.

The main reason these teachers attended professional development was to learn new strategies to bring to their students. They wanted to gain knowledge to be able to teach their students to the best of their abilities. The participants also gained a sense of community when attending workshops with like-minded people. Luciana noted, "I love how we can have conversations with other teachers. These conversations make me realize we are not alone." Victoria mentioned that eighth-grade teachers typically teach the Holocaust, but she did not know enough to feel comfortable teaching it. "I get nervous when I try to teach the Holocaust that's why I signed up to take the Holocaust/Race Massacre workshop, but it got canceled because of COVID," explained Victoria. Areas where the participants evolved and grew from this professional development included creating brave classrooms, facilitating tough conversations, using diverse literature, exploring other perspectives, and teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre.

### ***Brave Spaces and Tough Conversations in the Classroom***

*Invitation to a Brave Space*

*Together we will create brave space*

*Because there is no such thing as a "safe space"*

*We exist in the real world*

*We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.*

*In this space*

*We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,*

*We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,*

*We call each other to more truth and love  
We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.  
We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.*

*We will not be perfect.*

*It will not always be what we wish it to be*

*But*

*It will be our brave space together,*

*and*

*We will work on it side by side.*

*~Micky ScottBey Jones inspired by an untitled poem by Beth Strano*

In her poem *Invitation to a Brave Space*, Micky ScottBey Jones hinted that there is no such thing as a safe space, that what we needed was a brave space. According to Break Away Blog (2017), a safe space is simply what the name implies – an area of safety where there is no judgment and intending to offer support. In a brave space, members acknowledge differences, but through dialogue, the group holds each individual accountable for doing work that is often "hard, and typically uncomfortable" (para. 4). Exploring experiences that are different from your own, facing topics such as racism, examining your own identities, biases, and privilege may be uncomfortable and could sometimes even be traumatic (Pierce, 2018). By creating both safe and brave spaces, teachers are offering support to their students while at the same time challenging them.

Creating brave spaces and having tough conversations was an idea discussed by most of the participants. These teachers desired to create a space where students were encouraged to speak openly and honestly and tell their truth. They wanted to create a brave space where all students' voices were heard and that all students saw themselves in the choices that were made in the classroom, whether through curriculum, literature, or dialogue. Along with the idea of

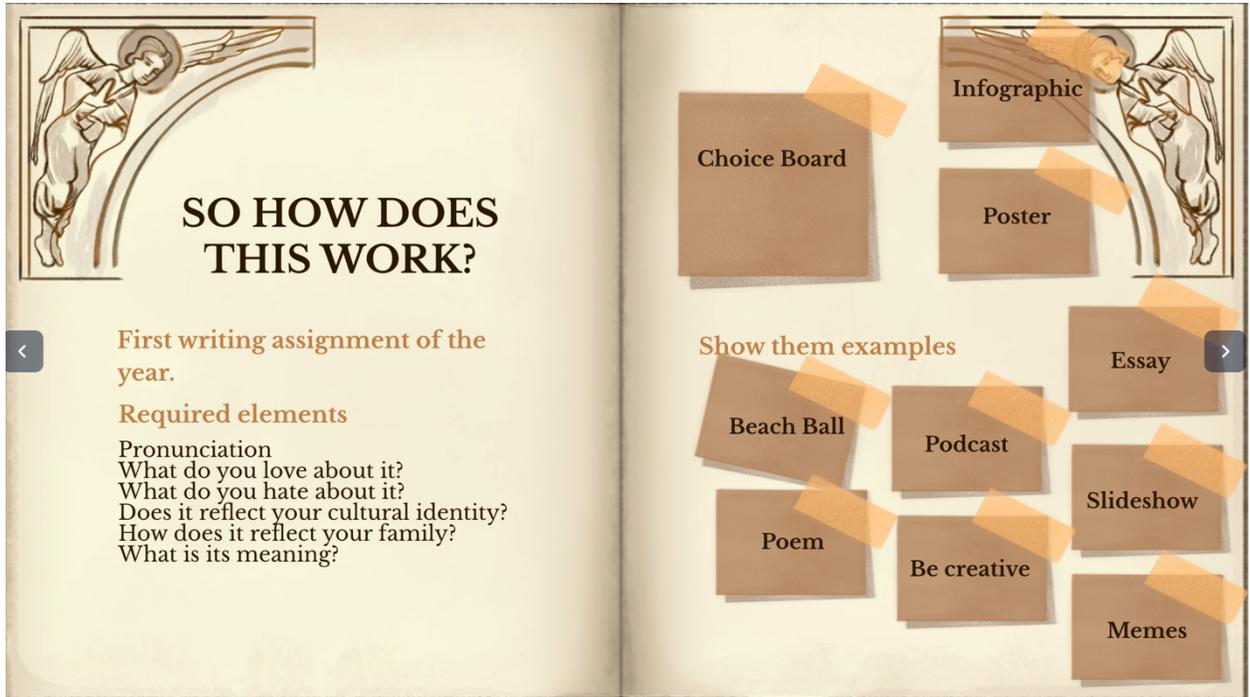
creating a brave space comes having tough conversations. Like Holley and Steiner (2005), these teachers wanted to create an "environment in which students are willing and able to participate and honestly struggle with challenging issues" (p. 49). The participants mentioned having tough conversations not only about the Tulsa Race Massacre but also such topics as the 2020 election, racism, bullying, and LGBTQ issues.

Building relationships with students seemed to be the most crucial factor in creating a brave space. The participants worked with their students from the first day of school to create a space where they felt welcomed and important. While creating a comfortable space for students was essential to many teachers, the participants in this study specifically commented that since the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, creating a brave space where tough conversations could happen was essential. As Boostrom (1998) suggested, "Learning necessarily involves not merely risk, but the pain of giving up a former condition in favour of a new way of seeing things" (p.399). The participants acknowledged their pain in giving up some former ideals themselves. They discussed an improved comfort level with challenging topics and the desire to address topics other classes and teachers might not be willing to discuss because of their lack of information, their avoidance of parent pushback, or simply not being comfortable with tough topics themselves.

Ashley, Belinda, and Sakura all discussed specific strategies to build a brave space with their students at the beginning of the year. Ashley started the year with a culture project in which students presented their culture to the class through items they drew or brought from home. These cultural artifacts allowed her to learn about her students and them to learn about each other. Belinda created a new name project to use in the 2021-2022 school year. To learn more about her students, she wanted them to research and report on their names. What does their name mean? From where does their name come? What do they like about their name? How does their name reflect their cultural identity, and how does someone pronounce their name? (Figure 54)

**Figure 54**

*Belinda's Name Project*



Sakura mentioned that she began the year focused on identity with her students. She had them write a personal narrative. She also had them complete a True Colors® personality test and graph their personalities.

Susan mentioned that just being open about herself encouraged her students to feel comfortable. "I don't really have a strategy. I guess it just comes naturally. I try really hard to make a connection with each child, and I am very open myself about a lot of things," Susan commented. She added that she was the Gay/Straight Alliance and the Young Democrat's Club sponsor, and she thought students realized they could talk to her about topics about which they do not speak to other teachers. Michelle taught special education and often had the same students for four years. Because she spent so much time with the same students, she built a relationship and naturally had a brave space with her students. She added, "They really do become like a family.

They become like my kids. I honestly think they feel more comfortable in my class because we are bonded." Victoria added, "It is important to build relationships with my students. Things are less uncomfortable if they feel safe. I have students say, 'I can talk about this with you but not my other teachers.'"

Teachers typically spend time getting to know their students. The participants had used some of the strategies mentioned before the professional development; however, all the participants admitted feeling more comfortable talking about and teaching the hard stuff since participating in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. Belinda commented:

Before the workshop, I didn't have the comfort or knowledge to talk about [the Tulsa Race Massacre], especially to students of color. I am a White woman. Who am I to teach this? But now I know more and am more comfortable having these conversations.

Ashley added:

I am more relaxed now than I used to be. I am a little more open and honest with them about racism and how people are treated based on their skin color. I just make it more of a focus now than I used to.

Luciana, Victoria, and Susan described their classrooms as brave spaces while acknowledging that all teachers were not comfortable teaching the way that they do. Many teachers shut down questions or conversations that made them feel vulnerable or uncomfortable or topics where they do not have all the answers. Luciana acknowledged this:

I think that some teachers really want their classrooms to be a space where you can forget about all of that, and I'm the opposite. I want my classroom to be a space where you can project or talk it out or just get rid of all those feelings.

Ashley was the only participant that included the parents when talking about being comfortable in her classroom. She said:

I want to build rapport with my students and parents before I have tough conversations. We are going to discuss racism in *Tulsa Burning* (Myers, 2004). If I build rapport with them for the first several months of school, I feel it will be easier when we talk about the harder things.

Ashley communicated with her parents about the topics they discussed in class and wanted her parents to trust her with their children.

Ashley, Luciana, and Susan talked about the essential skills students developed by having this brave space. Luciana commented, "I want them to have those skills to be able to resolve conflict, to be critical thinkers, to know where to get information and how to use their voice."

Ashley added:

I want them to leave my classroom being a more empathetic human being, a more open-minded human. Whether you agree or disagree with every single thing that I say is irrelevant, but can you use empathy? Can you look for evidence? Can you think critically for yourself? That's what I want my students to get.

Susan extended this conversation:

Since the workshop, I've tried to bring up more social justice topics for conversation with the kids. I try to be more intentional on keeping my door open for all the kids. I am still growing myself about certain things, and I want to encourage them to think and grow as part of being a lifelong learner.

Along with the idea of creating a brave space comes having tough conversations. While Jeane Copenhaver-Johnson (2006) acknowledged that teachers need to have tough conversations

with their students, her research focused on tough conversations about race. She stated, “When we fail to acknowledge race with them, we increase the probability that White children, especially, will recognize discussions of race as off-limits with adults” (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006, p. 17). I posit that the classroom needs to be a place where tough conversations can happen about many topics, not just race. Talking about tough topics is not always easy, but these participants found it necessary. Not only did the teachers mention being more comfortable talking about the Tulsa Race Massacre, but they also felt comfortable tackling subjects such as protests, elections, race, and racism. Belinda commented:

I am not the teacher that tiptoes around things. I'm the one that likes to take both feet and goes [sic]whoop here I come. We have talked about Colin Kaepernick and why he kneels. We talked about the presidential candidates. I think our kids have got to learn to think for themselves, and they have to understand that their perspective is not the only perspective.

Victoria continued, "I don't feel uncomfortable anymore talking about race and discrimination and things like that with the class, but sometimes it makes the kids uncomfortable. I tell them it is uncomfortable. You should feel uncomfortable by this."

Since *Tulsa Burning* has words such as "colored" and "Nigger" many participants had open discussions with their students about using them in the book and during this time in Tulsa's history. Luciana was the only person who mentioned hearing the word "Nigger" now, but that was with her son, not her students. Ashley and Belinda both described their conversations about using the N-word and its use in *Tulsa Burning* and in other documentation they shared with their students.

Belinda stated:

I was more comfortable having a conversation with my students about the use of the N-word in *Tulsa Burning*. I explained to them that I am not going to say that word because

it is inappropriate today. It is used in the book because the book was written using the vernacular of the time.

When I asked the participants why they found it necessary to have tough conversations, Luciana stated, "We have families that want their kids to know about history. They want their kids to know about the world that we actually live in, not necessarily what gets fed to them sometimes with certain curriculum." Susan added, "It is more important than ever before to have open discussions about issues that are pertinent in our world today and to use history as a springboard for those kinds of talks with my students." Both Belinda and Victoria discussed the importance of teaching their students how to have civil conversations. Belinda stated that she teaches her students that they can disagree with each other, and Victoria said, "I start the year by telling kids that they're free to share their opinion. I let them go back and forth if they are respectful. If we have a debate, they have to have evidence to support their side." All seven participants concluded that the brave space led to spirited conversations. Susan concluded, "Our environment is very relaxed in my class, and I think the kids feel safe to talk and safe to discuss the terrible things and the tough things as well as joyful things."

### ***Diverse Literature***

During the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, we introduced the teachers to various children's and young adult literature. While the focus of many of the books we shared was the Tulsa Race Massacre, we also shared a selection of books by and about diverse people. We encouraged the teachers to use diverse books in the text sets they developed during the workshop and in their classrooms. Those who participated in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development received a copy of *Tulsa Burning* (Myers, 2004) and *Dreamland Burning* (Latham, 2017), but many research participants purchased other texts. We introduced some of the books at the workshop, and the participants discovered some on their own. Other participants noted the

desire to buy books for their classrooms but did not have the funding that allowed them to do this. All seven participants planned to use either *Dreamland Burning* or *Tulsa Burning* in their classrooms; however, COVID-19 prevented this in some classrooms. Luciana, Belinda, and Ashley all used *Tulsa Burning* as a read aloud. Belinda and Ashley shared the book with their students in a face-to-face setting, while Luciana recorded herself reading chapters from the book, adding dramatic music, and sharing it with her students online because her school district was virtual. Luciana mentioned that she liked sharing the book online because many of her students had families that listened to the story as well. Sharing *Tulsa Burning* virtually led to greater discussions both within the classroom and within the families.

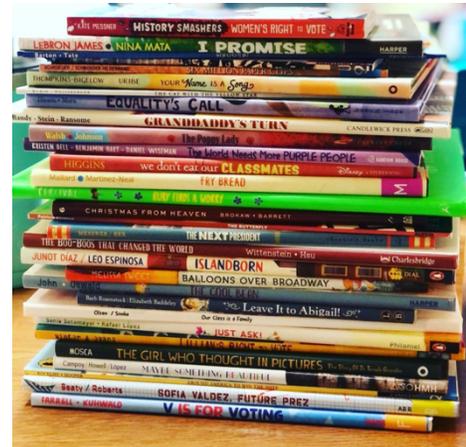
Ashley and Sakura both wrote grants to be able to purchase books for their classrooms. Ashley wrote two separate Donor's Choose grants – one for the school year 2019-2020 and one for 2020-2021. With her first grant, Ashley purchased 20 picture books that focused on diverse characters. She bought such books as *Mommy's Khimar* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow (2018) and *Let the Children March* by Monica Clark-Robinson (2018). With the second Donor's Choose grant, Ashley purchased more diverse books and included women's rights and voting rights. The books bought with the funds from the second grant had such titles as *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box* by Michael Bandy and Eric Stein (2015) and *Women's Right to Vote* by Kate Messner (2020). Ashley commented:

When it comes to teaching, I try to have books that look like the kids in my class, but I also want to introduce them to people that don't look like them because they need that as well. After attending the workshop, I thought all my books look the same. We need diversity there, so I wrote a grant to get a more diverse library.

When she taught that unit, Sakura wanted each of her students to read *Tulsa Burning*, so she too wrote a Donors Choose grant and received 40 copies of *Tulsa Burning*.

Figure 55

*Books Purchased with Donor's Choose Grant*



Belinda stated that after the workshop:

I've tried to make more diverse choices in my books that I have available for my students. So, I have added a lot of Jason Reynolds, Jacqueline Woodson. I have added four or five of her books, and I look for Native and black and Hispanic characters.

Belinda looked for books to purchase on her own. She ordered from Amazon and also purchased books at garage sales. These purchases were all made with her own money. She said, "I don't have a budget. I am told that they spend more than the state gives them for curriculum, but nobody asks, hey, what do you need?" Melissa had a parent that donated books the first year after the workshop. In the 2020-2021 school year, she worked with the Indian Education director to purchase books focused on Native Americans for her classroom. Victoria also said that she would like to incorporate more diverse texts on her bookshelves. She commented:

I like to put on display books from diverse authors, or I have nonfiction texts that feature Hispanic Americans. I try to do a little culturally responsive stuff to where we're reading things that acknowledge different perspectives or different groups of people, and I pay attention to the novels I suggest, the stories I pick for class stuff like that.

However, she blamed a lack of funding as the most significant reason she lacked the diverse books she desired for her classroom. Susan mentioned that she wanted to purchase a class set of *Tulsa Burning* to use with her reading for pleasure students, but like many other participants, the funding for this was just not available.

### ***Perspective***

History, much like the African Proverb "Until the lion learns to write, every story will always glorify the hunter," is written by the winner. Being able to hear all sides or elevate the often-silenced voices requires intentionality. The research participants overwhelmingly noted that being able to "hear" all sides of the Tulsa Race Massacre story has carried over into both their classrooms and their personal lives. As a matter of fact, in the twenty interviews I conducted, the participants mentioned the word perspective 87 times. When I asked what their most significant takeaway from the workshop was, the participants often said perspective. Luciana stated, "The workshop made me really examine perspective. I want to make sure my students hear everyone's perspective no matter what we are studying."

The Tulsa Race Massacre professional development began with a strategy called the Tulsa Race Massacre Dinner Party Mixer. The leaders gave each participant a card that contained a character that experienced the Massacre on some level. Along with the character, the leaders gave the participants a role sheet describing who they were and what part they played in the Massacre. After allowing the participants time to read about "themselves" and explore the suggested questions, everyone began to mingle with the other characters talking and asking

questions. The characters included Dick Rowland, who "started" the Massacre; Sheriff McCullough, who arrested Dick Rowland; Mary Parrish, a teacher in Greenwood; Colonel Rooney, who oversaw the National Guard; and Ruth Phelps, who helped blacks fleeing Greenwood. This strategy, mentioned by many participants, showed them the value of hearing all perspectives. Michelle stated, "One of the most interesting things I got from the workshop was perspectives. During that first activity (the Dinner Party), I got to see other people's perspectives on this (the Race Massacre). This really struck me as important." She added that it was interesting to hear from Colonel Rooney of the National Guard and Ruth Phelps, who helped those leaving Greenwood. "I want to bring this up to my class and be able to say not everyone was bad." Both Luciana and Melissa had their students participate in the Dinner Party strategy. Melissa added that her students needed to understand that every event has more than one perspective.

Ashley, who taught in a more rural community, found that teaching perspective was essential for her fourth graders, many of whom had never left their county, much less their state. She commented:

I want to shift their perspectives. Some of them have a very narrow perspective based on their home situation, that's, you know, limited. I'm trying to broaden that perspective that there's not just one way of thinking of people. Like people are people no matter what their skin color, no matter what their house looks like, no matter how much money they have or don't have.

Victoria also talked to her students about the differences they encountered every day. "We all have different lived experiences, so we bring something different to the classroom," Victoria said. Both Luciana and Belinda used perspective to really teach their students critical literacy skills. Luciana explained:

It is important to teach my students about perspective, especially now even talking about the pandemic. I want them to question when we hear about things in the news, or we are learning about historical events – who is telling us the story? Whose point of view are we hearing this from? What are they trying to teach us? So much information comes at us from everywhere that it is so easy for people to hear one thing and be like yeah, that must be true. But we can't really know, we have to examine perspective and sources and do the work, and the workshop has opened that up for me.

Victoria tied perspective to her Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) for ELA that stated students will evaluate points of view and perspectives. She had her students read survivor stories from the Tulsa Race Massacre. These stories were from three different people, two men and one woman, three different ages, child, teenager, and adult, with three different perspectives of the Massacre. She explained, "We talked about the different perspectives all of the same event. We talked about how age affected the story and the perspective." Luciana also linked the study of the Massacre with ELA standards when she had them write opinion paragraphs about the racism in *Tulsa Burning*. She also "had them do a podcast on the Tulsa Race Massacre. They had to interview each other to get different perspectives on how they interpreted everything they learned from the unit."

Further, the participants mentioned being more aware of perspective in relationship to both peers and family members. Michelle stated that being able to hear her coworkers' perspectives was critical to her. She acknowledged that some people may think differently than her, and she wanted to honor their perspective instead of always being defensive about her opinion. Luciana mentioned how vital the group time at the Race Massacre professional development was. Despite having read *Tulsa Burning* to students, it was essential to hear what other teachers had to say about the books they read and how they used them in class. Belinda commented that she appreciated hearing Luciana's perspective since she had used *Tulsa Burning*

in class before. Luciana also mentioned that she had participated in a few Race Massacre panels since the workshop and her concern when she looked around was all the White faces. She was not hearing from any teachers of color. Belinda was excited to share what she learned at the workshop with the other sixth-grade teachers in her building. Working with others provided opportunities to hear perspectives that might be different from hers, especially from teachers who have been in the classroom longer. Belinda, Victoria, and Ashley all worked with other teachers in the building during the teaching of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Ashley and Victoria worked with their school librarian, and Belinda worked with the geography teacher. Luciana, Belinda, and Ashley mentioned the importance of acknowledging perspective when talking to friends and family. Ashley talked to everyone she ran into about the Tulsa Race Massacre and wanted everyone to be aware of all views concerning this event. Belinda had conversations with her husband, and Luciana discussed perspective with her mother. Luciana also ruminated that she wished her father was still alive because she would love to hear his views about many issues, including racism and the current political climate.

When talking about perspective, the participants also noted the importance of the human element to teaching historical events. "When you hear the stories of the people, I think that's where you make the biggest connections when you tie an event to a human story, a human element," commented Luciana. Luciana added that she intertwined her social studies with literature specifically to get to those stories of real people. Victoria, who teaches ELA, also used stories of real people to introduce historical events. Her students sometimes commented that this was English, not history, but like the other participants, she noted that the human element made everything more real. She even had as her essential question for the school year "Why are real people's stories important when studying history?" All seven participants mentioned that hearing the survivor stories and seeing the pictures of the survivors made the Tulsa Race Massacre more real to them and many of them brought survivor stories to their students. Michelle reiterated,

"They were real people. They really lived, and they mattered. We are not going to know all of their names, but they lived. They were real people. They did bad things and good things, and their stories matter." Susan planned to use survivor stories when she taught memoir writing to her high school students, and Victoria used them when she taught personal narratives. The silenced voices had a significant impact on the participants. Ashley mentioned:

We only have pieces of the survivors' stories. At the time, they weren't important. They didn't have any power. We are missing so much because they didn't have anyone looking out for their stories, to save them and keep them around. This goes back to who was in charge and who had the power?

Victoria and Luciana both reiterated the desire to focus on the survivor stories and how they rebuilt Greenwood instead of just focusing on the atrocities of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Victoria stated, "I think focusing on the survivors and rebuilding and focusing on the fact that people's real stories affect history is more important than just saying look at this horrible thing that happened."

Luciana commented:

A lot of what we discussed this past school year with my kids was more centered around resilience and learning those personal stories of the people who took a leap of faith and came to Oklahoma to this unknown area as African American people and succeeded.

This vision of the African American community thriving, and rebuilding was a focus of the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. Just as important as acknowledging that the Tulsa Race Massacre happened were the stories of the people and events that led up to the Race Massacre.

Included in this were the stories of the Black veterans coming home from World War I, the wealthy White oil men, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, and Jim Crow Laws. Other stories were told about what happened after the Massacre, including the refusal of payouts from the insurance companies, the community banding together to rebuild the churches and a few

businesses, the sense of pride and resilience that continues even now one hundred years later. Knowing these stories was just as crucial as the Tulsa Race Massacre itself.

### ***Teaching About the Tulsa Race Massacre***

Of the seven participants I interviewed, only one had taught anything to her students about the Tulsa Race Massacre before taking this workshop. Luciana had read *Tulsa Burning* to her students as a read aloud, but they did not delve too deeply into the Race Massacre itself. The Tulsa Race Massacre was not in the OAS for any participants, yet all seven participants planned to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre in the 2019-2020 school year. Despite their good intentions, they all could not teach about the Race Massacre in that school year due to COVID-19. Like schools across the U.S., Oklahoma schools closed for spring break and did not return to in-person classes that school year. Because of this, Sakura and Susan could not teach the topic, and Ashley only managed to introduce her students to Jim Crow laws using *Ruth and the Green Book* (Calvin, 2010).

Victoria, Michelle, and Belinda taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre face-to-face before the COVID-19 shut down, while Luciana taught it to her students virtually. All four of these teachers used resources and materials provided or shared at the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. Belinda and Victoria had the Tulsa Historical Society bring the Race Massacre panels to their schools. Victoria used them as a museum piece with her seventh and eighth graders, and Belinda used them as a supplement with her sixth graders. Both Luciana and Belinda read *Tulsa Burning* to their students as a read aloud. While Belinda read a chapter a day to her students in class, Luciana recorded herself reading each chapter, set it to dramatic music, and shared it with her students and their families through Google Classroom. Belinda also recorded herself reading in class and made the recording available to absent students. Both Victoria and Michelle taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre just using primary source documents and

documentaries instead of reading *Tulsa Burning* or *Dreamland Burning*, although both women mentioned a desire to use one of those books when they taught about it in the future. Victoria wanted to use *Dreamland Burning* but did not have a budget to purchase books for her class. Michelle wanted to read *Tulsa Burning* to her students, but she cannot figure out how to include this book since she taught social studies. She would like to plan a unit with the ELA teacher and have that teacher read the book to her students while she taught the history aspect of the event.

Luciana, Victoria, and Susan used the OPTIC method of visual analysis for their students to examine photographs from the OSU-Tulsa special Tulsa Race Massacre collection. Luciana and Belinda also used the Dinner Party strategy to introduce their students to many people involved in the Tulsa Race Massacre. Luciana, Victoria, and Belinda all had written assignments in their Tulsa Race Massacre unit, while Michelle focused mainly on discussions with her students. Following ELA standard 4.3.W.3, Luciana's students wrote an opinion paragraph about characters in *Tulsa Burning*; Belinda's students authored an informational paper on a famous person from the 1920s; Victoria's students wrote both poetry and an essay that answered the Essential Question for her unit, "Why are real people's stories important when studying history?" Another ELA standard that Luciana, Victoria, and Belinda focused on included evaluating points of view and perspective. Michelle taught special education students. She commented that she focused primarily on dialogue. Many of her students struggled with reading, and writing, so she used primary sources and documentaries to teach her students about the Massacre, but there were no written assignments for the unit.

Both Victoria and Luciana's students listened to an NPR interview with Olivia Hooker, a survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Luciana, Victoria, and Belinda's students took a virtual tour of the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. Belinda created a scavenger hunt for her students to complete during the virtual tour, and Victoria's students picked three survivor stories to read on the website and responded to questions in their journals.

Six of the seven participants included the Tulsa Race Massacre in their curriculum during the second school year after the professional development (2020-2021). In addition to COVID-19 remote learning, Oklahoma also experienced a significant ice storm in February, which closed the schools for two weeks. Despite these obstacles, most of the participants taught about the Massacre to an extent. Because of COVID-19, Sakura retired in December of 2020. She was unsure whether her replacement would teach the Massacre, even though Sakura left a class set of 40 copies of *Tulsa Burning* that she had written a grant to purchase. Belinda brought the Tulsa Race Massacre panels to her school again, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, Victoria could not display them this year.

Susan, who had not taught the Race Massacre the first year after the professional development, had planned to have her journalism students write a special magazine focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre, but her journalism students did not display interest in publishing a magazine, so this class folded. She was able to share the photographs from the OSU-Tulsa collection with her students. Susan also shared a History Channel documentary with her students. She did not have any written assignments but instead focused on group discussions. Because of COVID-19, Ashley did not teach about the Massacre the first year but included the Massacre in her plans for the second year. She repeated a smaller version of her *Green Book* lesson from the year before and added a Tulsa Burning read aloud. Ashley used *Tulsa Burning* as her mentor text for teaching character motivation. COVID-19 left Michelle with only two students in her special education history class, and instead of having a pull-out program, she went to the classrooms and assisted the teachers there.

Luciana, Victoria, and Belinda all taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre for the second year in a row. Luciana focused more on the rebuilding of Greenwood and the resilience of the members of that community. She also spent more time focused on race and racism then and now. Since her students were again virtual, she recorded herself reading *Tulsa Burning* to her students.

Luciana also included the new Race Massacre curriculum her school created, that included lessons for kindergarten through twelfth grade. Belinda also read *Tulsa Burning* with her students again this year, but outside forces once again kept this second year of teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre at a minimum for her. She commented that missing two weeks of school during the ice storm usurped time from her schedule for teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre, and she did not think that the unit went as well as it did the year before. Victoria also mentioned that the storm shortened her Tulsa Race Massacre unit. She tried to teach it the same as the previous school year, but she thought the students were not introduced to as much as she would have liked with the reduced time. This year, she added the search for mass graves to her Tulsa Race Massacre curriculum since this was something prominent in the local news. She used newspapers and news broadcasts to include this current event.

Many participants decided to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre during February (when the ice storm hit) and include it in their Black History Month unit. Ashley chose to teach it later in the school year after she had developed a rapport with both students and parents. The other participants commented that since the Race Massacre was not in their curriculum, including it during Black History Month made sense. The fact that the Tulsa Race Massacre is not in the current OAS did not prevent these teachers from including this in their curriculum. They could do this because of a sense of autonomy.

Teacher autonomy has declined over the past decade primarily due to standardization and high-stakes testing (Walker, 2016). Autonomy has a direct impact on teacher satisfaction and performance in the classroom. All seven of the participants acknowledged that they felt supported by their administration and had a certain level of autonomy in their classrooms. Luciana stated, “When it comes to teaching history, I go rogue.” This confidence was present in each teacher as I asked them about teaching content, especially the Tulsa Race Massacre, even if it did not appear in the Oklahoma Academic Standards. Each participant readily agreed that the Tulsa Race

Massacre professional development gave them more confidence in making curricular and classroom choices.

Both Sakura and Susan commented that they had taught long enough, 37 and 41 years, respectively, that they created their curriculum. They stated that they followed the academic standards, but they brought in supplemental materials and even topics that they wanted to share with their students. Sakura always included a large unit on the Holocaust, despite it not being in her ELA standards. Because Susan mainly taught journalism classes, she taught what and how she wanted. The other teachers acknowledged following the academic standards in their classes, but they also acknowledged that they had the freedom to teach the standards with their preferred pedagogies and materials. If they used a textbook at all, it was at a minimum. For example, when I asked Michelle about the curriculum used to teach social studies in her school district, she replied, “I have no idea. I don’t use it. I’m sure the school district has a textbook, and I probably have it in the closet, and it’s probably falling apart because it is really old.” Michelle typically used material that she garnered at professional developments that she attended to teach her students. Likewise, Belinda, a recently alternatively certified teacher, acknowledged the curriculum that her district used. She mentioned that she used it to an extent, but she included many ideas and strategies that she gained at the workshops she attended to teach the standards to her students. Many participants mentioned following a pacing calendar that told the teachers what topics to teach when, but Belinda mentioned feeling unsupported as a new teacher in receiving no guidance and not even having a pacing calendar that she could follow. The other six participants all mentioned feeling supported by their administration in teaching topics they were passionate about. All seven participants agreed that the Tulsa Race Massacre was a topic that all students should learn. After the workshop, all seven acknowledged they felt a deep sense of responsibility to teach their students about the Tulsa Race Massacre.

## **Theme 2 – "Life-Changing"**

Although she felt it sounded cliché, Belinda described the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development as "life-changing." Attending professional development sometimes leads to pedagogical changes for teachers (Desimone, 2009), but personal changes do not always happen when attending a three-day workshop. However, when I interviewed these seven participants, even two years after the seminar, all commented on changes made in themselves. From exploring their own identity to having courageous conversations with family members, personal changes were evident in these seven women.

### ***"Everybody looked like me."***

I am a White female. I grew up in a White neighborhood, attended White schools with White teachers and administration (in 2020, my district hired its first African American principal. She lasted a year). I went to a White church and had White friends. I read about White characters in the books I read and had a picture of the White Jesus on the wall of my house. I grew up with White being the norm and everybody looked just like me. I found out about the Tulsa Race Massacre at the age of fifty, and this new knowledge shook me to my core. Because my story was the catalyst for this dissertation, I wanted to know the stories of the White teachers I interviewed. Of the sixteen teachers that participated in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, seven agreed to participate in my study. Of those seven, five were White, and two were [White]. All seven participants wrestled with their identity as being White or [White] and are meaningful to who they are as people and as educators.

### ***Being White***

Five of the participants identified themselves as White, although one participant learned she was a mixture of many things, including African American, after doing a DNA test. Like me, these five participants grew up in White neighborhoods with people that looked just like them.

All five participants acknowledge their Whiteness and said they are working through their own biases through readings and professional developments. Still, when I asked how their Whiteness affected the way they taught or the choices they made in their classroom, they could not give me an answer. Ashley was the only one who said that her identity impacted her teaching, but when pressed, she said, "Even seven years ago, I taught slavery and stuff, but not to the extent I talk about it now."

All five participants mentioned growing up in neighborhoods and attending schools with little to no diversity. Victoria described growing up in the golf course neighborhood of her town, while Ashley mentioned traveling a lot with her parents and being "exposed" to diversity that way. Belinda said that she lived in a nice neighborhood because her mom was an oil executive, and everything they did was "proper." Both Susan and Ashley mentioned never really being around diverse people until they went to college. Susan stated that she did not realize it until she went to college, but she had "never been around very many diverse people." When Ashley went to the University of Oklahoma, her college roommate was Black. She commented, "I had never been around a Black person, much less lived with one." She quickly clarified that she was okay with it. She added that she learned a lot from her roommate, who always answered her questions. I asked her what kind of questions she asked, and the two biggest ones that she could remember were about her hair and hair products and why the African American students all sat together. Ashley commented that most African American students were athletes, so maybe this was why they all sat together.

All five participants acknowledged that they were not aware of color or privilege and even stated that being White was just the norm. Belinda said, "Growing up, I didn't realize people were different or had any other thoughts or ideas. This is just the way it is." Ashley stated, "Well, I never really was aware of my White privilege or the advantages that I was given just based on my skin really until I don't know, the last few years." She mentioned that reading the book *The*

*Hate You Give* (Thomas, 2017) was a revelation for her because, in the opening chapter, the characters get pulled over by the police simply because of the color of their skin. Learning about profiling by the police was shocking to her and was not a worry that she had ever had. Not seeing color had carried over to adulthood with Susan, who admitted now that she does not see color, she sees students. Victoria stated that she considered the Whiteness in the curriculum, and she does what she can to make some changes. She talked about so much of the middle school ELA curriculum is reading "old White guys," and while she included some, she strove to disrupt the White guy norm by introducing her students to female writers and authors of color.

### ***Being [White]***

While the White participants did not have much to say about their Whiteness, the two [White] participants did. Again, I chose to use [White] when describing these two participants because each identified as White at some point in their lives: one decided to be White while the other was categorized as White in a work situation. These [White] identities have significantly impacted both women. As previously stated, limited racial categories in Oklahoma forced a White identity on Sakura. Luciana was part Hispanic, and because she "looked" White, this was how she chose to identify

Like their White counterparts, both women grew up in neighborhoods where most everyone looked like them. Sakura grew up in Hawaii and lived in a community of Japanese and Hawaiian children, therefore people who looked like her. Luciana presented as White while growing up and lived in a White neighborhood. While she was not White, she looked White and identified as White; however, her father was "very brown." One thing that she found interesting about the neighborhood where she grew up was that her father was always so friendly when he was outside. She said he always smiled and waved. Now, as an adult, she realized that he presented a smiling and happy face to let his White neighbors know that he was not threatening

and that he belonged there. Like the White participants, Sakura said that everyone looked just like her when she was at home in Hawaii. Still, when she came to Oklahoma, she realized that people were different, more specifically, that she was different.

Both [White] participants mentioned not being able to find a group where they really fit in. Luciana mentioned that she bounced around between groups, but never “found one that was distinctly mine, that I felt like I truly belonged.” Sakura echoed this sentiment by using words such as invisible, isolated, alone, lonely, unaccepted, and insignificant. In one interview Sakura used the word invisible when describing herself, ten separate times. Both women mentioned wrestling with their identity but are now more comfortable in their own skin.

Microaggressions was something else shared by the [White] participants. Both Luciana and Sakura experienced microaggressions from their own family members. Luciana’s mom, a White woman, commented on the way Luciana looked. She liked her hair better when she straightened it and commented about her looking better when she looked Whiter. Sakura’s mother-in-law, who is Black, purposely mispronounced her name, making sure that Sakura realized she will never really be part of the family. Sakura and Luciana have also experienced microaggressions from people outside of the family. Sakura, who was forced to be White, was singled out in staff meetings, and harassed by Black girls who did not think she should be with a Black man. Sakura chose to be White, so she did not have to answer questions about her family and was again told by her friends how good she looked when she straightened her hair.

Finally, both women discussed checking boxes for race and ethnicity on forms. In all three interviews, Sakura brought up the incident with the secretary at her school checking White on a form she had to fill out for the state of Oklahoma. This event still traumatized her. She talked about being in Hawaii and having more options on various forms. One option they had was cosmopolitan if you had more than two ethnicities. Sakura acknowledged that being forced to be

either Black or White was harmful and traumatic. Luciana also mentioned checking race and ethnicity on forms. She commented that her ethnicity was Hispanic, and her race was White, but she is not comfortable with those being her only options. She also mentioned being curious about how her now 16-year-old son filled out forms. He was Black, White, and Hispanic. Luciana further mentioned that her “White” presenting children are only 25 % Hispanic and with each new generation it would get less and less. The [White] participants struggled more with identity than their White counterparts.

### *Exploring Identity*

Upon learning of the Tulsa Race Massacre, I experienced a time of cognitive dissonance. I questioned who I was as a White woman and who I was as a White female educator. I felt like I had been lied to, and in turn, I had lied to my students. I taught for close to thirty years, and while most of my students were White presenting, I had students of color. My first concern was for those students and the damage that I had possibly inflicted upon them. Then I was concerned for the White students who would grow up not knowing the history of their place. Five years after learning of the Massacre, I am still processing these things. Like me, all seven of the participants noted the same sense of cognitive dissonance that I felt. The participants learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre as adults in various ways, from exploring their family history and genealogy to reading and writing.

Two participants found the idea of learning more about their family history compelling. Both participants had grown up in the area and were curious if their family had been part of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Belinda and Susan explored their family genealogy after the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development and continued the quest. Belinda found out that her great grandfather lived on Standpipe Hill, where machine guns aimed at Greenwood were stationed and fired during the Massacre—acknowledging that her family’s racist background, she knew that her

great grandfather played a role in the incident. She did not know to what extent but found it necessary to acknowledge her family ties and shared this information with her students. While Susan has not found that her family was involved in the Massacre, she had taken a DNA test to determine her ethnic makeup. After learning that she had a small percentage of Black in her makeup, she decided to explore that more, even though some of her family members do not wish to acknowledge this part of their identity.

Another way these participants chose to learn more about their identity was through the use of literature. They each mentioned purchasing and reading many books about Whiteness and teaching as White (even the [White] women). These women purchased books that included *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World and Become a Good Ancestor* by Layla Saad, *We Got This: Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be* by Cornelius Minor, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo, *We Want to do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom* by Bettina Love, and several books about the Tulsa Race Massacre that we shared with them during the professional development. These books focused on topics such as anti-racism, privilege, educational justice, and racism. We shared some of the books in the workshop, some they found on their own. Luciana stated that since the workshop, she became passionate "about racial equity and bringing my personal identity to the forefront." Luciana also commented that she wanted to hear stories from teachers across the country. Teachers with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and specifically not White teachers. Ashley, Luciana, Victoria, and Susan noted that learning about their implicit bias was impactful.

Another way these seven participants explored identity and how to teach diverse students was through social media. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are all applications that these participants used to connect with other educators across the country. While Facebook was the

most common, Instagram and Twitter were also frequently accessed. The participants mentioned that finding other teachers working on anti-racist and culturally sustaining pedagogy affirmed and provided additional perspectives and resources. Luciana and Belinda both mentioned that some of the teachers they followed on Instagram shared resources which they also found significant. By following teachers on social media, the participants learned about some of the books mentioned above.

Some participants also mentioned that deep thinking, questioning, and journaling were all part of self-reflection after the workshop. Because of this professional development topic, there were naturally periods of heaviness that the participants experienced. Many of them mentioned that going home and reflecting and writing was one way they dealt with this heaviness. Admittedly, the three days of training about the Tulsa Race Massacre was intense at times, and the subject, of course, was heavy. Michelle mentioned, "Right after the workshop, I had a lot of self-reflection. It was just heavy, and I had to write. I spent a week just decompressing from all that I had heard and learned." Victoria, Luciana, Susan, Sakura, and Belinda also mentioned that reflecting was something they did after the workshop. Victoria commented:

The workshop got me thinking about myself as an educator. Am I acknowledging the diversity in my classroom enough? Am I teaching the right things? I don't want to perpetuate any stereotypes that were taught to me. After the workshop, I spent a lot of time reflecting.

The participants also mentioned that it was vital that they acknowledged their biases, privilege, and any racist tendencies that they had. Victoria added:

I think that I have to learn about my own biases a lot, and I embrace that. I do teach things that obviously aren't my experience. I tell the kids that my experiences might be different from yours. So, learning about myself and unlearning things is essential.

Aside from social media and self-reflecting, many of the participants chose to take other workshops focused on both the Tulsa Race Massacre and anti-racist teaching. Susan and Belinda participated in a twelve-week-long professional development called the Racial Justice Institute hosted by the Tulsa Race Massacre Commission. Since 2021 was the hundred-year commemoration of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the committee focused much of the time on the Massacre. The participants met once a week for 12 weeks on Zoom. They concentrated on the Massacre, privilege, White supremacy, and anti-racist teaching using literature and discussion. The Tulsa Race Massacre Committee gave the participants books and resources to use in their classrooms.

In the summer of 2021, Ashley, Michelle, Sakura, and I all attended The Olga Lengyel Institute (TOLI) for Holocaust Education at Oklahoma State University. This institute focused not only on the Holocaust but also the Tulsa Race Massacre – drawing parallels between the two historical events. This workshop lasted for five days and included a field trip to the Jewish Museum in Tulsa and a walking tour of Greenwood, which the participants had taken during the original Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. At the exact time of the TOLI workshop, Belinda participated in the OSU Writing Project Summer Institute, which also focused on teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre and took the walking tour of Greenwood. When I asked the participants why they took these workshops, considering they had to use personal time to take them and then often had to pay for them themselves, the answer was overwhelmingly to "learn more." Whether they were decades-long veteran teachers like Sakura, Susan, and me or had only taught for a couple of years like Belinda and Victoria, learning ways to teach about events like the Massacre and the Holocaust to their students was at the forefront of their minds.

### *Tough Conversations in Personal Spaces*

The Tulsa Race Massacre professional development happened in the summer of 2019 – a full two years before the 100th anniversary; however, the Tulsa Race Massacre was as hot a topic in the media in 2019 as it was in 2021. All three local news stations, a radio station, and some print media reported on the workshop, much of the time sitting in on the sessions and even taking the field trips. The three news stations all put clips on both their evening news programs and on their Facebook pages. The coverage garnered much discussion, much of which was negative. Because of the attention in the news and their participation in the professional development, many of the participants had tough conversations with their family and friends.

Not unlike the tough conversations happening in many of the participants' classrooms, many of the participants felt more comfortable having conversations about tough topics with their family members. Victoria had discussions with her father. Luciana had conversations with her mom. Belinda had tough talks with her husband. Michelle had conversations with her mom and her children.

Victoria's father, Luciana's mother, and Belinda's husband all questioned the need to discuss this event that happened in the past. Comments like “I was not there.” and “It was not my fault” were common phrases heard by the participants. All three of these participants acknowledged that after the workshop, they felt more comfortable engaging their family members in conversation about why talking about the Massacre was essential and how this event still affected Tulsa today. Victoria stated that she and her father often had heated discussions about many issues because he was more conservative than she. She does not like to "lose" in these discussions, so she educated herself to defend whatever topic they were discussing at the time. In discussing the conversations with her mother, Luciana mentioned:

As liberal and open-minded as I thought my mother was, she actually got angry and experienced a lot of what we now call White guilt about anything coming up that insinuates that people now should take responsibility and try to right wrongs that happened in the past. And so, it has been really interesting to me that how much of a natural reaction that is for people. And I know specifically in Oklahoma, I think that you have to be intentional about moving past that because now that I've had multiple conversations with my mother, she has a lot different perspective about it.

Michelle did not have to convince her mom and kids that the Tulsa Race Massacre was important, because according to her, they were all open-minded and were interested in what they heard. She stated that her mom was very open-minded, and her children, growing up with a father who was a member of the Ku Klux Klan in Tulsa, have been exposed to more racism than most. The Tulsa Race Massacre workshop gave her new knowledge to share with them. These tough conversations, whether in the classroom or with family members, required these participants to have intentionality, knowledge, and comfort.

### **Theme 3 – "Knowing the History in Your Own Backyard."**

#### ***Local History***

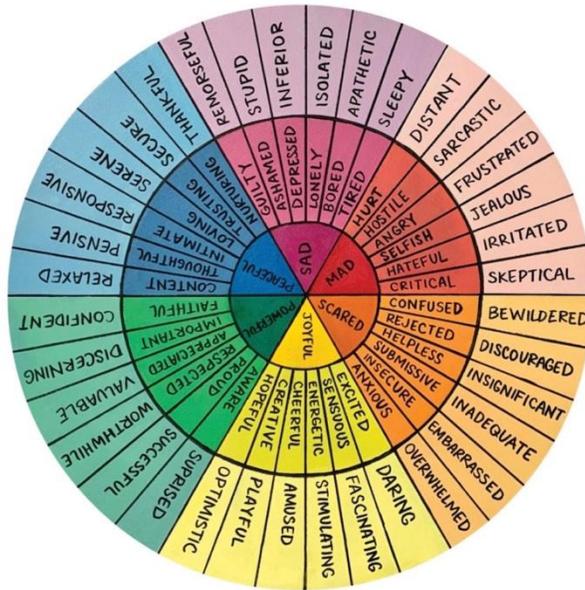
As an Oklahoma elementary classroom teacher, I taught about colonial history, the Civil War, the Boston Dinner Party, the Declaration of Independence, and the branches of government. My students listed all the presidents in order and named all the states and capitals. However, although my school district was in Tulsa County, I did not teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre. I did not teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre because I did not know about the Tulsa Race Massacre. When I was in school in Tulsa County, I did not learn about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Like Ashley stated, I too could talk about colonization and the historical events of Williamsburg, Virginia (I even took students there), but I could not tell you about the history in my backyard.

As mentioned before, most of the participants learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre as adults. The two who learned about it earlier described it as just surface-level learning, so while they knew about the Massacre, they did not KNOW about it. The five who learned about the Massacre as adults also stated that what they knew before the workshop was just a few facts and surface-level information. They all said that attending the seminar brought much more knowledge of the events than they ever knew before. The participants mentioned that learning about what led up to the Massacre was important knowledge they gained from attending the workshop. They also gained knowledge about the Massacre itself and the aftereffects. The participants learned teaching strategies for supporting their students in not only learning about this event but in ways that broadened their perspective. This new knowledge also brought up many emotions.

When discussing the range of emotions they experienced upon learning about the Massacre, many described the same emotions that I felt – surprise, anger, shock, but some mentioned in the first interview that they often did not have words. I also noticed that even when talking about heavy topics, they often used words such as enjoyed. I could not reconcile the tragedy with the words enjoy. So, during the third interview, I shared an emotions wheel with the participants to see if they could better explain their thoughts and feelings about the discovery of an event that happened "in their own backyard."

**Figure 56**

*Human Systems Emotion Wheel*



*Note.* Retrieved from <https://humansystems.co/emotionwheels/>

Words evoked by using this emotions wheel included horrified, flabbergasted, shock, disbelief, heaviness, a sense of responsibility, awareness, sadness, remorse, and guilt. They also felt misled, lied to, and angry. While the participants noted feeling these emotions when learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre for the first time, the most prominent feeling was the betrayal that this event was right here (the farthest school was 45 miles from where the Massacre happened) in the places they grew up, in the areas where they taught, and they should have known about it. Ashley, who learned about the Massacre as an adult, told her friend:

I don't even know what you are talking about. I grew up in Tulsa. I don't know what you are talking about. .... I knew nothing about it, and that amazed me that I had grown up here and never learned anything about it, and that was really disappointing to me. How have I made it thirty-some years and didn't know anything about this?

This sense of shock and amazement permeated the conversations discussing when they found out about the Massacre for the first time. Like me, five participants could not believe they had not learned about it in school.

The Oklahoma History Standards did not include the Tulsa Race Massacre until 91 years after this event happened. One hundred years later and it still is not in the OAS for all grades. So, who is to blame for the lack of teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre? I did not learn about it from my teachers, but does the blame lie there? Maybe they did not know about it either. Ashley agreed when she stated:

I feel like I was kind of cheated out of that information or lied to or not told the whole truth may be. Whether that be ignorance on the part of those around me, I think is mostly to blame. They (the teachers) didn't know themselves. There was also a lack of information out there. It just wasn't publicized. There weren't documentaries on The History Channel. It was like a hush-hush story.

How were we supposed to learn about it if it was not in the standards, history books, or curriculum? When I was beating myself up for not knowing or teaching about this event, one of my professors told me, "You can't teach what you do not know." These seven participants who did not know about the Massacre could not teach it, but now that they know, they can.

All seven participants, ranging from fourth-grade teachers through high school, were adamant that they needed to teach this history to their students. Sakura reiterated:

This (the Tulsa Race Massacre) is important to teach here because of an awareness – awareness of where we live and what we have not talked about. Awareness of what is hidden and how the souls of people are also hidden. Children need to understand that interconnection of history and how time, place, and sociality influences what we do today.

Belinda, Susan, Ashley, and Victoria all mentioned that the Race Massacre was a history left out of their learning. They all wanted to ensure their students knew about the Massacre before leaving their classrooms, despite not being in their standards. Ashley commented, "I want to find ways to teach this to my students so that they don't have the same story as me. I want them to know about this part of history." Belinda added, "When I heard about it, I felt stupid that I didn't know about it. I've always been a history buff, and I didn't know about it, and I felt stupid." Two of the participants taught within ten miles of the Tulsa school district and recognized the impact of knowing this history on their students. They realized this one event still impacted Tulsa today, and they wanted their students to understand that this happened and why Tulsa remains divided to this day.

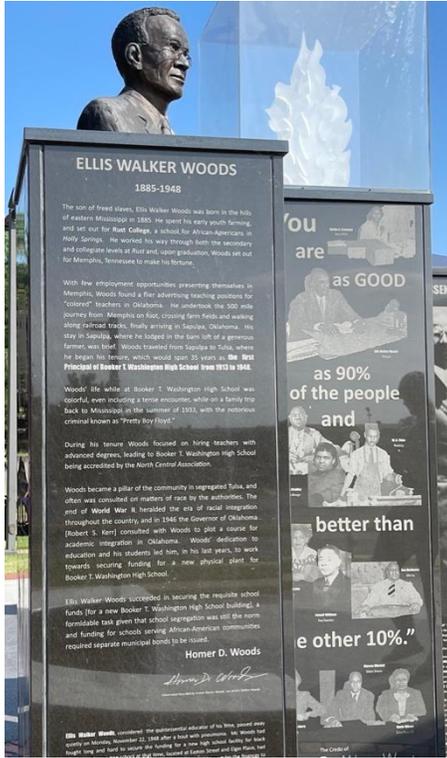
### ***Power of Place***

Along with knowing the history in your own backyard is the power and importance of place. The Tulsa Race Massacre professional development took place on the Oklahoma State University-Tulsa campus in the North Hall building. Located in the middle of what was more than 35 blocks of Black-owned businesses destroyed during the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 is the OSU-Tulsa campus.

As you leave North Hall, the Ellis Walker Woods Memorial (Figure 57), dedicated to the first principal of Book T. Washington High School, stood to the left. During the Massacre, Woods opened his school and provided shelter and assistance to survivors of the Massacre.

**Figure 57**

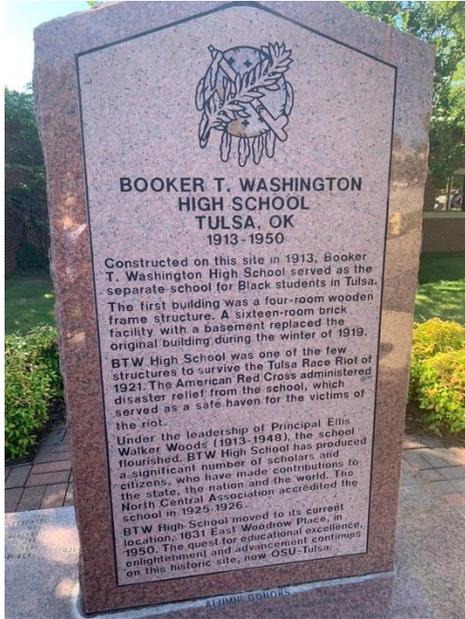
*Ellis Walker Woods Memorial*



In front and to the right of North Hall is a memorial to Booker T. Washington High School (Figure 58). On this spot in 1913 was Booker T. Washington High School, which was the school for Black high schoolers in Tulsa.

**Figure 58**

*Booker T. Washington High School Monument*



To the right of North Hall, the OSU Tower stands on what was Standpipe Hill, which overlooked the events of June 1, 1921. Illuminated on all sides by the OSU emblem, this 70-foot structure acknowledges the presence of OSU. In 2014, the University Center at Tulsa Authority and Oklahoma State University-Tulsa dedicated a memorial in front of OSU's tower that acknowledged the atrocities witnessed from this hill. There is an ongoing tension between OSU and the Black community, who objects to anything other than a historical monument to be on Standpipe Hill.

The Tulsa Race Massacre professional development acknowledged place, and the participants noticed and remarked on the impact that being at the site of the Massacre had on them. All seven of the participants stated that one of the most potent happenings during the workshop was the walking tour of Greenwood. During this tour, participants saw the plaques

Figure 59) on the sidewalks leading from OSU-Tulsa to Reconciliation Park. These plaques identified the locations of Black-owned businesses. The plaques also identified which businesses owners rebuilt and which were not.

**Figure 59**

*Example of Plaques on Greenwood*



*Note.* This plaque identifies the Vernon AME Church that was destroyed and rebuilt

Participants toured the Mabel B. Little Heritage House (Figure 60). The Mackey family, who were the original owners, rebuilt this house after the Massacre of 1921. This two-story house was a symbol of the resilience of the Black community.

**Figure 60**

*Mabel B. Little Heritage House*



The Black Wall Street mural, Interstate 244, and the burned bricks were also places mentioned by the participants. The Black Wall Street mural (Figure 61), painted on the side of Interstate 244 directly across from the Greenwood Cultural Center, was painted in the summer of 2018. Each letter in the Black Wall Street mural contains symbols and imagery that tell the story of Greenwood in the past and Greenwood in the present.

**Figure 61**

*Black Wall Street Mural*



This mural was a popular selfie stop in Tulsa and the place that we took our group photos, but the mural was also a powerful place that the participants mentioned. Michelle noticed:

Standing at the corner of Greenwood and Archer and seeing the mural so you can see what it used to look like and what it looks like now, it's almost like the souls are still there. So, it's just a heaviness to it and a connection to being where the events occurred. I think there is just a connection to being where an event actually occurred.

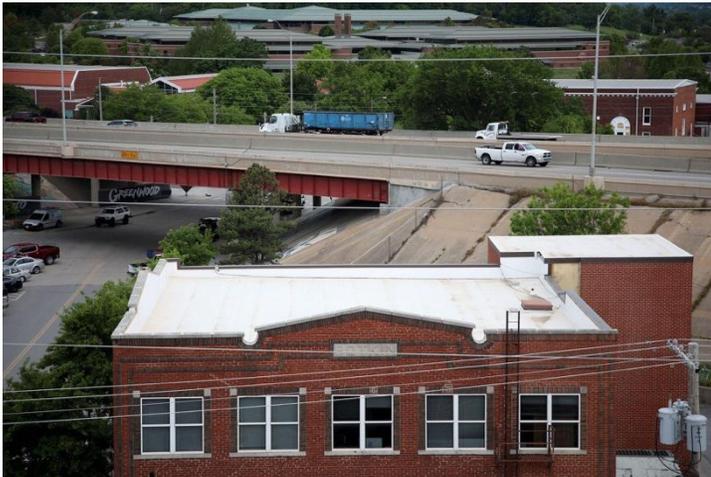
Everyone present felt the heaviness of walking the streets that Black Tulsans were forced to walk when they were rounded up and marched through town, touching bricks that were burned in 1921 and seeing a highway that cuts through the heart of the community.

Interstate 244 (Figure 62) now cuts right through the heart of Greenwood. The building of this highway meant that several of the businesses rebuilt after 1921 were torn down in 1967. Many called this the second Massacre of Greenwood. Tulsa World reporter Ginnie Graham

(2021), acknowledged that Interstate 244 is "not just a physical barrier; it psychologically isolated Black neighborhoods and businesses from the rest of the city." Four of the participants mentioned that seeing Interstate 244 cutting through Greenwood was impactful. Belinda and Victoria both noted that they had driven on this highway dozens of times but never thought about the intentionality and impact of its location. Learning the history of Interstate 244 made a difference in how they understood driving on this highway today.

## Figure 62

### *Interstate 244*



*Note.* Retrieved from [https://tulsaworld.com/news/local/racemassacre/interstate-244-it-took-the-heart-out-of-greenwood/article\\_f61d48f4-ba7a-11eb-8e0e-67790e03b317.html](https://tulsaworld.com/news/local/racemassacre/interstate-244-it-took-the-heart-out-of-greenwood/article_f61d48f4-ba7a-11eb-8e0e-67790e03b317.html)

The burned bricks were the remains of a building that was burned in the Massacre (Figure 63). The building was part of a preservation project, so the façade remained the same. The preservation project was part of the Greenwood Market project that lasted from 1978-1982. Joe Robinson, Oklahoma's first Black architect, was the lead architect on this project. Belinda was in awe of the burned bricks. She, like all the participants, took pictures of the bricks. She used these pictures when she taught her students about the Tulsa Race Massacre. She said that

seeing those pictures of the melted bricks in a familiar place to her students made it more real to them. It was something more tangible than just reading about it in a textbook. Ashley described it this way:

I think the place is important because you can look at it with your eyes and see that happened right here. I am literally walking the same streets they walked and experienced it at the same places that they were at and getting to see things that are still there, whether that be a colonial home or the bricks that were scorched in downtown Tulsa.

**Figure 63**

*The Scorched Bricks*



Knowing the history of your place is essential, but so too was being in the place where this event happened and realizing this history is still here and still impacts Tulsa today. Luciana summed up her experience of being at the site of the Tulsa Race Massacre beautifully when she said:

Having the workshop be in Greenwood is extremely important. Walking the neighborhood, I noticed the plaques in the sidewalks paying homage to the businesses that occupied those spaces prior to the Massacre. I saw the Mt. Zion Baptist Church and

Mt. Vernon AME Church that have been pillars of the Greenwood community for a century; churches which were burning in photographs I saw just moments before taking our field trip. I could see and touch the original charred brick on the buildings that remain on Greenwood Ave. Yet, once you look around, it's sobering to notice an enormous highway overpass that bisects the original Greenwood Avenue. There are only a few of those old brick buildings existing like an island in a sea of modern architecture. Until recently, the Spirit of Greenwood lied in the memories that were passed down from survivors of the Massacre and dedicated historians who have fought to preserve it. With the addition of the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park, the Black Wall Street mural, and now, numerous businesses centered around the Greenwood District name and culture, that spirit has been manifested and is growing. There is an energy in the community now that gives an idea as to how it may have felt in 1921, albeit in one city block rather than thirty-five. Experiencing that energy is incredibly important when learning about the Tulsa Race Massacre because it not only brings to life the physical community that was destroyed but shows that the Greenwood community spirit is still alive and thriving.

To see this community as alive and thriving, students needed to be taught the history of place, the history in their own backyards.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the themes that I discovered when I completed a cross-case analysis of my data. By completing this analysis, I was able to look across all cases and find three themes that the participants had in common – “evolving teacher selves,” “life changing,” and “I didn’t know the history in my own backyard.” In chapter seven, I answer the research questions, discuss my thoughts of the study, and implications for future research.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

During this dissertation journey, I have had the opportunity to learn and grow, discover and reflect. I experienced what Patton (2015) refers to as becoming a reflexive researcher. Reflexivity invites the researcher to delve deeper than what the term reflection implies. Reflexivity as a researcher means deeply exploring my awareness and interpretations of many aspects of myself and my research. Reflexivity includes an in-depth look at my cultural awareness, political consciousness, theoretical thoughts, sense of self, social sense, identity, and voice (Patton, 2015, p. 70). By becoming a reflexive researcher, I discovered where each of these pieces intersected, where they blended well together, and where they caused some cognitive dissonance.

I have always had an avid interest in history, literature, science, and pedagogy, but I did not enter the Ph.D. program with a particular research interest in mind. I have always enjoyed professional development and sought out professional learning that would enhance my knowledge and equip me with strategies to bring back to my classroom. Then on a hot and humid Oklahoma June day, I learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. This alone did not set my heart on fire, but this event, along with what I learned in my classes the following semester, filled me with indignation. I began to research textbooks and how teachers teach history in Oklahoma. I dug

deeper into the Tulsa Race Massacre, and I started to ask questions. I wondered if I was the only Tulsa area teacher who did not know about the Massacre. I quickly learned that I was not the only one. Teaching others about the Tulsa Race Massacre and sharing ideas for including this in classrooms promptly became my passion. I started presenting at conferences and sharing my story with anyone willing to listen. I was invited to join the Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Committee at OSU-Tulsa. As part of this committee, I volunteered to help design and present a professional development to Tulsa area teachers about teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre. My research emerged from this professional development. I wondered if other teachers experienced indignation that ignited changes when they learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Therefore, I followed seven teachers as they implemented what they learned at the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. I interviewed them during the two subsequent school years and the following summer. I explored changes they made personally and professionally because of this professional development experience.

### **Summary and Organization**

The narratives of the individual cases presented in chapter V and the cross-case analysis presented in chapter VI described the findings of this study. Through the two and a half years since the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, I attempted to show my participants' challenges, changes, and growth. I chose to share the individual cases as narratives because "Narratives are not transparent renditions of 'truth' but reflect a dynamic interplay between life, experience, and story" (Eastmond, 2007, p. 248). As much as possible, I shared the authentic voices of the teachers to give life to their evolving racial identity, their engagement in challenging conversations, and their difficulties in tackling tough topics. In this chapter, I first discuss the research question and situate it within the relevant literature, when possible. I discuss each finding through a reflexive reflection of what I learned during this two-and-a-half-year study. The

significance of the study, limitations, recommendations for future research, and my final thoughts follow.

### **Illuminating the Question**

I designed this study to answer the following overarching question:

- How is the journey of Oklahoma teachers impacted after participating in a workshop focused on the Tulsa Race Massacre?

Being self-reflexive is an essential piece of qualitative research. As I have gone through the process of being reflexive, I have had to dig deep and examine some things about myself that I have been working on overcoming – privilege, bias, fragility, and racism, and those I celebrate – growth, change, and a constant grappling with tough issues. Because of my background, I have assumptions and perceptions that are faulty and that I must work through and acknowledge. As Patton (2015) stated I must examine how these things influenced my epistemologies and shaped my worldview. I think that by incorporating my story into my dissertation, I add authenticity to my work. I also learned by listening to my participants' stories. As a teacher and a researcher, I am interested in the stories my participants told and the stories they left untold.

### **Finding 1 – "Evolving Teacher Self": Professional Development as a Conduit for Change**

Teacher professional development (PD) is any type of continuing education efforts made by teachers to strengthen their instructional practice and gain new strategies. (Borko et al., 2011; Jenkins & Agamba, 2013). The goals of effective professional development include increasing teacher knowledge which in turn will increase student achievement and growth (Svendsen, 2020). As standards and accountability increase, educators are pressured to find ways to increase their knowledge. Participation in effective professional development aids teachers in developing and enhancing pedagogies to meet these exacting standards.

However, research has shown that many professional development programs are ineffective and not meeting educators needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Ineffective professional development is a waste of time and resources and tends to discourage teachers instead of encouraging them. Darling-Hammond et al., (2010) found that most teachers spend a total of eight hours or less participating in professional development and most of those were in short workshops held after school. Fullan (2007) stated that professional development was seldom “powerful enough, specific enough, or sustained enough to alter the culture of the classroom and school” (p. 35).

For PD to be meaningful, it needs to be effective. Many researchers have completed studies about the characteristics of effective professional development. The most common characteristics of effective professional development are duration, content/subject specific, collaborative, and active (Bechtel et al., 2006; Birman et al., 2000; Boyle et al., 2004; Cohen et al., 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2001; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; King & Newman, 2000; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021; Wei et al., 2007). Other less common characteristics of effective professional development include choice over context, teachers personally invested in their learning, opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, and time to discuss learning with other teachers (Sailors, 2018).

Writing and Remembrance: Strategies for Teaching the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre was designed to enrich teachers' knowledge of the events of the Tulsa Race Massacre, enhance their ability to teach about this event, and introduce them to a variety of counternarratives and teaching strategies. The length of the workshop, the focus of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the opportunities for collaboration, and the inclusion of active learning made this an effective professional development.

A critical factor in the effectiveness of a professional development is a substantive amount of time spent in the training (Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). One-hour or one day professional development opportunities tend to be less effective (Birman et al., 2000). The Tulsa Race Massacre PD was a three-day workshop. The participants invested 24 hours of their own time participating in this workshop. Not only did they spend 24 hours in attendance at the workshop, but they also had assignments to complete after the workshop including reading and a final project. Sakura commented she realized that the workshop was important when she learned how long it was going to be.

Another characteristic of effective professional development is that it is content or subject specific (Wei et al., 2007). The Tulsa Race Massacre professional development was subject specific. The goal of this PD was to share strategies for teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre. While the content was specific, we shared ways this topic could be approached in a variety of subjects and grade levels. The participants for this study were English language arts teachers, journalism teachers, social studies teachers, special education teachers, math teachers, and teachers that taught multiple subjects. The grades these teachers taught ranged from fourth grade to twelfth grade.

The Tulsa Race Massacre professional development was also collaborative in nature. Teachers engaged in literature circles focused on novels and they met in discussion groups. Several participants mentioned that being able to talk to other like-minded teachers was important. Not only were they able to collaborate with their peers, but they were also introduced to OSU-Tulsa faculty and staff that were willing to share knowledge and collaborate with them. The special speakers and field trip locations offered a variety of ways the participants could get involved in the community of Greenwood.

Finally, the participants were actively involved in their learning. Not much time was spent in the lecture style of professional development. When teachers participate in hands-on strategies, their content knowledge is enhanced (Wei et al., 2007). These participants were able to work in small groups, participate in a role-playing activity, take field trips, and create lessons to take back to their classrooms. They also interacted with different texts including novels, primary source documents, and photographs. Being actively involved in their learning is a characteristic of an effective professional development.

After participating in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, the data revealed that the PD was effective, and all seven participants made pedagogical changes. Those changes included: engaging in challenging conversations, including more diverse literature, seeking out other perspectives, and adding the Tulsa Race Massacre to their curriculum.

Being comfortable engaging in challenging conversations was one of the benefits of attending this professional development. While having courageous conversations was not a topic shared at the professional development, these participants mentioned they were more confident in talking about issues of race and racism because they attended the workshop. Belinda commented:

Before the workshop, I didn't have the comfort or knowledge to talk about [the Tulsa Race Massacre], especially to students of color. I am a White woman. Who am I to teach this? But now I know more and am more comfortable having these conversations.

Ashley also mentioned being more comfortable talking about race and racism with her students. Victoria added, "I don't feel uncomfortable anymore talking about race and discrimination and things like that with the class.

Another change many of the participants made was to include diverse literature into their classrooms. Victoria mentioned that one effect the workshop had on her was to examine her library shelves and curriculum. She concluded that much of what was taught in the English

language arts classes in her school were “old White guys.” Her library shelves were also not remarkably diverse. After the workshop, both Ashley and Sakura wrote grants to purchase books for their classroom libraries and Belinda worked with others to garner diverse books for her classroom. All of the participants acknowledged a need for books that gave students both mirrors and windows. These participants not only looked for books to diversify their classroom bookshelves, but they sought out books that would enhance their own learning not only about the Tulsa Race Massacre, but about Whiteness, biases, antiracist teaching practices, and privilege.

Disrupting the single story was another change these teachers made. From the beginning of the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development until the end, we stressed hearing everyone’s story. All seven of the participants noted that seeking out all perspectives on a topic had become important to them. They are not satisfied with just using a textbook to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre or any topic they are sharing with their students. Luciana stated, “The workshop made me really examine perspective. I want to make sure my students hear everyone’s perspective no matter what we are studying.” Point of view and perspective are both ELA standards, and the participants have a new appreciation of what it means to examine perspective. Luciana stated that it was important to teach her students about perspective she wanted them “to question when we hear about things in the news, or we are learning about historical events – who is telling us the story? Whose point of view are we hearing this from? What are they trying to teach us?”

Finally, all seven teachers included the Tulsa Race Massacre in their lesson plans. Aside from Luciana, none of them had taught about the Race Massacre, so this was a change for many of them. The Tulsa Race Massacre was not in the Oklahoma Academic Standards for any of the grades or subjects these participants taught; however, all seven decided to teach about it any way. They taught about it through literature, photographs, and primary sources. They watched documentaries, engaged in conversations, and wrote poetry. They took virtual field trips and

created scavenger hunts – all for the first time. I was able to interview the participants during two school years and their desire to teach about the Race Massacre continued. They all have plans to teach it for a third year. These seven participants passionately described changes they made because they attended the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop. This was an effective professional development.

### ***Discussion and Researcher Illuminations***

As a veteran educator, I have spent countless hours in professional development. Some of those have been effective and some have not been productive. The state of Oklahoma requires teachers to attend yearly professional development. In Oklahoma teachers are required to participate in 75 hours of professional development over the course of five years. Teachers must submit a Summary of Professional Development Points for Certification Renewal form to the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Some professional development points are required of Oklahoma teachers yearly (drug and alcohol awareness, bloodborne pathogens, bullying, child abuse, and FERPA), while other points can be gained in professional development opportunities they choose. I am more intentional now about the professional development that I attend. I know the power of effective professional development and how it can change both your teacher identity and your personal identity. Some have changed mine.

### **Finding 2 – “Life Changing”: Examining Identity and World Views**

Teacher identity is how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others. A teacher’s identity is multi-layered. Background, family structure, beliefs, ethnicity, education, continued pursuit of professional and personal growth, and self-awareness can all be facets that makes up this identity. Privilege, bias, and racism can also be part of a teacher’s identity. Qualitative research examines how all these facets of self are experienced, interpreted, and understood (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Even though I could not find any research that linked

professional development with personal changes, all seven participants acknowledged changes they made personally. All stated that their participation in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development was the impetus for these personal changes.

What individuals think, believe, and do are shaped by cultural, historical, and social structures. Structures such as family, schooling, the media, books, political beliefs, and even the curriculum shape our identity (Lasky, 2005). Teacher identity shifts and evolves over their career (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Huberman, 1993). Research has shown that teacher identity changes in response to school reform, policies, school environment, and even politics (Sachs, 2000). I suggest that teacher change can happen because of effective professional development. In her 2005 study, Lasky found that emotion and vulnerability can lead to change. She defined emotion as a “heightened state of being that changes as individuals interact with their immediate context, other individuals, and while reflecting on past or future events” (p. 901). These emotions or vulnerability can happen as a result of being with a group of like-minded educators, exploring hidden history, and examining self in relation to this hidden history.

Lasky further explained that vulnerability is an emotion that one can feel in a variety of different contexts. It can be influenced by “the way people perceive their present situation as it interacts with their identity, beliefs, values, and sense of competence” (p. 901). She added that critical incidents can act as triggers to intensify one’s vulnerability. Learning about an atrocity that happened in your own backyard can be a trigger that can lead to changes in identity, beliefs, and values. Each of the participants in this study noted times of stress, of disbelief, and of a sense of responsibility when attending the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development. They described it as heavy and worked through these emotions and times of vulnerability in different ways: Journaling, poetry, dialogue, reading, and examining their identity.

While researchers examined changes in teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Mockler, 2011) my study also explored the changes in personal identities of these seven women. Critical self-reflection, an on-going assessment of attitudes and beliefs about others, developing a respect for diversity, and the ability to acknowledge mistakes and continue to move forward are all aspects of a changing identity (Fletcher, 2016; Nieto, 2013). These participants recognized changes in themselves personally because of their participation in this professional development. These changes involved critical self-reflection, an on-going assessment of their attitudes and beliefs, a developing respect for others, and the ability to know that they are not always going to get it right, but they will continue to move forward.

After participating in the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development, these women began an examination of who they are as White women and [White] women. They began this process by reading books such as *Me and White Supremacy* and *Stamped*. They joined social media groups and book clubs with people of diverse backgrounds. They talked to their family and friends about difficult topics. They sought out other perspectives for themselves and their classrooms and they participated in other professional development opportunities. They began to acknowledge their own racist tendencies and questioned things in their past. Change is a never-ending process. While this three-day workshop may not have really changed these participants. It did at least open their eyes and their minds to the possibilities.

### ***Discussion and Researcher Illuminations***

The research I conducted is very personal to me. It is a topic that I am passionate about and has made me dig deep into myself – confronting biases, exploring my Whiteness, examining and reexamining my belief system. I have had to confront systemic racism as well as intergenerational racism. In chapter one, I shared my story. My story is the why behind this research. Being a reflexive researcher allowed me to acknowledge the part that my story played in

this research process. Chapter one mentioned two critical incidents early in my graduate career that set me on this path of self-discovery and influenced the dissertation research I completed. These events messed with everything I thought I knew about myself and teaching. Saldaña (2003) refers to this as an epiphany – a discovery about myself. These two events, or epiphanies, continue to haunt me, elicit questions in myself and my chosen career path, and spur me on to action. I continue to struggle getting everything just “right.” Sometimes racism, privilege, or White fragility slips in and if I do not acknowledge it, it could fester and grow. In this section I explore these untold stories of my participants.

### **White Fragility**

Racism is not a thing of the past. Despite claims to the opposite, we do not live in a post-racial society (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The third tenet of Critical Race Theory states that racism is so embedded in society that it is commonplace and sometimes unrecognizable (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010). This means that despite our best efforts as White people, there are still going to be moments where we mess up – moments where we say something inherently racist; moments where we think something inherently racist; moments where our actions are going to be racist. Ibram X. Kendi (2019) noted that racism and antiracism are like peelable nametags. He said that these nametags "are placed and replaced based on what someone is doing or not doing, supporting or expressing in each moment" (p.22). He likened racism and the struggle to become an antiracist to fighting addiction. It requires "persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination" (Kendi, 2019, p. 22). Self-awareness, self-criticism, and self-examination were all present in the interviews I conducted with the participants. There were also those sneaky moments when racism and White privilege also slipped out. The remainder of this section discusses terminology from the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. I recognize that many scholars of color push back against DiAngelo's book; however, as a White woman, this book gave me words to use to describe how I grew up and the

racism that is inherent in society. As I struggle through acknowledging inherited racism, I want to be able to name those times where I still might have racist tendencies. Therefore, I chose to use the book *White Fragility* in this dissertation.

### ***Color-Blind Racism***

According to color-blind racism ideology, "If we pretend not to notice race, then there is no racism" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 41). The idea of being color-blind came from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech when he said that one day he would live in a world where his children "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their character" (King, 1963, para. 17). This one line out of a sixteen-minute speech has been used to justify color-blindness (Berry, 1996; DiAngelo, 2018; Turner, 1996). By maintaining the stance that one does not see color, we sustain White dominance, particularly in education. As educators, if we do not see color, we do not see the child in front of us, and according to Williams & Land (2006), we hold every student to the White standard regardless of their background or ethnicity. This approach delegitimizes a culturally sustaining pedagogy. Critical Race Theory very distinctly states that racism is inherent in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993) and that racism cannot be separated from the history of our country (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Susan was the only participant that used the phrase "I do not see color, I see students." This phrase is common in color-blind ideology. What is the harm in this simple phrase? Actively disregarding students' race or ethnicity takes away a big part of who our students are. This may not have been Susan's intention. Like many teachers, she may simply be saying she treats all her students the same (Blaisdell, 2005). While the words may appear harmless, this phrase often upholds all students to the White norm (Solomon et al., 2003).

While none of the other participants stated that they did not see color, I noted other comments that I would liken to a color-blind attitude. When talking about growing up in her

mostly White community, Michelle commented that diversity was not something she ever thought of. Belinda made a similar comment when she stated that being White was something she “did not give much thought to.” When reflecting on her Whiteness, Ashley said she had always been in the majority. Even Luciana, one of my [White] participants, admitted that being White was just easier. All these participants were speaking from a White frame of reference. As White people in the United States, we were not taught to see ourselves in racial terms (DiAngelo, 2018). These comments display an attitude of White normativity. Winings (2018) defines White normativity as “taking the dominant group’s values and ways of living, attitudes, and perspectives to define and create social norms that are used to define the correct or normative way to live” (p. 190). Because each of these women did not see or acknowledge their Whiteness, they participated in color-blind racism.

### ***Aversive Racism***

Aversive racism denotes something as Black without explicitly using the word Black. DiAngelo (2018) used the examples of commenting that a neighborhood was Black or White without using those words. Examples of aversive racism in this study were evident. Victoria described the neighborhood in which she lived as a golf course community. I knew, without her telling me, that this community was a White, upper-class community. She did not need to say I grew up in a White neighborhood. I knew she did. Likewise, Michelle described when she and her classmates were driving in the Greenwood area after dark. She did not say the area was a Black part of Tulsa. She used words such as “scary,” and “there were homeless people,” and “we didn’t know where to stop.” Michelle and Sakura both described schools they worked in as being in North Tulsa. They left Black schools out of their description, but I knew. Whether the participants were aware of doing it or not, they were using the us vs. them dichotomy.

### ***Cultural Racism***

Two examples that DiAngelo (2018) used to describe cultural racism were evident with my participants. One example given was whispering or hiding your mouth when you say something about someone of another race. I noted this behavior with Belinda from the very first time I interviewed her. Every time she would say the word Black, she would cover her mouth and look towards the door. I interviewed her face-to-face twice, and both times she behaved this way. This behavior showed that she was not comfortable using the term Black.

Using jokes and laughter when talking about racial issues is another sign of Cultural Racism. Michelle exhibited this when talking about the first high school where she taught. She described the diversity of her classes and laughingly said that this class had the one token White kid. She went on to add that she called this class her racist class. Because it was so diverse, she commented that she allowed them to “sit around and crack racist jokes with each other.” She quickly clarified that they were not doing it to be mean and that they were all friends, but the fact that she allowed it to happen and that she seemed to encourage it is an example of Cultural Racism.

### ***White Racial Innocence***

DiAngelo (2018) stated that since White people are not raised to view White in racial terms, we display White Racial Innocence. All five White participants mentioned growing up in neighborhoods and attending schools with little to no diversity. Victoria described growing up in the golf course neighborhood of her town, while Ashley mentioned traveling a lot with her parents and being "exposed" to diversity that way. Belinda said that she lived in a nice neighborhood because her mom was an oil executive, and everything they did was "proper." Both Susan and Ashley mentioned never really being around diverse people until they went to college. Susan noted that her parents had kept her sheltered and added her community displayed

prejudices. Ashley said that she did not think about her privilege until she read a book about a person of color being shot by a police officer. This book made her reflect on her privileges. Even Luciana, who chose to be [White], acknowledged her privileges because she identified as White. These are all examples of White Racial Innocence.

After more than two years, I know these participants. I sat beside them in workshops about the Holocaust and the Tulsa Race Massacre. I have seen them struggle with their identity and create space in their classrooms to share complex topics. Like me, they are discovering more about themselves as humans and educators, naming and confronting biases and racist tendencies. Despite the hard work we have all put in, there will still be times that our inherent racial tendencies surface. I described these times of racism I noticed during the research process, not to shame the participants but to acknowledge that peelable label of racist/antiracist that Kendi (2019) described.

### **Finding 3 – "I Didn't Know the History in My Backyard."**

Finally, the data revealed that knowing the history of your place is essential. Like me, most of these participants did not learn about the Tulsa Race Massacre until they were adults. The participants noted that the information they knew about the Massacre was just surface-level information. All seven participants shared a range of emotions they experienced when they first learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre. Those emotions ranged from anger and sadness to a deep sense of responsibility to teach others about the Massacre. All the participants confirmed that they learned more about the Tulsa Race Massacre by participating in the professional development than before.

In school, we were taught about large, dramatic, historical events that affected the nation. We learned about wars, depressions, and industrialization. We knew the states and capitals and the names of the presidents. We studied the three branches of government. We did not learn about

the Tulsa Race Massacre or why the landscape of Tulsa is the way it is. We hear that North Tulsa is a bad place with a high crime rate, gang violence, and drugs. We hear the bad (aversive racism), but we do not learn why. Social and Cultural Psychologists Plaut et al. (2012) confirmed that knowing your local history is essential for constructing self.

Not knowing about the history in our own backyard led to many unanswered questions. The participants questioned why there were never taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre. They also seemed to want to place the blame for their not knowing somewhere. Ashley and Victoria both questioned whether they should blame their former teachers, but they also acknowledged that their teachers probably did not know either. There have been generations of teachers that did not know about the Tulsa Race Massacre; therefore, they did not teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre. The Oklahoma History Standards did not include the Tulsa Race Massacre until 80 years after this event happened. One hundred years later and it still is not in the OAS for all grades. Textbooks did not mention the Tulsa Race Massacre. When Ashley reflected on not learning about the Massacre, she stated that she felt cheated out of that knowledge. The Tulsa Race Massacre was a local historical event that impacted many lives, yet it was not in our standards or textbooks.

Local history teaches you about your community. Knowing the history of Tate Brady and his ties to the Ku Klux, Klan could explain why some Tulsans wanted his name removed from Brady Street. The city renamed the street MB Brady Street in 2013 to honor a Civil War photographer with the same last name but no ties to Tulsa. Brasher et al. (2020), however, called this a faux renaming and claimed that this “weakens cities’ ability to engage in the restorative memory-work of recovering from past racial violence” (pg. 1224). Not knowing Tulsa’s racist past destroys memories and place identity while at the same time further alienating the historically marginalized people of Greenwood. By keeping Brady in the name of the street, Brasher et al. claimed that this compromise between activists and White business owners just did

more damage to this “wounded place” (p. 1226). Brady Street had its own history with the Tulsa Race Massacre. Brady Street is just north of Greenwood. Convention Hall, also known as Brady theatre, located on Brady Street, was one of three internment camps created to hold Black Tulsans after the Race Massacre. Not knowing this history keeps White Tulsans complicit in the Massacre hidden. Healing the wounds of painful racialized historical events is tough (Brasher et al., 2020). Healing begins with knowing the history in our own backyard.

### ***Discussion and Researcher Illuminations***

I have now walked Greenwood on numerous occasions. I have walked the area with groups of educators, and I have walked it alone. I have seen the burnt bricks and read the historical markers about lynchings in Oklahoma. I have wandered through Reconciliation Park and reread the plaque that first informed me of the Tulsa Race Massacre, and like Katie Taylor (2018) I try to reconcile my story – growing up White, in a predominantly White place, attending predominantly White schools with what happened 10 miles from the house in which I grew up. Hidden history of historical events has lasting effects on individuals today. Like Taylor (2018), I wonder what would be different if the Tulsa Race Massacre was not hidden. I wonder if knowing about the past would have altered the landscape of the present. Would there be the racist divide in Tulsa that we have today? Would we waste time arguing about changing the names of streets and schools? Would we fight against reparations or the search for mass graves? Would we try to keep the history hidden if we had owned up to what happened in 1921? “Excavating the past could prevent future mistakes and repeating acts of complacency where there should be outrage” (Taylor, 2018, p. 189). I also wonder where I would be if I had learned the history in my own backyard. Walking Greenwood embodies the power of place.

## **Power of Place**

It was not until I started reading the first interviews that the power of place resonated with me. One of the most significant talking points in that first interview was the walking tour of Greenwood. Each participant noted feelings elicited simply by being in Greenwood – the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre site. In his article “Engaging Geography at Every Street Corner,” Brian Smith (2018) discussed the importance of linking history, geography, and politics with place. Maoz Azaryahu (1990) named place as a city-text. Using place as a city-text, there are literally histories on every street corner. Sometimes those histories are told, but sometimes like the story of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the histories are hidden. While many Tulsans continue to downplay the history of Greenwood, the participants in this study recognized Greenwood as a city-text.

“The city-text writes into the geography of a space a particular narrative of that very community and its connection to the larger national project” (Smith, 2018, p. 114). For decades, the narrative about Greenwood was covered up. The city-text was hidden. Those in power in Tulsa maintained the master narrative of Whiteness and did not acknowledge Greenwood as its own city-text. They tended to “commemorate the good version of an individual/event to the exclusion of a recognition that some of those events/individuals written into the city-text are complicit in or reflective of practices and politics of violence and exclusion” (Smith, 2018, p. 117). White Tulsans did not want to acknowledge their complicity in the Massacre; therefore, the story remained untold. The narratives of Black Tulsans were excluded from the city-text.

However, by the time the Tulsa Race Massacre professional development took place, the participants were able to walk the streets of Greenwood and “read” the story of the city-text. Historical markers and a knowledgeable tour guide relayed to the participants what happened exactly 98 years before in the places they were standing. They saw the Vernon AME Church, one of the only edifices on Greenwood that survived the Massacre. They saw burned bricks left over

from the Massacre, and they saw I-244 as it cuts through the heart of Greenwood. Participants looked at plaques in the ground that acknowledged where Black-owned businesses once stood and toured the Mabel Little Home, an example of the homes that Black wealth built in Greenwood.

Paulo Freire and Myles Horton (1990) coauthored a book titled *We Make the Road by Walking*. As acknowledged in the book, we make the road by walking is an adaptation of a phrase in a Spanish poem written by Antonio Machado (n.d.). Translated into English, part of the poem simply says, “Wanderer, your footsteps are the road, and nothing more; wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking” (Machado, n.d.). In June 2019, the participants made a new road by walking a road that many had walked before but never “read.” Some researchers noted that walking is a form of research methodology (Goffman, 1983; Kendon, 1990; Marin, 2013). By walking the streets of Greenwood, participants were reading their world and the words (Freire & Horton, 1990). They were working through what Taylor (2018) referred to as layers of “historical sedimentation” (p. 189). By acknowledging Greenwood as city-text, the participants were able to disrupt previous knowledge they had about the area as they peeled back layers of historical sedimentation. For the most part, the participants grew up in and around the Tulsa area – layer one. They went to schools in the area – layer two. They were not taught about the Race Massacre in schools – layer three. They learned new knowledge about the Massacre at the professional development – layer four. They walked Greenwood and read their world – layer five. After the workshop, they continued to learn about the Tulsa Race Massacre – layer six. As the participants peeled back each of these layers, they could disrupt any old knowledge they may have had about the history of this area.

When the participants reflected on the tour, they described the power of being in that place had on them. For example, Michelle said, “There is a weight and certain indescribable feeling I got learning about events in the same location they originally occurred.” Belinda

described seeing the burned bricks as a potent reminder of what had happened right there. Ashley, who often participated in workshops in the locations of historical events, concluded with:

I think the place is important because you can look at it with your eyes and see that happened right here. I am literally walking the same streets they walked and experienced it at the same places that they were at and getting to see things that are still there, whether that be a colonial home or the bricks that were scorched in downtown Tulsa.

I suggest that “reading” Greenwood is an example of the use of counternarratives that is vital in Critical Race Theory.

### **The Aftermath and Over-arching Discussion: History Continues to Evolve and Connect**

Just before the last interview of this research, Critical Race Theory (CRT) became a hot-button topic in the media. This term, not known by laypeople just a year ago, is now at the forefront of everyone's minds because of a push by conservative media outlets. In fact, I watched one hour of Fox News and noted that the commentators and their guests mentioned the words Critical Race Theory a total of thirty-eight times. Conservatives claim that CRT is a provocative set of ideals. They claim that public school teachers teach CRT to their students, therefore, indoctrinating them with ideas that conservative parents do not want their students learning.

### **Critical Race Theory and HB1775**

Critical Race Theory grew out of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) in the 1980s. Critical Legal Studies, which began in the 1970s, was a movement that examined how the law favors the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor and marginalized (Cornell Law School). Critical Race Theory grew out of CLS. Critical Race Theorists such as Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic developed a set of propositions that have become the central tenants of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). These tenets include:

- Race is a social construction
- Racism is perpetuated in society through cultural norms, institutional rules, and laws
- Racism is so embedded in society that it appears the norm
- Counternarratives magnify the voices, stories, and experiences of underprivileged communities

So why is this coming up now?

Last year, protests erupted across the country after the killing of George Floyd. Former President Donald Trump sent a memo to federal agencies warning against Critical Race Theory and banned any training he deemed racist (Buchanan, 2020; Mourtgos, Adams & Nix, 2021; Taylor, 2021). The use of the term exploded after that. Critical Race Theory quickly became a divisive term as many Americans rushed to accuse public school teachers of indoctrinating students by teaching them Critical Race Theory. According to a poll conducted by the Association of American Educators (Mazzanti, 2021), teachers are not teaching CRT, and many do not even know what it is. Despite the protests from teachers, many states across the U.S. began to pass legislation that banned the teaching of Critical Race Theory. Oklahoma was one of these states. On May 7, 2021, Governor Kevin Stitt signed HB1775 into law (Appendix 1). This bill states:

- No student in college can be forced to participate in any diversity training
- No teacher or school employee may teach the following concepts:
  - One race or sex is superior to another
  - An individual is inherently racist or sexist

- An individual should be discriminated against because or receive adverse treatment because of race or sex
- Members of one race or sex cannot treat others without respect because of their race or sex
- An individual's moral character is determined by race or sex
- An individual bears responsibility for actions of the past
- An individual should feel discomfort or guilt because of race or sex
- Meritocracy is racist or sexist

Some school districts decided to denounce the law (Oklahoma City Public Schools), while others capitulated. All of this happened right before I conducted the third and final interview. During this interview, I decided to ask the participants about their knowledge of CRT, how they teach CRT, and how they perceive it will affect their teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre in the future.

I first asked the participants if they knew what Critical Race Theory was. Susan and Ashley both stated that they did not know what Critical Race Theory was. Luciana, Victoria, and Belinda claimed to know a little. Luciana said that she would not be confident enough to try and tell someone else what CRT means. Sakura, who had just finished her Ph.D., knew what CRT was and in her explanation, included references to Critical Theory, Freire, Foucault, and Habermas. Michelle too knew what CRT was:

I have a much better understanding of it than most of the people complaining about it being taught in schools. It's funny because I did not know what Critical Race Theory was until Republicans threw such a fit about it. So, I decided to look it up. I spent a lot of time learning about it. At first, I did not understand it. It took forever for me to figure out what it was.

Despite not giving a definition, Michelle was confident in her knowledge of CRT.

I next asked the teachers if they were teaching Critical Race Theory since accusations in the media indicated so. Five out of the seven participants claimed that they were not teaching Critical Race Theory to their students. When I asked Luciana if she was teaching CRT, she simply answered, “Probably.” Ashley, who teaches fourth grade, also answered, “Probably,” but added:

I teach differently. I teach that not all history was good, and I try not to teach Whitewashed history, which is what I was taught. So, some would say I am teaching Critical Race Theory because I am teaching my students to think critically about the way people were treated based on their race.

I next asked the participants if they had read HB1775. Susan, Ashley, and Sakura all stated that they had not read the bill. Luciana claimed that she skimmed it:

Because the language is so vague, and I was getting ready to teach the Tulsa Race Massacre. I was trying to make sure if there was some mass attempt to shut things down and that we were staying within the lines. From what I saw, it just says we're not allowed to make people feel guilty about having White skin, and that is definitely not what we are doing.

Victoria stated that she did not read the bill in its entirety, and Belinda simply said that yes, she had read the bill. Michelle has studied the bill and went into detail about her thoughts:

Yes, I have read the bill, and first of all, I find it incredibly hilarious that we have a bill that is literally cut and pasted from a definition section of a Trump executive order. It was from the order where diversity training could not be mandated. The bill goes into a laundry list of things that teachers can't teach. When I read the bill, the first thing

mentioned is that you can't teach that one group is inherently superior to any other group. When I look at that and look at the way we teach history from the European American perspective, then we are instilling that the European American perspective is superior. I read that to say that we need to revamp the entire curriculum, the entire way we teach so that it's not centered on European American history. I don't think the authors of this bill put any thought into it.

The final question I asked concerning HB1775 was whether they thought it would affect the way they teach and, if so, how. All seven participants did not believe the bill would affect the way they teach. Susan commented, "I'm just going to talk with my kids and teach what I'm going to and shut the door to the governor." She added that her administration was supportive of "academic freedom, and I don't see that changing." Victoria, who teaches in Searcy, stated that it had already affected their school district. The ninth-grade teachers had planned on sharing *Dreamland Burning* (Latham, 2017) with their students. The district mandated that teachers could not use this book because of its content. She added:

The whole bill ignores the fact that kids have their own brains. I might teach them something, but if they feel guilty, it's not because I told them to feel guilty. It's because they have their own feelings, and they're capable of feeling their own things.

Michelle and Ashley, who teach in Gould, did not believe that they would change the way they teach because of the bill. Ashley added that she thought more prominent school districts under a microscope would have a more challenging time than teachers like her who teach in a small community. She further stated, "I think it's ridiculous that it's even a conversation."

According to a survey conducted by the Association of American Educators (2021) teaching Critical Race Theory is not happening in classrooms. Ninety-six percent of the respondents, teachers from both public and private schools, claimed that they were not teaching

CRT and that it was not required by their administration. Most respondents have not changed their curriculum in light of the push against CRT and 78% responded that the current rhetoric around the issue was interfering with the necessity to have conversations around race (Association of American Educators, 2021). Most of my participants did not even know what Critical Race Theory was, and if they did, it was because it had been so prominent in the news that they researched it to find out what people were talking about. My participants were not teaching Critical Race Theory in their classrooms; although, many were teaching their students to think critically. And despite the passing of HB1775, my participants did not believe they would change the way they teach. It is November 2021, and the media storm about Critical Race Theory has died down, and the media has moved on to other topics of import. As a teacher and a researcher, I worry that laws mandating what teachers can and cannot teach will keep some teachers from doing the good work they are doing simply because of fear.

### **Can We Really Trust History?**

#### *Who Teaches History Anyway?*

The question of who teaches history did not occur until the final round of interviews. Belinda was the first participant I interviewed, and she mentioned that when she had Oklahoma history in the ninth grade, her teacher was a coach. As I reflected, I thought about my history classes that coaches taught. I found this interesting, so I decided to ask the other participants if they remember coaches teaching their history classes. The six participants that went to school in Oklahoma all acknowledged having coaches as history teachers. Victoria recalled that her Oklahoma history teacher showed any movie that even mentioned Oklahoma. "The only thing I remember learning besides all of the movies is the Trail of Tears." Ashley added, "All I remember is him sitting with his feet propped up on the desk and reading the newspaper." She stated that her boyfriend had a different history teacher, and he had a different experience from

her. When they got to college, he was more prepared for the history class they both took than she was. Luciana recalled a coach/history teacher that she perceived as not liking girls unless you were a cheerleader. She remarked that cheerleaders always got better grades.

In Oklahoma, all coaches must hold a valid teaching certificate (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2021). This does not mean that all coaches teach – it is different by the school district. It also does not mean that all coaches teach history or that all history teachers are coaches. Some studies suggest that teacher/coaches are coaches first and teachers second, meaning that coaching is their priority, and that teaching is an afterthought (Dickerson, 2012; Shuttlesworth & Edgington, 2005). Besides physical education, coaches most often teach social studies at the secondary level (Burden, Burdette, Zwald, Czech, & Buckley, 2010; Hansen & Quintero, 2017). Studies done also hold that the perceptions of coaches as social studies teachers are not favorable. They are not perceived as effective instructors (Conner & Bohan, 2018; Rodgers, 2013). In 2013 a team of researchers from across the United States surveyed over 12,000 social studies teachers. It was the largest survey of social studies teachers in more than thirty years. This study inquired about their teaching background and experience, the number of years teaching, and teaching methods. It also asked about other assignments outside of the social studies classroom. They found that roughly 52% of middle school and high school social studies teachers had coached at some point in their careers (Passe & Fitchett, 2013). Other items of interest from this study included that social studies classes are more often taught with textbooks and lectures than other subjects. Students who are not participating in AP history classes are more likely to receive traditional teaching than those who can take AP courses (Passe & Fitchett, 2013).

The common perception is that coaches who also teach social studies are ineffective teachers. Little research has been undertaken to prove or disprove this argument. Fouts (1989) surveyed middle school and high school students and found no significant difference between the

teaching of coaches and the teaching of non-coaches. Van Deraa & Schug (1993) replicated Fouts's study and found no significant difference in the responses. While both my participants and I had negative experiences with teacher coaches, that does not mean that everyone does. My recommendation is for further research on this topic.

### *We Only Teach What We Know*

In 2006, Gary Howard authored a book titled *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*. This book was recommended to me when I struggled with the anger and sadness upon learning that I had taught an incomplete history, a Eurocentric version of history. In the U.S., White Americans have the power and privilege to write the version of history that suits their needs and puts them in a more positive light. White Americans write the textbooks and choose the curriculum. White Americans decide funding and own the media (Howard, 2006). He adds, "In this way, we have institutionalized our ignorance in the name of education. Through the filter of our particular truth, we have projected only a narrow wavelength of light, usually tinted to favor our own countenance" (pg. 63). I came to understand that I was teaching what I knew. I did not know about the Tulsa Race Massacre; therefore, I did not teach it. I did not know the whole story about Christopher Columbus or Rosa Parks, so I taught an incomplete history. I taught what I knew.

Howard's book also resonated with me as I reflected upon the two and a half years I spent with my participants. They, too, taught what they knew. Most of the participants learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre as adults, many of them well into their teaching careers. Their emotions were remarkably like mine when they found out about something so close to home – something they had never taught. They were outraged. They were sorrowful. They wondered who was to blame for their lack of knowledge. They also experienced a deep desire for the cycle of not knowing to stop with them. These teachers vowed to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre even if it was not in their Oklahoma Academic Standards. All the participants continued learning about

the Tulsa Race Massacre and ways to teach it to their students after the workshop. They also wanted to learn more about the Massacre for themselves and to share with family and friends. They read, they researched, and they participated in more professional developments. Their drive to learn what they don't know has inspired me to continue my research past this dissertation.

The teaching of American history is not a neutral act (Litner, 2004). History textbooks teach us what is important. They also teach us stereotypes and biases that persist long after we take our last history class. One way in which racial stereotypes and biases can be disrupted is through the lens of Critical Race Theory. Specifically, CRT challenges the dominant discourse and master narratives present in the curriculum and history textbook. By encouraging teachers and students to interrogate the curriculum, we are empowering them to think critically about whose story is told and whose story is hidden. Litner (2004) contended that using CRT shifts the focus of historical “perception from the visible to the invisible, from the powerful to the powerless (p. 30). This shift works to ensure that stories like the cover-up of the Tulsa Race Massacre does not happen again.

### **Limitations of Current Study**

As with most qualitative research, a limited number of participants offer a limited number of lived experiences. Only seven of the sixteen professional development attendees agreed to participate in this research study. Of these seven, one participant retired in the middle of the research. Further, these seven participants represent a small fraction of the teachers teaching about the Tulsa Race Massacre in their classrooms across Oklahoma. Despite there being two males who participated in the professional development, all of those who chose to participate in this study were female, which further limits this study.

COVID-19 was another limitation of this study. I began interviewing my participants in February of 2020. In March of 2020, COVID-19 caused the closure of school buildings in

Oklahoma and around the globe. Because of this, some of my participants were either limited in how they taught about the Tulsa Race Massacre the first year or were completely unable to teach about the Massacre. All the participants had plans to teach about the Massacre, but COVID-19 limited these plans.

COVID-19 continued to be an issue in the following school year as well (2020-2021). While some of the participants taught about the Massacre face to face, others continued to be online. Participants who were face-to-face had other limitations caused by limited physical and social contact, such as no group work, no field trips, and no visits to the library. One participant retired because of health concerns. The second year was also interrupted by an ice storm (October) and a blizzard (February) which again impacted the teaching of the Tulsa Race Massacre because of school weather closings and power outages that reduced school days. Also, I had to conduct most of the interviews virtually.

### **Significance of the Study**

The timeliness of this research is the most extensive significance of this study. The Tulsa Race Massacre professional development took place in 2019, just two years before the hundredth commemoration of the Tulsa Race Massacre. I interviewed participants in 2019, 2020, and 2021. During these years, the Tulsa community was preparing to honor and commemorate this historic event. During this time, many Tulsans did not agree with the recognition that this event received. As noted in the Facebook responses highlighted in Chapter IV, many were upset about how teachers were going to teach about the Massacre, whether it was a riot or a massacre, the possibility for reparations, and the search for mass graves. This tension continues today, several months past the 100-year centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre, as families of Massacre victims are seeking reparations and Tulsa is struggling to heal.

Also, questions have arisen of late about how teachers approach the teaching of various subjects. There have been accusations that schools are indoctrinating students. Critical Race Theory has become a common topic across the United States. A term that was not well known just a year ago is causing issues in schools, districts, and legislative bodies. Despite claims from educators, including most of my participants, that they are not teaching CRT, bills have been passed in several states across the U.S., including Oklahoma. Governor Kevin Stitt signed into law House Bill 1775. This controversial bill prohibits the teaching of Critical Race Theory in Oklahoma schools. How will this bill impact the teaching of the Tulsa Race Massacre? With the bill in its infancy, little is known about how this could impact such important work.

Can we trust history? In this research, I have followed teachers as they grappled with this question - teachers learning about the Massacre for the very first time or are learning how to teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre to their students. These teachers have wrestled with their emotions in regard to not knowing about the Massacre until they were adults. They struggled with how to instruct their students about this timely event even if it is not in their standards. They questioned the textbook and trustworthiness of what they read and what they want their students to read. It is critical that as educators, we continue to grow and learn those subjects with which we are unfamiliar with and those topics with which we are uncomfortable.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In contrast to the number of teachers in Oklahoma that could teach about the Tulsa Race Massacre, this research only followed up with seven area teachers. I acknowledge there may be other teachers across the state who also learned about the Massacre later in life and struggled with how to incorporate this topic into their curriculum. This research is just a starting point for more studies like this one. And in considering numbers, it could be followed up with survey research to

get a better understanding of when and if Oklahoma teachers learned about the Tulsa Race Massacre including if and how they teach about it.

Additionally, the Tulsa Race Massacre is not only part of Oklahoma history, but simply the place where it was enacted. It is part of U.S. history that illustrates the precarious founding of this nation, a nation founded on the socially constructed caste system of race (Wilkerson, 2020). Greenwood was a beacon of hope to Black citizens and heralded as Black Wall Street around the nation. How many other prosperous Black communities were destroyed by hate and jealousy whose existence was erased by either violence, rezoning, or other means?

Since HB1775 is in its infancy, a follow-up study about how teachers, even the seven from the current study, negotiated including historical topics with racial overtones into their curriculum. Including parents in a study about HB1775 would also be something to consider. I would like to know the long-term effects of this bill on teachers and the curriculum. Along with researching teachers and HB1775, one could also examine how CRT impacts schools and teachers. This legislation is also taking place across southern states in the nation, again pointing to a history of oppression of one group over another that continues to fester over lack of reparation.

When conducting the research, I discovered several teachers, like me, who chose who to return to teach in the school district where they received their education. Some of the participants, myself included, even taught at the same school they attended as a child. I think this limited my worldview. How does it affect other teachers?

Researchers documented the changes that effective professional development has on teachers, that lead to pedagogical changes, and ultimately changes in their students (Borko et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jenkins & Agamba, 2013; Svendsen, 2020). However, I was unable to discover research that documented personal changes that teachers make because of

their participation in professional development. All seven participants credited the Tulsa Race Massacre workshop with changes they made personally: a deeper understanding of their identity, an enhanced ability to have difficult conversations, and an exploration of Whiteness. Further research about changes that teachers make because of effective professional development needs to be conducted.

Finally, we need to continue exploring how the racial identity of teachers impacted what they taught and how they taught. I learned so much from listening to these seven women talk about the struggles understanding the unrecognized privilege of growing up White and how to approach teaching a sensitive historical event from a background of privilege. I think a deeper exploration of identity is needed.

### **Final Thoughts**

How do you end two and a half years of research? What are my last thoughts? I am writing these thoughts from a bench outside on Greenwood Avenue. If I look to my right, I can see OSU-Tulsa. This place is where the idea for my dissertation took shape. This place is where I took many of my classes in my graduate work. This place was also the scene of a crime – a crime that went unnoticed; a crime that was not acknowledged; a crime that, to this day, nobody has had to pay for. This crime was the Tulsa Race Massacre. OSU-Tulsa acknowledges the land that it sits on, but is it enough? From where I am sitting, I can see the 70-foot OSU-Tulsa tower that lights up the sky, but I cannot see the small plaque that tells the story of the land beneath the tower – the land that at one time steadied machine guns aimed at fleeing Black Tulsans. There is a plaque, but is that enough? I also notice a few letters on the sign that lets one know they are at Oklahoma State University. Today there is a new Tulsa Race Massacre mural that stands in front of the words Oklahoma State University. When I first saw this mural, to me it symbolized covering OSU-Tulsa, much like the Massacre was covered for so many years. Is this enough?

I look to the left, and I see the Greenwood of today. I see the Vernon A.M.E church that was rebuilt after the Massacre of 1921. I see a church that serves the community with a focus on social justice. I see a monument that lists the businesses lost in the Tulsa Race Massacre along with the monetary loss. Is this enough? I see the new Greenwood Rising History Center dedicated to the history of The Tulsa Race Massacre recently opened on August 4, 2021. I also see the Black Wall St. mural. I see this mural painted on the side of a highway that cuts right through the heart of Greenwood. Some acknowledge this as the second Massacre of Greenwood, but is it enough? The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Commemoration Commission was formed to “educate all citizens” about the Tulsa Race Massacre but was that enough? Many Tulsans want to move on and forget this event happened. Others disparage the fight for reparations. At the same time, still others dispute the search for mass graves. Any mention of reparations or mass graves on social media brings out the hateful rhetoric. When will it be enough to just be a community of Tulsans working together to heal?

This dissertation journey has been fraught with a tension that felt and continue to feel all the way to my soul. Despite coming to this research as a White woman, I did not come to it lightly. I examined everything about myself as a person – my thoughts, my actions, and my beliefs. I changed politically, academically, and even religiously. I have worked through some learning and some deeply embedded racist unlearning. During my dissertation defense I was questioned about my use of brackets around the word White. One of my committee members is a person of color and she was not sure if she was comfortable with the non-White participants being labeled [White]. Like many other issues throughout this dissertation, I wrestled with the decision. I discussed the choice with one of the [White] participants. While she was unsure if she liked that label, she said as the researcher it was my choice. We discussed possibly changing it to teachers of color or invisible teachers, but I chose to leave my work intact at this point. While there is not a set definition of bracketing in qualitative research, researchers such as Creswell and

Miller (2000) stated it involved biases while Beech (1999) claimed it encompassed the researchers' beliefs and values, while Starks and Trinidad (2007) claimed bracketing involves the researchers' thoughts and hypotheses. As a novice researcher, I wrestled with my decision to use brackets to designate these two women as [White]: am I using a microaggression by doing so? I decided that bracketing is an appropriate designation in this instance and have decided to leave it in my dissertation.

Despite the possibility of facing critique from readers of this dissertation, I assert that at the time of this writing, I felt this was the wording I wanted to use to highlight the microaggressions of either being forced to identify as White or because of the ease of passing as White, a result of microaggression. Like my participants, I am on a journey. As I continue to grow in my own identity as a White woman, more will probably change for me and I acknowledge that at some point, I may change my mind or even regret this designation, but for now, it stays.

In this dissertation, I described the struggles of my journey with honesty, humility, and some shame. For the first time, I have acknowledged my family's racist past. I admitted to racist comments I have made and doing this was not easy. I work daily on confronting my privilege and working against racism, but is it enough? The answer is no. It is not enough yet. I will wear my peelable tag of racist/antiracist as I continue this journey as a more knowledgeable and understanding, but still seeking and struggling, White woman.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

# WRITING & REMEMBRANCE: STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING THE 1921 TULSA RACE MASSACRE

This interactive 3-day workshop offers teachers (grades 5-12) curriculum ideas and strategies to address the events of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Using literature, writing, field trips, and guest speakers, participants will build curriculum and resources to take back to their classroom. All participants will receive books, digital resources, and a professional development certificate for hours completed.



**JUNE 11-13, 2019**

9am - 4pm  
Bank of Oklahoma Room (North Hall  
140)  
Cost \$25



For more information, contact:  
Dr. Shanedra Nowell  
shanedra.nowell@okstate.edu  
Event Link:

<http://bit.ly/writingandremembrance>

## Appendix B

### Interview 1

1. Describe the neighborhood in which you grew up.
2. Describe the schools in which you attended.
3. Tell me about your undergraduate experience – school, major
4. How many years have you taught? What are you teaching this year?
5. When did you learn about the Tulsa Race Massacre?
6. What did you know about the Massacre before you attended the professional development?
7. What did you learn about the Massacre at the workshop?
8. Have you ever taught about the Massacre before attending the workshop?
9. Why did you sign up to take the workshop?
10. Describe your experiences at the workshop – what impacted you the most?
11. Did you teach the Massacre this year? If so, how? If not, why?
12. Did you have any responses from students? Parents? Administration?

## Appendix C

### Interview 2

1. Describe your teaching assignment this year.
2. In the demographic survey, you identified as White or (biracial). How does your identity impact your learning and teaching?
3. What have you done to learn about your racial identity?
4. Why do you feel it important to learn about yourself?
5. Describe how growing up with people that were just like you impacted you and your teaching (for those that responded this way).
6. Discussion of specifics from interview 1 – clarifying – probing.
7. (If they hadn't taught it yet at time of first interview) – how did teaching about the Massacre go last year? What resources and strategies from the workshop did you include, if any?
8. Did you have any written responses or assignments for the Massacre?
9. Will you teach the Massacre again? Will you change anything?
10. Why is teaching the Massacre important to you?
11. Has COVID-19 affected your teaching? How?

## Appendix D

### Interview 3

1. Much has come up in the past two interviews about the emotions that have come to the surface when learning about the Massacre, when attending the workshop, and teaching about it to your students. Look at this emotions wheel and see if you can describe your feelings with the wheel.
2. How did it feel as a Tulsa native, not knowing this history? (if this is true)
3. What changed, if anything, about your sense of responsibility in teaching this? What do you think White people should know about this history and teaching this content?
4. One participant mentioned she had to do ‘a lot of unlearning.’ Did you find that you did some unlearning? If so, please describe.
5. Often teachers “just cover” a standard or learning goal to check it off as done. What are the implications of some teachers ‘just covering’ the Tulsa Race Massacre? Or continuing with because it makes them uncomfortable?
6. Deeper discussion of interview 1 and 2 – tough conversations, textbooks, comfort with difficult topics.
7. Did you teach the Massacre this year? Or do you plan to? Describe.
8. Let’s talk about HB 1775 – First do you know what Critical Race Theory is? Do you teach CRT? Have you read the bill? How do you interpret it? How will this bill impact the way you teach? Has your school district made any proclamations about this?

## Appendix E

### Demographic Survey ~ Tulsa Race Massacre Workshop

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Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q21 Thank you for your recent interview participation. As a follow-up, please complete this brief survey to provide demographic information. The information you share will not only provide me additional context, but also helps me avoid making assumptions as I read, analyze, and write about the interview. As noted in your signed consent form, all information you share in this online survey is confidential and will be anonymized. As the investigator, I am the only person who will have access to your responses. While the first question is required, all the remaining questions are optional. Please answer and/or skip any questions that you wish. Although your responses to all the questions would be appreciated and helpful, I understand people have various levels of comfort in sharing aspects that may seem sensitive. I also understand that some of the questions might duplicate items we discussed in the interview. If you have questions, please contact me: Shelley Young dawn.martin-young@okstate.edu or (918)850-9941 (cell)

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Q1 Name

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Q2 What is your race/ethnicity

- White (1)
  - Black or African American (2)
  - American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
  - Asian (4)
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
  - LatinX (6)
  - Multiracial (7)
- 

Q3 What is your age?

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Q15 Where were you born?

---

Q4 What is your gender identity?

- Male (1)
  - Female (2)
  - Non-binary (3)
  - Other (4)
-

Q11 What is the highest degree or level of education completed?

- High school (1)
- Bachelor's Degree (2)
- Master's Degree (3)
- Ph.D. or higher (4)

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Q12 Where did you receive your bachelor's degree and what was your area of study?

\_\_\_\_\_

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Q13 If you have a master's degree or are currently working on your master's, from which university did/will you receive your degree?

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

Q14 If you have a Ph.D or are currently working on your Ph.D, from which university did/will you receive your degree?

\_\_\_\_\_

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Q5 Including the 2019-2020 school year, how many years have you taught?

\_\_\_\_\_

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Q6 List schools and school districts for which you have taught

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Q7 For which school and school district did you teach for the 2019-2020 school year?

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Q8 What grade did you teach?

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Q9 What subject/subjects did you teach? How many sections of each? (2019-2020 school year)

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Q10 How many students were in your class/classes total?

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Q18 How did you teach the Tulsa Race Massacre in the 2019-2020 school year?

- I taught the Tulsa Race Massacre face to face (1)
  - I taught the Tulsa Race Massacre online (2)
  - I didn't teach the Tulsa Rae Massacre last year (3)
  - I taught the Tulsa Race Massacre both face to face and online. (4)
- 

Q19 Do you plan to teach the Tulsa Race Massacre this school year (2020-2021)?

- Definitely yes (1)
  - Probably yes (2)
  - Might or might not (3)
  - Probably not (4)
  - Definitely not (5)
- 

Q20 How has COVID-19 impacted your teaching of the Tulsa Race Massacre?

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Q16 I have been reflecting on the importance of place in regards to the Tulsa Race Massacre Workshop. In thinking about where the workshop took place and the walking field trip that we took through Greenwood, could you reflect on both of those for me. Think about: how important was where the workshop took place? What was significant to you about walking Greenwood? What were some of the sights, sounds, smells that made an impression on you? Reflect on anything you found important during this time.

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Q17 Is there anything else you would like to share about the workshop or your experience teaching the Tulsa Race Massacre?

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End of Block: Default Question Block

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## Appendix F

### Tulsa Race Massacre Workshop Survey of Professional Development Participants

Name:

(optional)

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E-Mail Address

(optional)

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Please respond to the following comments, providing the appropriate rating (with 5 being the highest agreed). [**Strongly Agree** is 5 to the right]

#	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
1	The <b>workshop</b> <u>have been useful</u> to my professional learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I <b>have been exposed to ideas</b> that will work in <u>my</u> classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I have sufficient resources to <b>modify some strategies</b> from the session that <b>can work in my classrooms</b> .	1	2	3	4	5
4	The workshop <b>interactivity</b> helped my professional learning.	1	2	3	4	5
5	<b>More sessions</b> of this type should be <u>offered</u> .	1	2	3	4	5
6	The workshop moved at an <b>appropriate pace</b> .	1	2	3	4	5
7	The instructor(s) was/were well <b>prepared</b> to teach this workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The material covered was <b>presented clearly</b> .	1	2	3	4	5
9	The <b>resources</b> presented within this workshop were helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I feel that <b>my professional expertise</b> was <u>valued</u> and nurtured during the workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
11	The <b>guest speakers</b> were informative and worthwhile.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The interaction and discussion allowed me opportunities for professional <b>connection</b> with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
13	The <b>balance</b> of lecture and hands on work was appropriate for the content.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I would <b>recommend</b> this workshop to others.	1	2	3	4	5

Please describe and give an example of resources or ideas you've learned about in the workshop and how you might use them in your classroom practice/pedagogy.

Please offer any feedback you would like to share with the presenters or with Oklahoma State University related to this workshop.



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 02/20/2020  
Application Number: IRB-20-109  
Proposal Title: EDUCATING A COMMUNITY: (RE)-  
CONSTRUCTING THE TULSARACE  
MASSACRE

Principal Investigator: Dawn  
Martin-Young  
Co-Investigator(s):  
Faculty Adviser:

Sue Parsons  
Project Coordinator:  
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt  
Exempt Category:

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved**

---

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

**This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.**

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may

include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.

2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744- 3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Oklahoma State University IRB

VITA

Dawn Martin-Young

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE TULSA RACE MASSACRE: AN  
EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF A PLACE-BASED PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT ON OKLAHOMA TEACHERS

Major Field: Language, Literacy, and Culture

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Language,  
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December 2021.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Library Media and  
Information Technology at Northeastern State University, Broken Arrow,  
Oklahoma in May 2010.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Elementary  
Education at University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, in May  
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Experience:

Adjunct Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistant at Oklahoma State  
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Elementary Teacher and Library Media Specialist at Sand Springs Public  
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Professional Memberships:

Association of Literacy Researchers

National Council of Teachers of English