Strategies Exemplary Social Studies Teachers' Implement When Facilitating Discussions About Race

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School of Educational Leadership

Strategies Exemplary Social Studies Teachers' Implement When Facilitating Discussions About

Race

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Dr. Candice Nicole Jasmer

March 2020

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my children Tristan, Mackenzie, and Maddox, whom I hope to continue the tradition of putting one foot in front of the other, never giving up, and never giving in when in pursuit of your goals. Also, to my mom, who instilled that the glory of God is intelligence. "Education is a *must*, not an *option*," she said. Finally, to my sweet dog Baylor, who is now in heaven, you loved to hear me type, and you never left my side.

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Mom and Jeff, thank you for making sure your children and grandchildren all recognize the value of hard work and education, both formal and otherwise. Thank you for being a daily presence in my kids' life, and for all the times you picked up, dropped off, cooked, and help me be a better mom. I hope I have made you proud. I could not have accomplished this without you.

I would like to take this time to thank the participants who shared their time and experiences to make my study possible. I learned a great deal from you all through the process. Thank you for your time spent discussing the strategies and tools you use to help students learn

to communicate effectively their perspectives of the world and how to listen to and understand the voices of others truly.

Above all else, thank you, God. Thank you for the lessons and obstacles placed before me that have caused me to pause and focus on who I am and who I have become rather than what I have been waiting for. In the meantime, on this journey, I realized I still have much to accomplish.

Abstract

Teachers experience difficulty in introducing some sensitive and controversial issues in the classroom environment. The purpose of this qualitative instrumental case study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically, racial issues framed within Singleton and Linton's 4 agreements of courageous conversations: stay engaged, speak your truth, experience discomfort, and accept and expect nonclosure. This study utilized qualitative data collection. Semi-structured, online one-to-one internet-based interviews were used to document the lived experiences of exemplary secondary social studies teachers and the strategies they use when facilitating discussions about sensitive and controversial issues such as race in the classroom. Voluntarily submitted participant artifacts such as lesson plans, strategies, and multimedia resources were utilized to provide in-class strategies and context. The 4 purposefully selected secondary social studies teachers, 3 males and 1 female, met the criteria to be included in this study by being a recipient of the National Council for the Social Studies, Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year award. Moreover, each participant is a current or previous classroom teacher of 1 or more courses under the content area of secondary social studies. Geographically, all participants reside within the continental United States. An overall conclusion of the findings revealed that teachers need to teach and model how to communicate effectively by acquiring the ability and willingness to share, hear, understand, and accept multiple perspectives effectively both in and of the classroom.

Keywords: best practices, secondary social studies, strategies, race, sensitive and controversial issues, courageous conversations, perception, effective communication strategies

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Teachers, like students, work more effectively when they are supported and provided the knowledge and skills necessary to transform and succeed (Mathews, 2015). In fact, Singleton (2013) emphasized a need to rethink or abandon poorly constructed educational initiatives that perpetuate the gap in equitable education for all and instead evolve and meet students where they are currently rather than being a part of the status quo. Indeed, Dewey's (1897) seminal vision of what education is, what school is, and a schools' role in social progress served as a signal to a schools' leaders to continually work to educate students for their future. Dewey (1897) passionately stated:

> I believe that the school must represent present life – life as real and vital to the child. I believe it is the business of everyone interested in education to insist upon the school as the primary and most effective instrument of social progress and reform in order that society may be awakened to realize what the school stands for … and that the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life. (pp. 77–80)

Since John Dewey presented his view of the purpose of education in *My Pedagogic Creed*, the discussion among theorists and practitioners has revolved around what should be taught in schools, how to discuss issues of significance with students, and how to help students use the knowledge and skills gained both in the classroom and beyond (Copur & Demirel, 2016; Estivalèzes, 2017; Hartwick, Hawkins, & Schroeder, 2016; Misco, 2016; Singleton, 2013). To further support Dewey's assertion, Soares (2013) postulated that as far back as 1916, scholars emphasized that the educational curriculum must be structured to prepare students using real-life experiences, which will help them better reach and sustain "life outside schools' walls" (p. 69).

Chapter 1 is organized such that the reader will understand the background and conceptual framework of the study. This is followed by the statement of the problem, which will situate the specific problem and purpose of the study, including the framework applied and the

research questions investigated. The chapter concludes with definitions of key terms and a preview of what will occur in Chapter 2, the literature review.

Background of the Study

Diversity, whether it is cultural, ethnic, racial, political, and/or religious, occurs naturally in all classrooms and, consequently, this diversity influences the definition of education and its presentation in classrooms (Günel, 2016). While Singleton (2013) indicated much had been done to meet the cultural, ethnic, racial, political, and religious challenges of today and tomorrow, he noted that the ideologies shared and written by practitioners are often far from what occurs in practice. Indeed, Singleton suggested how fortunate teachers are not to be assessed based on whether their ideals align with their actions in the classroom. However, teachers are obligated to promote tolerance and understanding without allowing their inter-group attitudes, stereotypes, and biases to affect teaching practices and behaviors toward students and others (Kello, 2016; Kuş, 2015).

Teachers, particularly those at the secondary level of public education who teach courses under the umbrella of social studies and civic education, are charged with the responsibility to teach and discuss with students global and often "sensitive and controversial issues (SCIs)" daily (Kello, 2016, p. 35). By extension, Günel (2016) posited global education has found its way into the social studies curricula and has created a platform to address issues such as "open-mindedness, multiple perspectives, eliminating stereotyping, discrimination, racism, acceptance of diversity, different cultures, and universal values as well as different cultural values and empathy for the marginalized" (p. 443). Admittedly, teachers are "critical levers" to students' interests and choices and "curricular-instructional gatekeepers" of the student experience (Misco, 2016, p. 334).

Regardless of social studies teachers' roles to guide students' educational experiences, Estivalèzes (2017) emphasized teachers' duty to "decenter themselves and assume a detached and critical stance that enables them to recognize their own culture's potential limits and to be open to different perspectives and points of view convergent to their own" (p. 62). As a result, teachers struggle to facilitate discussions, which venture outside their level of comfort and beyond the parameters of what has been supplied in a textbook or through a schools' prescribed curriculum. While it is true that controversial issues can be dangerous, intimidating, and divisive for teachers and students alike, it does not necessarily follow that schools and teachers should not "have to help students to handle questions of value and learn to make judgments which are truly their own" (Kuş, 2015, p. 84). Consequently, Singleton (2013) pointed out that educators need to understand sensitive issues such as race before they can begin to have conversations about the issues and introduce them in the classroom and to students.

Organizations, such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), have been in support of reshaping educational policies, programs, and schools to educate students in a way that will prepare them to be global citizens ready to understand and be an active participant within the world in which they live (NCSS, 2013). Nevertheless, teachers feel uncertain and unprepared to teach SCIs in secondary social studies classrooms (Kello, 2016). Thus, they hesitate or even refrain from discussing SCIs in the classroom, choosing instead to remain distant and factual to avoid problems (Gindi & Erlich, 2018; Kello, 2016; Misco, 2016; Steinberger & Magen-Nagar, 2017).

For instance, Maxwell, McDonough, and Waddington (2018) noted that teachers avoid uncomfortable or difficult conversations because they do not want to generate shouting matches, instances where students will become the target of ridicule or bullying, and do not want to place

themselves in a position where they must choose between their students' interests and their job security. By extension, Maxwell et al. (2018) noted the scrutiny teachers face when "teacher speech" contradicts the curricular content or poses a perceived threat to the rights of students as a captive audience (p. 198). As a result, Maxwell et al. argued teachers who value exposing their students to the broadest possible range of viewpoints through discussion and debate must accept that they might fall victim to judgment about the appropriateness of the content which is discussed with students as in the case of *Webster v. New Lenox School District*.

According to Maxwell et al. (2018), in the case of *Webster v. New Lenox School District*, Webster, a science teacher, argued that although he understood the district's stance against the inclusion of creationism, Webster felt he had the "academic freedom" to provide students both the state curriculum and facilitate discussion about creationism (p. 199). Moreover, Webster not only lost the appeal, but the court system also deemed Webster as irresponsible based on his choice to force upon students his personal view. In discussions of what should and should not be included in the student curriculum, Zaver (2015) noted that one controversial issue has been whether teacher neutrality disrupts the learning process. On the one hand, Zaver posited not permitting educators to venture outside the state curriculum, diminishes their ability to model for students how to analyze and assess different perspectives. On the other hand, Zaver conceded that without teacher neutrality, the fear of indoctrination exists. Regardless of the professional or legal ramifications, researchers in favor of the use of SCIs in the social studies classroom deplore tactics used by teachers to avoid controversial topics of discussion because it disrupts the beauty of a democracy, limits higher-order thinking skills, and diminishes the notion of tolerance and acceptance (Hartwick et al., 2016; Kuppens, Langer & Ibrahim, 2018; Misco & Tseng, 2018).

According to Singleton (2015), the United States educational system needs an overhaul for which the future of all children is considered so that all children are prepared to enter the world. Doing so would secure a more communicative and inclusive American school system in which alternative methods are used to face head-on those issues which seemingly have torn schools and communities apart. It is with this goal, racial awareness in schools and ending racism, that Singleton and Linton (2006) set the framework of their work, *Courageous Conversations about Race*, a guide to facilitate discussions about SCIs such as race with students effectively.

Statement of the Problem

Copur and Demirel (2016) suggested, "Teachers experience difficulty in introducing some issues into the classroom environment" (p. 82). In other words, not only do teachers not feel comfortable and lack the confidence to teach SCIs, but they often reflect on teaching these issues as a continuous stress (Gindi & Erlich, 2018; Misco, 2016; Steinberger & Magen-Nagar, 2017; Van Beveren, Rutten, Vandermeersche, & Verdoodt, 2018), and also doubt students' "ability or maturity to engage in meaningful discussions" which involve SCIs (Maxwell, McDonough, & Waddington, 2018, p. 197).

Singleton (2013) argued that teachers must have the fortitude to discuss issues such as race despite racial issues being a seemingly taboo topic of discussion in the context of the current educational system. The literature regarding the significance of teaching SCIs has indicated social studies curriculum and discussion should facilitate the development of real-world skills that will serve students in and out of a classroom setting (Copur & Demirel, 2016; Hartwick et al., 2016; Kuppens et al., 2018; Misco & Tseng, 2018).

There is limited research aimed at stimulating secondary social studies classroom curricula to train in-service teachers to teach global and SCIs to students to be individuals equipped with the skills of the 21st century (Alongi, Heddy, & Sinatra, 2016; Copur & Demirel, 2016; Misco, 2016). As a framework for understanding how teachers facilitate difficult conversations about SCIs such as race, the purpose of this study is to draw upon the work of Singleton and Linton (2006), Singleton and Hays (2008), and Singleton (2013, 2015), who argued that four agreements are necessary for individuals to begin courageous conversations. The researchers' expansive work is focused on race and raising awareness about racism as a topic of discussion in schools to allow those who have knowledge about issues of race to share what they know and allow those who lack knowledge about race to learn and grow from the exchange. Because discussions about SCIs, such as race, can be dangerous, emotionally charged, and unpredictable, their four agreements of courageous conversations include the following:

- stay engaged,

- experience discomfort,

- speak your truth, and

- accept a lack of closure.

Singleton and Hays (2008) suggested that individuals who understand and commit to these four agreements provide a guide for "safe exploration and profound learning for all" when negotiating potentially polarizing topics of discussion (p. 18).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues, framed within Singleton and Linton (2006) and

Singleton's (2015) four agreements of courageous conversations. Utilizing a qualitative, instrumental collective case study, the primary source of data for this study were narrative teacher interview responses. The research questions posed in this study were supported by a qualitative and dialogical approach that denoted teachers' unique perspectives about how they engage students when facilitating difficult conversations. The interviews were analyzed to determine the participants' experiences and to identify resulting themes regarding the research questions. A purposeful sample of four exemplary social studies teachers were interviewed. Four of the 10 NCSS award winners who were contacted for this study stated they would participate in the study. All four of the awardees were chosen because of the diversity of their locations, student populations, years of experience, and their eagerness to share their teaching strategies. This study utilized online, one-to-one internet-based interviewing (Gupta, 2017) because the sample population was gathered from different regions of the United States, and face-to-face interviews were not feasible. Online consent from voluntary participants was obtained.

Research Questions

The study will seek to answer the following research questions:

Q1. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged?

Q2. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group?

Q3. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations in which one might feel uncomfortable?

Q4. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved?

Q5. What are the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers regarding facilitating courageous conversations with students?

Definition of Key Terms

Included are several key terms used throughout this study. An understanding of how the terms are used in this study is relevant to the reader's understanding of the topic. The definition for each term is as follows:

Bias. The term *stereotypes* or *judgment statements* or *inter-group attitudes* are used to discuss the irrelevant factors which influence teachers when they make decisions about student performance and student ability and capability (Meissel, Meyer, Yao, & Rubie-Davies 2017). For example, subjective views of students' ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, weight, socioeconomic status, and special needs status are said to affect teachers' decision making processes about a student's achievement (Byrd & Andrews Carter, 2016; Desmond & Roth, 2016; Ehlert, Marston, Fontana, & Waldron, 2015; Fish, 2017; Fitzpatrick, Cote-Lussier, Pagani, & Blair, 2015; Meissel et al., 2017; Mol, Jolles, & Boerma, 2016; Timmermans, Boer & Werf, 2016).

Civic education. The term *social studies* is used interchangeably in this study to address those courses wherein enrolled students participate in the acquisition of knowledge in the areas of economics, geography, the evolution of human history, religion, government and political processes such as in a democracy, and the study of the rights and duties of citizenship within the United States (Maxwell et al., 2018; NCSS, 2013).

Difficult conversations. In the context of this study, difficult conversations allude to the discussion of sensitive and controversial subject matter between parties wherein opinions are developed and whereby groups are formed which offer different perceptions to societal concerns (Gindi & Erlich, 2018).

Global citizens. In the context of this study, a global citizen is a person who has the ability and willingness to give back to and contribute further to the current and future development of the community and the world within which they live (Copur & Demirel, 2016; Hartwick et al., 2016; Kuppens et al., 2018; Misco & Tseng, 2018).

Race. This study relied on the socially constructed definition of race pinned to those physical attributes which distinguish individuals from around the globe based on their hair color, hair texture, eye color, bone structure, and skin color/tone (Singleton, 2013).

Racism. The term racism refers to the continual and consistent discrimination of certain groups of people based on their physical traits and who are not a part of the majority (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Sensitive and controversial issues (SCIs). The term *controversial issues* or *difficult issues* or *taboo topics* and the subsequent abbreviation SCIs are used interchangeably in this study. The definition of these terms in the context of this study is those issues or topics of discussion which "cause dissent and division amongst groups in society to either make contradictory explanations or develop different solutions based on different values" (Copur & Demirel, 2016, p. 80). However, researchers agreed there is no definitive explanation to what are and are not controversial issues (Copur & Demirel, 2016; Engebretson, 2018; Gindi & Erlich, 2018).

Chapter Summary

The teaching and discussion of SCIs such as race are not only reasonable and logical, they are necessary to raise student-citizens who have a global viewpoint and who are able to make sound judgments and decisions through the development of toleration and support for equality (Baloğlu Uğurlu, & Doğan, 2016; Copur & Demirel, 2016; Kello, 2015; Kuş, 2015; Misco, 2016). If educators are interested in raising their current education and curriculum standards to embody more authentic learning experiences, teachers and other educational leaders must commit to engaging in courageous conversations about the racial issues faced in society and in schools (Singleton & Hays, 2008; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Soares, 2013). This can ultimately work if a better understanding of how teachers teach and facilitate difficult conversations is provided. Since the four agreements of courageous conversations are based in open dialogue, educators can "muster the strength" to tackle topics like race (Singleton & Hays, 2008, p. 19).

The subsequent research of this study is divided into four additional chapters. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature on the nature of teaching controversial issues within the educational setting, along with the ethical responsibility of social studies teachers to facilitate and act as agents of civic education implementation. Also discussed in Chapter 2 is the analysis of teachers' and students' perceptions of the relevance and need for civic education. The review of literature presents an explanation of the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the Singleton and Linton's (2006) four agreements of courageous conversations. Compounding this notion is the evidence that *mindful facilitation* based on Singleton's (2013) Nine Healthy Ways to Communicate, educators can improve their readiness and willingness to facilitate discussions about race. Moreover, in Chapter 2, the author discusses race and history as a social construct,

including a discussion of race and culture and how to develop a common language around race. Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology. In Chapter 4, the author reports the findings. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, discussion, and conclusion of the findings and implications for practice and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to identify current strategies used by exemplary secondary social studies teachers when facilitating discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically race, in the classroom. This study was framed on the work of Singleton and Linton (2006), Singleton and Hays (2008), and Singleton (2013, 2015), who argued that four agreements are necessary for educators to begin courageous conversations about sensitive and controversial issues (SCIs), specifically race, in the classroom. The teaching and discussion of SCIs such as race are not only reasonable and logical but also are necessary to raise student-citizens who have a global viewpoint and who can make sound judgments and decisions through the development of toleration and support for equality (Baloğlu Uğurlu & Doğan, 2016; Copur & Demirel, 2016; Kello, 2015; Kuş, 2015; Misco, 2016). If schools are interested in raising their current education and curriculum standards to embody more authentic learning experiences, teachers and other educational leaders must commit to engaging in courageous conversations about the racial issues faced in society and schools (Singleton & Hays, 2008; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Soares, 2013).

Chapter 2 is divided into eight parts. In the first section, the researcher reviews the literature relating to the definition of controversial issues. As a partial basis for the study's importance, the second section reviews the research on the significance of the evolution of sensitive and controversial issues in the social studies classroom. The third section focuses on the relevance of civics education. In section four, student skills and the knowledge gained through exposure to civic education are discussed as well as social studies teachers' hesitance to facilitate discussion about SCIs. By extension, in section five, the researcher also presents research on teacher bias and the impact bias has on the learning environment. The sixth section considers the

conceptual framework of the four agreements of courageous conversation and the accompanying courageous conversations compass. In the seventh section, race issues in society are examined. Section seven also discusses the current culture of race within the United States, race in schools, and the significance of cultural pluralism. The final section focuses on effective communication.

The literature search included databases such as Google Scholar, the Abilene Christian University Brown Library, ProQuest Digital Dissertation and Thesis databases, the written work of Singleton and Linton, Singleton, and others. Search engines extended to other university publications such as peer-reviewed journal articles and dissertations. Keywords and phrases used to conduct the search included secondary social studies curriculum, sensitive and controversial issues in the social studies classroom, and teachers' perspectives on the inclusion of difficult conversations in the learning environment.

Controversial Issues

According to Copur and Demirel (2016), there is no commonly accepted definition of controversial issues just as there is not a clear answer to what are and are not controversial issues. In fact, Camicia (2008) noted what was controversial yesterday might not be controversial tomorrow because peoples' understanding and ideologies about society are constantly in flux. Indeed, Camicia asserted that the curricula adopted by schools often mimic societies' acceptance or lack of acceptance of an issue, thereby determining if an issue is "open or closed" to students for discussion within the learning environment (2008, p. 301). Taking into consideration the many ways controversial issues are defined in the literature (Copur & Demirel, 2016), it makes sense that controversial issues are the source of ever-changing and often opposing opinions and perspectives formed by groups about a multitude of societal concerns (Gindi & Erlich, 2018).

In the United States, SCIs at the forefront of societal concern are the perceivably incendiary conduct of elected political officials and racial turmoil (Boyd & Glazier, 2017), which reminds Americans that "Race Matters" (Thorington Springer, 2014, p. 12). Camicia (2008) attributed these and other SCIs to individuals' and groups' conflicting views about "interests, economics, social, or religious beliefs, group affiliations, political expectations" and cultural and racial issues (p. 306). Whereas Zimmerman and Robertson (2017) provided ample evidence of opposition geared to ban the teaching and discussion of controversial issues in schools, others insist that the inclusion of SCIs is an essential part of what constitutes a true learning environment (Boyd & Glazier, 2017; Camicia, 2008; Yacek, 2018; Zimmerman & Robertson, 2017). Soares (2013) posited schools should be a place where discussions about different beliefs, values, and perspectives can be shared rather than a place where real-life issues are ignored. Indeed, he acknowledged that schools should be a place to break down the barriers which cause division among groups and perpetuate social barriers in the classroom.

Zimmerman and Robertson (2017) noted that in 1947, the California State Senate proposed legislation that would all but eradicate the teaching of SCIs in public schools. Despite rejecting the California Senate's measure to censor "intelligent citizenship, debate, deliberation, and discussion," further attempts to stifle the inclusion of controversial issues occurred when Southern public school stakeholders prohibited teachers from facilitating conversations about slavery (p. 9). In fact, Zimmerman and Robertson reported those teachers who chose to present to students the topic of race and slavery were fired. As unreasonable as this might sound, Zimmerman and Robertson argued teachers of the 1960s and 1970s faced a similar fate when the discussion of highly publicized political issues such as the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and socialism and communism resulted in dismissal, demotion, and ostracism of

teachers. Reported actions of school districts of the 1970s appeared to coincide with the addition

of alternative teaching methods, which changed how content was delivered to students (Alongi et

al., 2016; Zimmerman & Roberts, 2017). In the 1970s, civic education was revamped and took a

more student-centered approach, which went beyond memorizing historical and geographical

facts (Alongi et al., 2016). Specifically, Zimmerman and Roberts (2017) noted a change from

conventional teaching methods to strategies that emphasized the "depth of understanding of

concepts, thematic patterns, and student engagement that included room for inquiry, construction

of meaning and application to contextualized issues beyond the classroom" (p. 12). Indeed,

Soares (2013) postulated that as far back as 1916, scholars wrote the educational curriculum

must be structured to prepare students using real-life experiences, which will help them better

reach and sustain "life outside schools' walls" (p. 69).

Since the 1970s, researchers have argued that not enough has been done to make social

studies a priority in schools (Alongi et al., 2016; Hall Jamieson, 2013). According to Soares

(2013), high stakes testing in which schools are now graded under new educational reform has

contributed to "troubled times" in society because democracy and social justice curriculum are

often ignored (p. 69). Hall Jamieson (2013) wrote that a lack of social science and civic

education in schools would result in students who not only lack awareness of public and

community issues but will lack the ability and willingness to talk about different views and

understand different perspectives outside their own. Hall Jamieson's sentiments about social

studies and civic education's low priority status can be attributed to the omission of social

studies and civic education goals in the stated proficiency standards of the 2002 No Child Left

Behind Act (NCLB), and its later revision in 2007. Although Hall Jamieson did not say so

directly, she suggested NCLB's' lack of emphasis on social studies contributed to low levels of voting and waning civic-minded knowledge among youth.

The more recently adopted Common Core Standards of 2010 did little to reestablish a need for sound social studies instruction and skills such as a critical inquiry, according to Alongi, Heddy, and Sinatra (2016). Cho (2018) argued that the Common Core Standards forced students and other educational stakeholders to abandon independent thought if they desire to meet the expectations of the national curriculum and become competitive. In fact, it was not until the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) framework was introduced in 2013 that social studies teachers were provided a guide to implementing the skills proposed by the Common Core (NCSS, 2013; Randall & Marangell, 2016). Specifically, the Common Core, which aimed to improve students' preparedness for college and the workforce, added only one of 10 standards for grades 11 and 12 that conveyed a need for students to think about different perspectives on historical and current issues (NCSS, 2013; Randall & Marangell, 2016).

More recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed by former President Obama on December 10, 2015, represented a newfound commitment to equal opportunity for all students (Kuenzi, 2018). In fact, Kuenzi (2018) reported that the ESSA provided the first definition of the high school graduation rate in federal education law. The implications of the uniformity provided by the ESSA, for the first time, allow schools better track and report the success or lack thereof of student academic progress. Although more can and still needs to be done to serve the needs of all students in all places, Meyers, Goree, and Burton (2019) suggested the ESSA is a first step at bringing about change in the educational setting.

In response, Alongi et al. (2016) and Hall Jamieson (2013) noted that not everyone thinks students need to acquire an appreciation of history, democracy, acceptance, nor the ability

to understand and be aware of societal issues. Alongi et al. (2016) suggested that despite the efforts of organizations such as Civic Mission of the Schools Coalition (CMS), there exists opposition regarding the need for students to be able to think about competing perspectives. Furthermore, Alongi et al. argued educators in schools limit knowledge to what can be easily measured by standardized achievement tests rather than allowing controversy to be a pedagogical tool to be explored in a controlled learning environment. Arguably, the more things change, the more they remain the same (Singleton, 2015). Indeed, "The stakes are high when teaching controversial issues" (Yacek, 2018, p. 72). According to Cho (2018), each newly adopted piece of education reform, the textbook industry, and state accountability systems further narrow social studies curriculum, thereby leaving teachers no choice but to teach to the test.

Evolution of SCIs in the Social Studies Classroom

Facilitating conversations about controversial issues in secondary grade-level social studies classrooms are among the steps needed to prepare students of the 21st century to be productive citizens able to engage with local and global issues (Alongi et al., 2016; Copur & Demiral, 2016; Hartwick et al., 2015; Kuppens et al., 2018; Kuş, 2015; Misco & Tseng, 2016). Copur and Demiral (2016) suggested the current era requires that individuals are raised with communication skills that allow them to think, question, and produce. One implication of Copur and Demirel's research was that communication skills are strengthened by the teaching of controversial issues in the social studies classroom. To further support the need for civic education in schools, Fesnic (2016) indicated the skills and values learned through civic education are lifelong and are a significant determinant of lasting democracy. In fact, Fesnic argued that "open societies," which are dedicated to teaching students skills that focus on solving

real-life problems, often produce young citizens who are more inclusive and less oppressive and repressive as they grow older (Fesnic, 2016, p. 969).

Cho (2018) echoed these sentiments when he discussed the benefit of critical citizen education to develop students' understanding that "joint struggles can be engaged in ways that do not subsume each group under the leadership of one understanding" (p. 277). In short, Cho suggested that civic education is relevant not only to facilitate discussions that challenge students to think critically but to develop students' social action skills to challenge the status quo and enact change.

Alongi et al. (2016) argued that students benefit from in-class discussion and debate, which teach them to effectively convey their thoughts, improve inferencing and higher-order thinking, problem-solve, and make informed decisions. For example, a qualitative analysis of student interviews conducted by Alongi et al. suggested classroom discussions which included controversial issues presented by core concepts in social studies provided opportunities for students to develop and increase their willingness to apply learned concepts outside of class and connect the new knowledge gained to other background knowledge. In another study, Alongi et al. found that students who participated in class discussions about moral issues as an educational tool have developed and improved their moral development and decision-making skills in comparison to students who were not exposed to the alternative teaching strategies.

However, for decades, the United States and countries such as Australia, Russia, Colombia, and Singapore have shared a concern about the lack of interest young people have in issues dealing with civic engagement, political involvement, and civic knowledge, according to Stuteville and Johnson (2016). In the United States, the "balance of the responsibility falls upon the public-school system" (Stuteville & Johnson, 2016, p. 100). Having said this, Stuteville and

Johnson noted that a young person's citizenry skills are not only formed and shaped by the school where they attend but by a mix of factors not limited to family, religion, and mass media. To further complicate matters, the authors indicated there remains a lack of consensus across states about what makes a good citizen. In fact, Stuteville and Johnson (2016) suggested a lack of opportunity to learn all aspects of civic education rather than the adequacy of civic education is the problem to address.

Utilizing the conceptual framework of the seven perspectives on citizenship, Stuteville and Johnson's (2016) research aimed to determine what skills and knowledge kindergarten through 12th-grade students should be learning in civic education classrooms. The seven perspectives on citizenship discussed in the study were liberalism, communitarianism, civic republicanism, assimilation, cultural pluralism, critical thinking, and legalism. Of the seven perspectives discussed by Stuteville and Johnson, cultural pluralism, liberalism, and especially communitarianism were the least discussed aspects of citizenry discussed in schools within the five states included in the study.

Social Studies Teachers as Facilitators/Agents of Civic Education

According to NCSS (2018), secondary social studies teachers' purpose is to "help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (p. 1). Adopted in 1994, NCSS's standards continually evolve to provide guiding principles school districts and teachers can use to build a rigorous and pedagogically sound curriculum for all students. Indeed, Graybill (1997) recognized the relevance of teachers' role as an agent of change within the social studies classroom when she proffered teachers must set high expectations for their students, encourage

students to ask questions and delve deeper into the injustices of the world, and promote excellence among all children regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Singleton (2015) acknowledged the demands placed on teachers when he stated that teaching "requires remarkable skill, substantial knowledge, and significant effort" (p. 19). However, Singleton noted that tantamount to expertise is a passion for the profession and, more importantly, a passion for educating all children. Moreover, he argued a belief in the importance of equity is what distinguishes exceptional educators and the schools at which the teachers work from the rest. On the contrary, Singleton indicated teachers and educational leaders who lack passion and a desire to prepare all students for their future, regardless of race or ethnicity, would continue to fail. In fact, Günel (2016) argued that not all pre-service and in-service teachers have the critical thinking capacity not to allow their personal prejudices and beliefs to not negatively influence their teaching.

The preparation of all students has not always been the utmost priority, according to Bersh (2018). Indeed, Bersh noted that the results of data gathered from the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Center for Education Statistics suggested a consistent and constant knowledge and achievement gap between primary and secondary students who were part of the minority and who were of low socioeconomic status. By extension, Bersh suggested that the United States Department of Education indicated despite the increasing cultural diversity of students across the country in classrooms, 82% of teachers are White, middle class.

The implications of the contrast between students and teachers have contributed not only to the long-standing achievement gaps among majority and minority students but teacher unpreparedness in meeting the educational and social needs of all students and a lack of teachers'

understanding and willingness to learn and value cultures other than their own (Bersh, 2018; Robinson & Clardy, 2011). Moreover, Bersh (2018) emphasized that to teach all students and facilitate change in classrooms and beyond takes effort and is a lifelong journey. By extension, in their discussion of developing a Pedagogy of Teacher Education, Van Beveren, Rutten, Vandermeersche, and Verdoodt (2018) discussed the relevance of teachers' ability and willingness to continuously evolve and reflect on the choices they make and how one's attitudes and behaviors impact students. However, Bersh (2018) noted few teachers have the willingness to learn and the determination and commitment to acquire the skills and strategies needed to be culturally aware and better able to connect with the students and their families served.

Teachers' Hesitance to Facilitate Discussions about Sensitive and Controversial Issues

Social studies teachers feel uncertain and unprepared to teach SCIs in social studies classrooms (Gindi & Erlich, 2016; Günel, 2017; Kello, 2016; Misco, 2016; Steinberger & Magen-Nagar, 2017). Social studies teachers' lack of confidence, when teaching and discussing SCIs, has contributed to teachers choosing to either include or completely avoid SCIs (Alongi et al., 2016; Childs, 2014; Misco, 2016). Although the research was unclear whether including or avoiding these discussions is viewed as right and wrong, Maxwell et al. (2018) and Kilinc et al. (2017) indicated teachers either present truths and accepted facts existing in textbooks only or use more evaluative tactics which allow for uncertainty, opinion, and comparative study and discussion based on argument and evidence. In fact, in their discussion of socio-scientific issues (SSI), Kilinc et al. posited teachers take on two types of interactions with their students: monological or dialogical. Granted, the context of the Kilinc et al. study centered on understanding the nature of other core content area of teachers' beliefs, the findings suggest that teachers' role in the discussion of SCIs should be dialogic wherein teachers "co-construct

meanings and decisions to enhance students' higher-order intellectual skills," rather than indoctrinate (Kilinc et al., 2017, p. 198).

Teacher Bias and Its Impact on the Learning Environment

Irrelevant factors and biases influence teachers' judgments and stereotypes about student performance and student ability (Meissel et al., 2017). Indeed, teachers' judgments and stereotypes are based on generalizations of character traits of a specific group, the teachers' belief and value system, and through teachers' lived experience (Childs, 2014; Kuppens et al., 2018; Meissel et al., 2017). A review of the literature regarding teacher bias and its impact on the learning environment indicated ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, weight, socioeconomic status, special needs status, and teachers' personal values or beliefs should not affect judgments made about student's achievement (Byrd & Andrews Carter, 2016; Desmond & Roth, 2016; Fish, 2017; Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Meissel et al., 2017; Mol et al., 2016; Timmermans et al., 2016).

According to Meissel, Meyer, Yao, and Rubie-Davies (2017), factors that shape teachers' expectations of students are important because teachers' expectations influence students' current and subsequent achievement. Van Beveren et al. (2018) argued, "Teacher identity is an essential element in the professional development of teachers and therefore needs close attention" (p. 187). In fact, Glock and Kleen (2017) suggested the relevance of studying how a person's past experiences influence perceptions and judgments of others. However, regardless of the factors that contribute to teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward students, the issue lies in how these behaviors manifest and the effect these judgments and expectations have on students. Timmermans, Boer, and Werf (2016) found significant differences in teacher expectations for students of different demographic groups after the previous performance of students was

controlled for. Put simply, regardless of actual levels of academic achievement, teachers tended

to have lower expectations of future academic performance when the student was a boy, came

from a family of low income, and was in the ethnic minority (Timmermans et al., 2016; Vervaet,

D'hondt, Van Houtte, & Stevens 2016).

Indeed, Fish (2017) argued despite previous evidence that teachers are more racially

tolerant than most Americans, teachers consistently hold higher academic expectations and

perceptions of White and Asian American students than Latino or Black students. Although Fish

did not indicate the implications of his findings directly, the results of data gathered have

important consequences for the broader domain of not only assuring students obtain the

education they are entitled to receive but that they are well adjusted and able to thrive in these

educational settings and beyond (Meissel et al., 2017; Timmermans et al., 2016). Fish (2017)

argued that subjective judgments and expectations made about students or specific student

groups stigmatize students, isolate them from peers, and further alter teachers' expectations and

judgments about the student or group.

By extension, DiTomaso (2013) discussed the motivations for the perpetuation of racial

inequality through favoritism. Specifically, DiTomaso asserted unlike discrimination or bias,

people now participate in a new kind of racism wherein the dynamic is an implicit or explicit

bias for the perceived in-group rather than explicit hostility toward the perceived out-group.

Moreover, she posited favoritism and everyday racism is passed along from those already in

positions of power, authority, and privilege to those with whom they identify, know, and

welcome as an extension to the in-group. Although the data presented by DiTomaso spoke

specifically to race and ethnicity within the business sector, the ideology extends to any

marginalized group and across organizational settings such as the school classroom environment.

In short, DiTomaso suggested that majority group members attempt to normalize discrimination by justifying acts of implicit or explicit bias through attempts to help pass on information or extend the benefit of the doubt to people within their same social groups rather than active exclusion of another group.

However, regarding teachers' ability to adopt a more inclusive and globally conscious social study learning environment in Turkey, Günel (2016) suggested factors that prevent teachers from effectively facilitating discussions about difficult issues such as diversity can be attributed to teachers not learning these skills and perspectives during their education. Granted, the study focused on including global perspective in the social studies curriculum in Turkey, the author's findings are relevant as they suggested that too much of teachers' knowledge comes from nonformal education, which has caused a gap in some teachers' ability and willingness to be sensitive to the differences of the students they teach and the world within which they live. Moreover, Günel emphasized the relevance of professional development that aims to develop how teachers can remain open-minded and empathetic to the differences of others and their diverse viewpoints while teaching current events and SCIs.

Conceptual Framework

A "candid examination" of race is not easy for educators (Singleton & Hays, 2008, p. 1). Singleton and Linton (2006) argued educators have far greater difficulty engaging in conversations about race than the students they teach. However, regardless of students' willingness to explore SCIs such as race, often, teachers lack the skills and strategies needed to guide students through conversations in the classroom without tension (Singleton & Hays, 2008). According to Mansfield and Gaëtane (2015), issues of race and ethnicity, class, gender, and other characteristics that historically impact access to education are the "elephant in the room" (p.

819). In his book, *More Conversations About Race*, Singleton (2013) described the irrefutable silence that exists surrounding discussion of race. To further support his position, Singleton referenced the real or perceived injustice which occurred when President Barack Obama's televised presidential message was not aired in schools because opponents argued the President's message would attempt to indoctrinate students his [Obama's] viewpoints. Regardless of Singleton's argument that the decision to prevent the president's message from airing in schools was more about race than political opposition, he lamented the opportunity lost to expose minority and low-performing students to an education revelation and open conversations about race. Singleton and Hays (2008) wrote:

> Race is the most explosive issue in American life-precisely because it forces us to confront the tragic facts of poverty and paranoia, despair, and distrust. In short, a candid examination of race matters takes us to the core of American democracy. And the degree to which race matters in the plight and predicament of fellow citizens is a crucial measure of whether we can keep alive the best of this democratic experiment we call America. (p. 4)

Because discussions about SCIs, such as race, can be dangerous, emotionally charged, and unpredictable, Singleton and Linton's (2006) four agreements of courageous conversations were developed to help teachers not only begin to identify and relate to their personal experiences with race but facilitate conversations with students and engage in conversations with their peers and colleagues (Singleton & Hays, 2008). Singleton (2013) suggested the relevance of finding one's place as a "human first and as a school leader second" if educators desire to fight for racial equality in the schools and communities they represent (p. 22).

Courageous conversations. Singleton's (2013) courageous conversations protocol emerged from his experience to "stay silent on race," a message which engulfed him and so many others' upbringing through the teachings of friends, family, educators,

clergy, and employers (Singleton, 2013, p. 27). As a result, Singleton suggested

Americans have needlessly suffered because of our inability or unwillingness to

communicate about differences such as a race. In response, Singleton posited that the

courageous conversations protocol is one way in which to end the missed opportunities to

"engage safely in dialogue about the contrasting perspectives that stem from our

divergent racial experiences" (2013, p. 28). Moreover, sensitive and controversial issues

such as race are increasingly difficult to share, especially for teachers (Byrd & Andrews

Carter, 2017; Kello, 2015; Singleton, 2013; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Singleton (2013)

urged educators to employ the strategies presented in the four agreements, six conditions,

and the courageous conversations compass.

    Four agreements. Singleton (2013) suggested the four agreements to courageous

conversations are not rules to be followed. Instead, the four agreements, although

interconnected, are loosely organized, having no sequence and are overlapping to allow

educators to use the strategies as a guide in their efforts to facilitate the discussion of

SCIs in the classroom. Indeed, Singleton and Linton (2006) indicated the four agreements

are a commitment to stay engaged, experience discomfort, speak one's truth, and expect

and accept nonclosure when participating in dialogue about SCIs such as race.

    Stay engaged. Singleton and Linton (2006) noted, *"Staying engaged means remaining*

morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved" in conversations regardless of the

level of commitment of others (p. 59). Singleton and Linton acknowledged this is increasingly

difficult when the topic of discussion is race because historically, race and issues of race are only

discussed when necessary or when the topic is otherwise unavoidable. Indeed, the authors

posited that White individuals refrain from discussing issues of race, while people of color talk

about race only among themselves. This occurs because the interracial dialogue is often reactive and, therefore, results in anger, disengagement, and silence.

In fact, results of data conducted by Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel indicated 65% of Americans think it is now more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views (Horowitz, Brown, & Cox, 2019). Singleton and Linton (2006) suggested hot button issues such as race often result in collective disengagement or passive acceptance of the pattern of discourse. This is further supported by Horowitz, Brown, and Cox's (2019) data that indicated 45% of survey participants think racist or racially insensitive views or judgments have become more acceptable in the workplace and in schools. However, rather than not facing the issues surrounding race, Singleton and Linton suggested that individuals "resist the natural inclination to move away from conversation" (2016, p. 60). Indeed, the authors urged teachers and school leaders to be aware of one's natural tendencies to remain silent and, instead, commit to staying engaged. Many authors have suggested the pattern of interracial discourse is widespread and greatly contributes to the social and political unrest within the United States (Horowitz et al., 2019; Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Speak your truth. People prefer kindness to honesty often because being honest or speaking one's truth feels scary and uncomfortable (Levine & Cohen, 2018; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Levine and Cohen (2018) and Singleton and Linton (2006) emphasized that being honest is risky not only because the person is exposing their beliefs, feelings, and opinions but also because individuals do not know how others will react about the honesty shared. These sentiments were shared when Singleton and Linton discussed how speaking one's truth requires absolute honesty regardless of what a person thinks others want to hear. According to Levine and Cohen, whereas honesty refers to "speaking in accordance with one's own beliefs, thoughts, and

feelings," authenticity, an extension of honesty, requires acting "in accordance with one's own sense of self, emotions, and values" (Levine & Cohen, 2018, p. 1401). In other words, to be honest and speak one's truth, an individual must also be authentic. To this end, Singleton and Linton (2006) wrote that until we can be completely honest with ourselves and with others, dialogue will be limited and remain ineffective.

However, according to Singleton and Linton (2006), societal issues have groomed us to not speak one's truth because being honest often results in confusion, anger, mistrust, misconceptions, and half-truths. Indeed, Levine and Cohen (2018) suggested that one's thoughts about what is true are independent of reality. To put it simply, Levine and Cohen argued a person "can be honest about an objective fact, but they can also be honest about their inner experience and opinions" (2018, p. 1401). It is highly likely that individuals fall victim to silenced dialogue, a phenomenon that arises when one's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and experiences are discounted, invalidated, and perceived as not entirely true (Levine & Cohen, 2018; Singleton, 2013; Singleton & Linton, 2006). To this end, Singleton and Linton (2006) argued that the more individuals rebuke or question one's truth, they become accomplices to the silencing of other's realities. Singleton and Linton pointed out that silenced dialogue occurs in schools and is a reason that educators might be afraid to facilitate discussions about SCIs and to address conflicts surrounding issues such as race. Singleton and Linton wrote:

> They may be afraid that doing so will lead to an increase in conflict or that they will then be targeted by the original perpetrators. They may simply not want to raise the issue because it is too painful to talk about, or they know other people will be uncomfortable. Many schools have a code of silence about race and ethnicity, a value system that says it's best to be color blind. In a color-blind school, there is no safe place for someone [of color]. (p. 62)

Indeed, color-blind campuses might appear to have little if any racial issues among students or staff, but this might only be because the issues are ignored, dismissed, and redefined as

something not at all having to do with race. Winters (2017) echoed these sentiments when she noted individuals are all different and that to have courageous and bold conversations, people "must first acknowledge that there are important differences that make a difference" (p. 24).

According to Singleton and Linton (2006), the courageous conversations strategy of speaking one's truth encourages the notion that all educators share the responsibility to engage in dialogue which validates their students' experiences, thoughts, and beliefs rather than "shutting them down, interrogating them, or redefining their experience into more familiar diversity terms" (p. 63). Lastly, Singleton and Linton suggested educators realize they can only be experts in their own lived experiences and should, therefore, be open to and allow themselves the opportunity to listen to the lived experiences of others.

Experience discomfort. Singleton and Linton (2006) argued that people tend to avoid uncomfortable situations and conversations. In fact, Singleton and Linton pointed out how people will do almost anything to minimize and avoid the discomforts caused by the innate differences which make each of us unique. Also, the authors suggested people have been conditioned to focus only on how we are ultimately alike just to avoid difficult or awkward situations and conversations about how we are inherently different (Singleton, 2013; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Moreover, Singleton and Linton wrote that traditional diversity training of years past did little to help people of different races work through issues or even get along.

According to Singleton (2013), overlooking or disregarding people's differences not only invalidates important racial nuances but also nullifies others' perspectives. To this end, Singleton argued that regardless of how difficult or uncomfortable SCIs are to discuss, educators must be aware that by not having difficult conversations, they are silencing voices. Therefore, Singleton

asserted educators have a professional responsibility to seek out, listen to, and comprehend what their students share regardless of how difficult the conversation might be to work through.

The courageous conversation strategy of being willing to experience discomfort urges individuals to deal with the reality of SCIs such as race in an honest and forthright way, according to Singleton and Linton (2006). Moreover, Singleton and Linton urged educators and educational leaders to evolve and achieve real growth by allowing themselves to be active participants in authentic dialogue about SCIs. Singleton (2013) defined real dialogue as a person's willingness to "open up and examine their core racial beliefs, values, perceptions, and behaviors" with others even though the dialogue might ignite personal and collective discomfort (p. 64). For example, Singleton noted all people find ways and reasons to avoid discomfort. Specifically, he noted that although White educators might avoid uncomfortable dialogue out of fear that their perceptions or biases could offend, educators of color can be just as reluctant to engage in difficult conversations based on the fear of being misunderstood, ignored, or even perceived as being angry and volatile. Relying on the courageous conversations strategy establishes a safe way to increase tolerance when faced with discomfort (Singleton, 2013).

Expect and accept nonclosure. According to Winters (2017), acceptance does not mean agreement. The fourth agreement of the courageous conversation protocol is to recognize and accept that closure might not be reached (Singleton & Linton, 2006). In other words, a solution might not be found, and a "quick fix" (Singleton, 2013, p. 64) is highly unlikely given the gravity of the issues discussed, such as race. To this end, Singleton and Linton noted the benefit of committing to the ongoing dialogue in which the participants involved in difficult conversations understand that the solutions and the people involved in the conversations will change and evolve. Moreover, the authors noted that because of the complexity of SCIs within

our society, educators should not look at open dialogue about difficult conversations as a goal or objective to complete but rather an open-ended opportunity to dialogue about the issues that impact students and teachers the most (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Although Singleton and Linton acknowledged that not all individuals are ready, willing, and able to begin investigating how race and other SCIs impact students within the learning environment, the authors did note how "everyone must stay collectively engaged throughout the continuous, challenging, and always evolving dialogue" (2006, p. 65). Therefore, the four agreements of courageous conversations require that all educators individually commit to staying engaged, experience discomfort, speak their truth, and accept nonclosure when involved in the school and secondary social studies improvement efforts.

Pedagogical Strategies

According to Walker and Carrera (2017), the scholarship of teaching and thinking (SoTL) begins with an understanding that individuals do not innately possess the historical thinking skills needed not only to comprehend social studies content but to understand and begin to empathize with historical content. Van Straaten, Wilschut, and Oostdam (2016) posited students are not inclined to make connections between the past, present, and future. In the context of Walker and Carrera's (2017) research, historically, thinking skills referred to the use of both primary and secondary source analysis and has been reported to encourage higher-order thinking and communication skills. In fact, the authors suggested that a deeper analysis of social studies content encourages students to "do" history rather than simply "learn" history (Walker & Carrera, 2017, p. 66). Walker and Carrera suggested that "history curricula and pedagogies must be designed to teach students explicitly and deliberately" to become informed and engaged citizens of the world (Walker & Carrera, 2017, p. 66).

Signature pedagogy unearthed by Walker and Carrera (2017) suggested social study educators use a backward design that facilitates deeper understanding and encourages students to speak and to focus on thinking skills rather than on the absorption of facts to which they do not relate to in their current life. Also, the authors suggested that in addition to reading the textbook and other primary sources, teachers should introduce the analysis of secondary sources such as articles, magazines, journals, movie and book reviews, and personal commentary that facilitate open discussion and exploration of issues. Along the same lines, Rantala, Manninen, and van den Berg (2016) wrote of the significance found in the examination of feelings and perspectives when the aim is to "deepen our understanding of human behavior" (p. 324).

Another pedagogical strategy used to facilitate discussions about historical content and SCIs is through the implementation of simulation exercises to assess historical empathy. Rantala et al. (2016) suggested students learn when they are provided an arena to identify the feelings of historical figures and when they are challenged to contrast their feelings with the experiences in their own lives. To this end, incorporating historical empathy exercises requires the ability to use both prescribed curricula content while also "making connections between goals, beliefs, and values" to determine the motives and reasons of people and events (Rantala, Manninen, & van den Berg, 2016, p. 324). According to Van Straaten et al. (2016), the National History Standards in the United States described the significance of history for American students as they endeavor to become informed citizens able to analyze the past with the purpose of understanding the present while cultivating decisions for the future.

Communication

Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals (Singleton, 2013, 2015). In this study, the research examined how teachers can best

communicate with students about SCIs discussed within the learning environment. However, not only should educators be concerned with what messages were sent and received but also the way the messages were delivered (West & Turner, 2014; Winters, 2017). Researchers are engaged in research and teaching strategies that address the consequences, impact, and influence of messages on individuals and groups (Kahane, 2010; West & Turner, 2014; Winters, 2017). In short, it is beneficial to analyze and be aware of how we communicate the message itself, the effect, the impact or influence of the message, and how one's unique experiences and understandings of the world shape how individuals communicate.

According to Winters (2017), in the last few years, society has experienced an increase in instances of police brutality, the shooting and killing of first-responders, immigration debates, religious intolerance, and issues regarding the rights of gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals. In fact, Winters noted that these instanced have made it clear that emotions are high between minority and majority groups and that individuals lack the knowledge and experience to effectively communicate through these SCIs. Indeed, Winters pointedly wrote:

> When race enters our public conversations about these important national issues, the dialogue is too often dehumanizing and racially charged. Language matters, and we need more tools to move our race conversations forward in more accurate, fair, and productive ways. (p. 2)

To this end, Winters noted that individuals not only struggle to engage in discussions regarding diversity, but they do not know how to effectively have and hold conversations with others about their thoughts, feelings, and judgments.

Nine Healthy Ways to Communicate

Singleton (2013) further analyzed how educators can prepare to use the four agreements of courageous conversations by first aligning their beliefs and ideals (intrapersonal thoughts) to those of their intellectual and relational obligations (interpersonal actions). Specifically,

Singleton presented nine healthy ways to communicate to cultivate more "mindful facilitation" in preparation for and during courageous conversations (2013, p. 46). Because individuals rely on verbal and nonverbal modes of communication, Singleton added this additional strategy to help educators first name and understand their feelings and beliefs before entering a conversation in which listening, asking questions, and responding to statements and inquiries with others is necessary. The nine healthy ways to communicate include the following:

- Reflect on what is being said. Use their words, not yours.

- Begin where they are, not where you want them to be.

- Be curious and open to what they are trying to say.

- Notice what they are saying and what they are not saying.

- Emotionally, relate to how they are feeling. Nurture the relationship.

- Notice how you are feeling. Be honest and authentic.

- Take responsibility for your part in the conflict or misunderstanding.

- Try to understand how their past affects who they are and how those experiences affect their relationship with you.

- Stay with the process and the relationship, not just the solution. (Singleton, 2013, p. 46)

Singleton (2013) and Wah (2015) suggested mindful and healthy communication is significant to improving one's intrapersonal cultural understanding responsiveness and enhancing the conversations we enter with others.

Racial Issues in Society

Understanding the changing racial and ethnic composition of the United States is critical (Federal Interagency Forum on Child & Family Statistics, 2018). Childs (2014) suggested that

one implication of the nation's increasing racially and ethnically diverse society is that young people need to be taught to understand the need to be more inclusive and accept differences. Although Childs postulated social studies classrooms are sites where students can engage in issues surrounding race, he did note how students' entrenchment in popular culture and the media tends to seep into these sites of learning and "reinforce old ideas about how individuals from certain groups should behave or think" (2014, p. 299). Along the same lines, Winters (2017) noted that before social media, society appeared far less confronted about polarizing topics such as race. For example, Childs asserted how stereotypes of violence, deception, misogyny, and deviance, to name a few, are attached to African Americans through music, videos, film, and advertisements.

In what has been described as "heightened times of social conflict" (p. 3), Winters (2017) noted that tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and even individuals' attempts to record events on their smartphones contribute significantly to peoples' fears about issues such as race and their unwillingness to participate in real dialogue about race. Because individuals are now able to read, see, and hear others' opinions, beliefs, and judgments, there exists a greater tendency to hold and form judgments about people and situations rather than taking the time to engage in meaningful conversations about different opinions.

Fay and Levinson (2017) expounded on the challenges of teaching "*in* a democracy and *for* democracy" when during the 2016 presidential primaries, candidates made racist and xenophobic claims (p. 63). Therefore, Singleton and Hays' (2008) argument that a "candid examination" of race is not easy for educators, especially when conversations about race often end in classroom conflict, controversy, or silence (Singleton & Hays, 2008, p. 18). Moreover, scholars have suggested the difficulty of teaching and facilitating open discussions about SCIs,

such as race, are that these issues are treated with passivity and as a luxury rather than a place high on the education priority list (Orfield, 2008).

Chapter Summary

The literature review served as a baseline for the need for and relevance of the present study. The review began with a brief overview of what SCIs are and how they are defined by researchers in the literature. This was followed by a discussion of the evolution of controversial topics in the social studies classroom and the role of teachers as facilitators and agents of civic education within the public school arena. Next, teachers' hesitance to facilitate discussions about SCIs and the presence of and the impact of teacher bias on the classroom environment were presented. Moreover, the literature review presented the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of Singleton and Linton's (2006) four agreements of courageous conversations and courageous conversation compass. Also discussed in the literature review were race issues in society and effective communication skills needed to discuss SCIs such as race with students.

Chapter 3 includes the research design and methodology of this case study. Chapter 3 begins by reiterating the problem, purpose, and research questions to be addressed. Also discussed is the research design and method, as well as a discussion of the appropriateness of the selected research design and methodology. Chapter 3 presents an explanation of the data collection type and strategies used and clearly describes the design steps. Moreover, the next chapter identifies the population chosen and the sample size used in this qualitative, instrumental case study. Lastly, in Chapter 3, the author describes the data collection and analysis procedures for this study and the methods used to establish trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. In Chapter 4, the author reports the

findings. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, discussion, and conclusion of the findings

and implications for practice and future research.

Chapter 3: Research Method and Design

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues, framed within Singleton and Linton's (2006) four agreements of courageous conversations. Additional content of this chapter includes the research design and method, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures, ethical considerations, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and summary.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues, framed within Singleton and Linton's (2006) four agreements of courageous conversations. The research questions are as follows:

Q1. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged?

Q2. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group?

Q3. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations in which one might feel uncomfortable?

Q4. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved?

Q5. What are the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers regarding facilitating courageous conversations with students?

Research Design and Method

This study used Singleton and Linton's (2006) four agreements of courageous conversations to identify strategies used by exemplary secondary social studies teachers when facilitating discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically race, in the classroom. According to Patrick, Gulayets, and Peck (2017), teacher beliefs are important to study because teachers influence the development of students' world perspectives. While this study did not address teacher beliefs specifically, it explored strategies teachers implement to keep their own beliefs and biases from interfering with their teaching when facilitating conversations in the classroom. A qualitative, instrumental collective case study was chosen for this study because the research aims to address the current norms and processes of a system and how the norms and processes are perceived by the participants (Misco, 2016; Misco & Tseng, 2018). The primary source of data for this study were narrative teacher interview responses. The secondary sources of data for this study included teacher websites, multimedia sources, lesson plans, and other resources and tools voluntarily submitted by the participant teachers.

According to Patton (2015), qualitative research provides a means for gathering the perspectives of individuals within a system. Moreover, the research questions posed in this study supported a qualitative and dialogical approach that denotes there is no one way to view a situation or system but multiple interpretations and perspectives of a system or occurrence (Misco, 2016; Park & Park, 2016; Patton, 2015). A qualitative study was chosen because the purpose of this study was focused on a theoretical or conceptual framework based on research questions through interviews in natural conditions (Park & Park, 2016). Leavy (2017) agreed that qualitative methods are relevant when the goal of the research is to explain and explore.

According to Stake (1995), case study researchers focus primarily on a program, event, or activity. This case study was an in-depth, instrumental collective case study. Creswell (2014) noted that a case study might include multiple cases or a collective of cases to illustrate similar or different approaches to the question being considered. Creswell suggested that "case studies are a design of inquiry found in fields in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of an activity or process" (p. 14). In the context of this study, exemplary social studies teachers from multiple locations participated in addressing a primary issue: how they engage students when facilitating difficult conversations. The interviews were analyzed to determine the participants' experiences and identify resulting themes regarding the research questions.

Dawson (2012) suggested qualitative case study research aims to provide a thorough and expansive analysis of a shared issue. In other words, the data in the analysis of a case study provided the depth and breadth needed to effectively understand the thoughts and feelings of the participant teachers in this study. Furthermore, Dawson suggested utilizing case study research because of its emphasis on the narrative story to explain better "what is going on and what is most significantly meaningful" to the research (p. 3).

Population

A purposeful sample of four exemplary social studies teachers was interviewed. Exemplary teachers from multiple locations were identified based on their previous receipt or nomination of the NCSS's Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teachers of the Year award. Recipients and nominees of this award were selected as participants of this study to ensure teacher participants were experienced, content knowledgeable, and were those who had exhibited excellence in social studies instruction at their school. Specifically, according to National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (2018), teacher applicants of the award must have

completed an online application, submitted a current resume, a content-specific and detailed lesson plan, and submitted letters of endorsement by State Council or by recommendation of a colleague, the applicant's principal or immediate supervisor, and a letter from a parent or student that underscores how the educator demonstrates exemplary teaching practices. Furthermore, secondary social studies teachers who were considered for this award were selected based on their demonstrated exceptional abilities in the classroom. Teachers who were considered for this award were selected based on seven criteria.

- Developing and using instructional materials creatively and effectively.

- Incorporating innovative and verified effective instructional strategies and techniques.

- Utilizing new scholarship from the social sciences.

- Utilizing the ten themes identified by the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment as well as integrating the four dimensions of inquiry concepts from College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History in their teaching.

- Fostering a spirit of inquiry and the development of skills related to acquiring, organizing, processing, and using the information and making decisions related to domestic and international matters.

- Fostering the development of democratic beliefs and values, and the skills needed for citizen participation.

- Professional involvement in workshops, committees, and curriculum development. (NCSS, 2013)

Individuals who have been considered for this award were contacted by the researcher. The four individuals who signed consent were interviewed using a guided and semi-structured protocol based on the research questions (Patton, 2015).

Sample

Data was collected from a sample of four past recipients of NCSS's Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teachers of the Year award. According to Creswell (2014), the sample size depends on the qualitative design being used. Specifically, Creswell suggested researchers use a sample size of three to 10 participants when conducting a case study, ethnography, or phenomenological research. Brinkmann (2013) suggested qualitative studies should not exceed more than 15 participants; therefore, this study used four voluntary participants.

Individuals who are recipients or have been considered for this award were contacted by the researcher through personal email or by phone to request voluntary participation. Recipient or nominees were identified through direct contact with NCSS's main headquarters wherein the researcher requested an email or phone list from the professional organization. The National Council for the Social Studies director of marketing and membership emailed the researcher a list of 10 recipient names, who were awarded Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teachers of the Year awards between 2010 to 2019. Four of the 10 NCSS award winners stated they would participate in the study. All four of the award recipients were chosen because of the diversity of their locations, student populations, years of experience, and their eagerness to share their teaching strategies.

The sample population was determined by using a purposeful or purposive sampling methodology, such as the snowball effect, wherein the first individual participant would help to identify other potential participants (Leavy, 2017). According to Leavy, this method of sampling

often produces the best data because the identified participants are positioned in relation to the topic, and therefore, provide a more in-depth understanding of the data, which can later be transferred from one case to another. However, pseudonyms were used to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the voluntary participants. The total number of participants was four teachers, three males and one female, who taught social studies related subjects and held that position prior to or during the time of participation in this study. In addition to their receipt of NCSS's National Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year award, each of the participant teachers has and continues to actively contribute to sharing the world with students.

Teacher 1, a White male, resides in the southeast part of the continental United States. Teacher 1 has taught social studies related coursework for over 23 years. In addition to teaching, he lends his expertise to social studies teachers on an international scale through publications and presentations. He is the recipient of several regional and state-level teaching awards and is an ambassador for education within his state of residence. Teacher 2, a White male, resides in the northeastern part of the continental United States. Teacher 2 taught secondary social studies for nearly 20 years. Teacher 2 has earned two master's degrees and a doctorate. He is an adjunct professor at a state university preparing prospective social studies teachers. Teacher 2 travels extensively in an educational capacity as part of educational delegations for global understanding. He is the recipient of two state-level teaching awards and is inducted into the National Teachers' Hall of Fame.

Teacher 3, a White male, resides in an east South Central state within the continental United States. He has earned a Master of Arts in history, a Master of Arts in teaching, a master's degree in leadership, and currently is pursuing an educational doctorate in curriculum and instruction. Teacher 3 has taught courses within the realm of social studies for over 20 years, is

the recipient of state-level social studies and teaching awards, was the president of his state's social studies council, and was a writer for the state's social studies curriculum.

Teacher 4, a White female, resides in the South Central region of the United States. She has taught secondary social studies content to students for over 15 years. She has received the National Council for Geographic Education Distinguished Teacher award and the Grosvenor Teacher Fellow award. She is a recipient of district, regional, and state-level social studies teacher of the year awards.

Data Collection

The four exemplary and homogeneous individuals chosen to participate in this study were asked to sign an online consent form and then were interviewed using a combined interview approach, which uses at least two interview variations based on the established research questions (Leavy, 2017; Patton, 2015). This study utilized online, one-to-one internet-based interviewing (Gupta, 2017) because the sample population was gathered from different regions of the United States, and face-to-face interviews were not feasible. Because a comprehensive account of the participants' experiences was needed for this study, Patton (2015) suggested that researchers interview participants to understand and gain perspective of what cannot be seen and what we do not understand.

In the same vein, Patton (2015) suggested proper sequencing of questions helps to focus the interview, and when done correctly, encourages the respondents to talk freely and descriptively. Patton underscored the relevance of using the conversation interview approach. Miller (2016) agreed when she wrote of the importance of interacting and connecting with participants to converse with them more effectively about the topic at hand. However, researchers have cautioned not only to maintain balance in shared conversations with participants

but also approach interview questions from the side rather than approaching a topic of inquiry head-on (Gibbs, 2013; Kennedy, 2006). Kennedy (2006) suggested that approaching interview questions from the side encourages participants to draw upon their knowledge and experience rather than attempting to force an answer or create instances in which a participant tries to come up with anything to answer the question posed. The time allotted for each interview was approximately 60 minutes.

Concurrent to the interview process, the researcher requested that the participants voluntarily submit to the researcher any number of lesson plans, multimedia tools, teacher websites, and other resources and tools that they use to reinforce how to discuss SCIs with students to help them stay engaged, speak their truth, experience discomfort, and better learn to accept and expect nonclosure. A description of the lessons, strategies, and tools shared with the researcher is included as a part of the discussion in the results section of Chapter 4 and can also be accessed in the appendices. The interview data transcripts were read multiple times and highlighted to identify not only reoccurring phrases for analysis and possible theme distinction but also to determine what activities, strategies, and tools were used by the participant teachers to reinforce with students how to discuss SCIs within the classroom learning environment and beyond. According to Creswell (2014), case studies are an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection.

Instrumentation

To address the research questions posed in this study, the researcher conducted online interviews with four voluntary participants. The researcher used a combined interview approach that Patton (2015) verbalized "offers the interviewer flexibility in probing and in determining when it is appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth, or even to pose questions

about new areas" (Patton, 2015, p. 442). In this study, the interviewer used a combination of informal conversational, guided protocol, and standardized interview formats (see Appendix A). Patton asserted this combination of interviewing provides structure to the interview process while also allowing the interviewer the freedom to pursue inquiry not previously anticipated in the interview instrument's development.

According to Patton (2015), an informal conversational technique allows questions to emerge naturally based on the context of the topic in question. Although this fosters a conversation that "increases the salience and relevance of the questions," this method of inquiry alone can be difficult to organize (p. 438). Conversely, a guided interview protocol relies on an outlined and predetermined set of issues and topics to be discussed wherein the interviewer decides the sequencing and wording of the interview. A strength in this method of inquiry is its systemic approach and is more comprehensive (Patton, 2015). Lastly, a standardized approach was beneficial in helping the interviewer stay on topic. Consequently, this method of inquiry allowed the interviewer the opportunity to encourage participation and disclosure because the "exact wording and sequencing of questions was predetermined" (Patton, 2015, p. 439). The interviewer was allowed to focus more on the participant's responses and body language rather than what to ask next. Face-to-face and online interviews require techniques of listening and prompting, astute observation, and sensitive responding, all while making the participants feel comfortable, and, therefore, more willing to share (Miller, 2016; Patton, 2015). After the conclusion of all interviews, the researcher transcribed verbatim the recordings and secured the documents through Abilene Christian University (ACU; Creswell, 2014). Per the voluntary participant consent form, each participant interview was 60 minutes in length. Subsequent communication between the researcher and participants occurred through email. The purpose of

the follow-up communication was to send and receive secondary data sources such as additional resources and strategies. Although interviews were the primary source of data, secondary sources included other data such as teacher websites, lesson plans, and multimedia tools.

Data Analysis

Nixon (2014) claimed there is no single best way to code because coding rests upon the questionable assumption that the coding has been performed by someone who knows what they are doing. Patton (2015) recommended the researcher identify and then employ a system to efficiently and effectively review the data gathered. Proponents of coding suggest a cyclical approach to coding which requires that the researcher either conduct several readings of the data, have more than one person working on the analysis, or use several methods of coding to unearth similarities, differences, and insights gathered from the data collected (Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Therefore, for this case study, I performed two coding passes: bottom-up and coding through questioning (Ivanka, 2015; Nixon, 2014; Patton, 2015).

Data-driven structures such as the bottom-up approach provided a means to reduce the data in a way that allowed the researcher to draw substantive conclusions and gather new information (Ivanka, 2015). Researchers have recommended an inductive or emergent coding approach such as bottom-up coding when the researcher aims to conceptualize better the ideas, concepts, actions, relationships, and meanings that emerge from the data (Blair, 2015; Nixon, 2014; Patton, 2015). According to Neale (2016), "an accepted analytical method (thematic analysis, framework, constant comparison, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and narrative analysis) should be deployed" (p. 1097). Moreover, Neale suggested that when coding, the data should be reviewed line-by-line, identifying key themes before collapsing the codes into fewer and more focused codes on subsequent passes to make comparisons across the data.

Therefore, the second coding pass was coding through questioning. Using the analysis results of the inductive coding pass performed in coding pass one, the researcher performed a second coding pass based on the answer to a predetermined list of questions that the researcher asked themselves (Blair, 2015). The identified categories from coding pass one served to inform coding pass two. Coding through questioning is a hybrid of deductive and inductive qualitative data analysis and provided a way to identify new or emerging themes and categories (Patton, 2015). Neale (2016) argued coding underpins three concurrent activities: (a) data reduction, (b) data display (through matrices, graphs, and charts), and (c) conclusion drawing/verification. More specifically, Neale suggested researchers first describe and then interpret the data, which facilitates the exploration of similarities and differences between topics and themes. Therefore, in addition to coding, the interview data transcripts, as well as submitted lesson plans, websites, multimedia tools, and additional artifacts, were read multiple times and highlighted to identify reoccurring phrases for analysis and possible theme distinction. The data were then grouped within a coding matrix according to similar and interrelated ideas and concepts (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood, 2013). The clusters of ideas and concepts identified and illustrated (see Appendix B) became the foundation for the narrative findings and subsequent support for the emerging themes.

Trustworthiness

Tantamount to the questions posed and the research conducted, researchers have an obligation to present the results of data in a clear and thorough manner. Leavy (2017) wrote that thoroughness refers to the "comprehensiveness of the project's components, including sampling, data collection, and representation" (Leavy, 2017, p. 154). Along the same lines, Leavy suggested researchers work to make sure that all components and pieces of one's research fit

together; namely, that researchers reach congruence between the questions, methods, and findings in addition to the connection between data analysis and collection. Specifically, the researcher conducted a review of the guided protocol interview questions with an expert teacher. The nonparticipant teacher provided feedback and suggestions on the interview questions and interview procedures.

Once data were analyzed, the researcher actively sought out ways to ensure trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014; Leavy, 2017). Patton (2015) suggested researchers "engage in a systematic and conscientious search for alternative themes, divergent patterns, and rival explanations" (p. 653) to improve the trustworthiness of the data collected and later analyzed. Leavy (2017) asserted that trustworthiness, validity, and credibility, terms used interchangeably, speak not only to the confidence others have in the results of data disseminated but also the quality of the project and the rigor of the methodology. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posited the relevance of considering the validity and reliability in qualitative research studies.

In the context of this study, triangulation and member checking were used. Triangulation is the most recognized strategy used to determine credibility and provide a continuous voice of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). "Triangulation is the corroboration of different data sources," which can include interviews, websites, lesson plans, and field notes (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). In fact, Creswell (2014) suggested providing back to participants specific descriptions and the themes unearthed to determine whether the participants feel what has been discovered is accurate. In the context of this study, the participants were provided an opportunity to read the transcripts of their recorded interviews. Also, concurrent with the interview process, the teacher participants were asked to voluntarily submit to the researcher any number of lesson plans, multimedia tools, teacher websites, and other resources and tools that they use to teach and

reinforce how to discuss SCIs with students in the classroom. Furthermore, Leavy (2017) suggested researchers ask themselves essential questions to evaluate the thoroughness and congruence of their work. For example, "(a) Can [you] see what was done and why?, (b) Do the components of the project fit together" (Leavy, 2017, p. 154). Indeed, Patton (2015) recommended researchers search for alternative themes and consider rival explanations, all of which contribute to the validity and credibility of the project.

Other tools used which speak to the trustworthiness of qualitative research are transferability and the vividness of the research (Leavy, 2017). According to Leavy (2017), "transferability is the ability to transfer research from one context to another" (p. 155). Put simply, by providing a rich description of the research, others might be able to replicate the study or extend the results of data beyond the present study. In the case of identifying strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues in the classroom, a campus or district might be interested in replicating the study within other core content areas at the secondary level. Regarding vividness, Leavy suggested researchers seek to provide descriptions that underscore the specifics of the data produced. Leavy suggested researchers consider if they can "see the setting, hear the dialogue, and imagine the interactions" (2017, p. 155).

Researcher's Role

Over the last nine years, I have cotaught hundreds of secondary students within the general education curriculum in the core content areas of English and social studies. I emphasize cotaught because I teach within a collaborative learning environment in which there are two certified teachers, one general education and one special education, who teach in the same room and the same students. During this time, I observed that some teachers were reluctant to or

completely avoided controversial issues while other teachers embraced and encouraged discussions about sensitive and controversial issues. I became interested in why this happened. By extension, as I continued in my doctoral journey, I also became interested in how teachers' inter-group attitudes, stereotypes, and biases affected their teaching practices and behaviors toward students and others (Banaji, Bhaskar, & Brownstein, 2015; Kello, 2016; Kuş, 2015). Therefore, it was at the intersection of wanting to effectively discuss real-world issues with my students to prepare them to be more informed and capable citizens and my interest in enhancing the pedagogical skills of teachers like me that I began reviewing research which examined how teachers teach and facilitate discussions about SCIs within a social studies classroom. Upon completion of this study, I will have the opportunity to share the research findings with educators, not unlike me, through professional development activities.

Ethical Considerations

Application and approval were sought from the Internal Review Board (IRB; see Appendix C) before this research study began the data collection, data analysis, and reporting phases. In accordance with the requirements of the IRB, documentation of informed consent was presented to, discussed with, and made available to the voluntary participants. Section 46.116 of the general requirements for informed consent, as dictated by the Office for Human Research Protections (2016), reads that no research shall be conducted on human subjects without obtaining each participants' approval. To that end, the letter of informed consent was presented to each participant in this study and was orally discussed and printed in the subject's native language and having no technical jargon, which could prevent a participant from understanding their rights (Office for Human Research Protections, 2016). Moreover, the letter of informed consent included an explanation of the purpose of the research, the duration of time the

participant was asked to contribute to the study, a description of the process and procedures to be followed, a statement that participation is voluntary, and that each participate could withdraw their participation at any time (Office for Human Research Protections, 2016).

To uphold the anonymity of participants in this study, the researcher used pseudonyms and did not discuss or include in the results any participant identifiers. The Office for Human Research Protections (2016) regulations specified that identifiers linked to participants should be limited to reduce the likelihood and risk of criminal or civil liability, depredation of reputation, and impact to employability. Section 46.111 of the criteria for IRB approval of research requires that researchers reduce risk to subjects in relation to anticipated benefits (Office for Human Research Protections, 2016). Specifically, the researcher ensured the selection of participants was equitable and did not involve vulnerable populations. Also, all data collected was stored in a secure Abilene Christian University (ACU) database to protect the anonymity of the research participants.

Assumptions

This qualitative case study was based on several assumptions. According to Simon and Goes (2013), assumptions are beliefs in the proposed research that are essential to conducting research but cannot be proven. In the context of this study, an assumption is that the study participants answered honestly and to the best of their ability. Another assumption is the participants were voluntary and were provided an online consent to perform the study. Also, the voluntary participants responded to the guided protocol based on the established research questions during the online interview process. The use of exemplar and homogenous sampling provided a more in-depth understanding of the data, which can later be transferred from one case to another or replicated (Leavy, 2017).

Limitations

Limitations are those attributes of a study which impede on the outcome of a study (Simon & Goes, 2013). Simon and Goes argued one could not "make causal inferences from case studies because one cannot rule out alternative explanations" (p. 2). Because a case study involves one group of individuals, the documented behaviors of the group might not reflect the judgments, attitudes, or behaviors of similar entities (Simon & Goes, 2013). Moreover, qualitative studies are limited in generalizability and only pertain to the population being studied (Amundson, Serlin, & Lehrer, 1992; Creswell, 2014; Leavy, 2017). There are certain limitations based on methodology—this study is an example of that. In fact, a review of the literature regarding potential limitations associated with qualitative research showed that because human participants are different and often these differences change over time, "definitive experiments in the social sciences are not possible … the most we can ever realistically hope to achieve in educational research is not prediction and control but rather only temporary understanding" (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 2).

Delimitations

Unlike limitations, delimitations are the specific choices made by the researcher, which limit the depth and breadth of a study (Simon & Goes, 2013). In the context of the current study, the boundaries of the study only included the perception of previous recipients or nominees of the National Council for the Social Studies' Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year award. The researcher delimited this study by only seeking information solely related to identifying those strategies used by exemplary secondary social studies teachers when facilitating discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically race.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this qualitative instrumental collective case study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues, framed within Singleton and Linton (2006) and Singleton's (2015) four agreements of courageous conversations. The results of this research were used to augment the secondary social studies curriculum teacher development, which aims to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers to better facilitate discussions more effectively about SCIs such as race with students.

The guiding research questions central to this study were as follows:

Q1. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged?

Q2. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group?

Q3. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations which one might feel uncomfortable?

Q4. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved?

Q5. What are the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers regarding facilitating courageous conversations with students?

Data were collected from four voluntary participant teachers selected based on receipt or nomination of NCSS's Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year award. The research was collected using an online, semi-structured interview protocol. The interview

questions were limited to obtaining data that identified how exemplary social studies teachers facilitate discussions about often sensitive and controversial issues with their students and within the learning environment. The online interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The transcribed results of data gathered were then analyzed using methods to ensure credibility, transferability, and vividness.

      Chapter 4 includes the results of this case study. Chapter 4 begins by reiterating the purpose of this study. Also discussed is the report findings based on the results of the data analyses to include themes that emerged. Chapter 4 includes text, tablets, and figures to demonstrate and document the data analysis results. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, discussion, conclusion of the findings, and implications for practice and future research.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues. The purpose of this chapter was to report the results of the data analysis gathered through the lived experiences of the four secondary social study teacher participants. Four secondary social study teachers were interviewed to determine trends in best practices and strategies used when facilitating discussions about SCIs in the classroom. This research is vital because there is limited research aimed at stimulating secondary social studies classroom curricula to train in-service teachers to teach global issues and SCIs to students to be individuals equipped with the skills of the 21st century (Alongi et al., 2016; Copur & Demirel, 2016; Misco, 2016). The findings of this case study were used to share with educators through professional development activities.

A qualitative instrumental case study approach was used to identify strategies exemplary secondary social studies teachers use when facilitating discussions about SCIs in the classroom with students. The data collected from the four voluntary teacher participant interview transcripts were analyzed. The primary source of data in this study was the teacher participant interviews; however, secondary sources of data that included artifacts such as websites, lesson plans, and multimedia tools were gathered and used and were incorporated in the discussion of the results section. Specifically, the researcher requested that the participants voluntarily submit to the researcher lesson plans, websites, multimedia tools, and other strategies they use to teach, model, and facilitate how to stay engaged, speak one's truth, experience discomfort, and accept and expect nonclosure with students in their classroom. The voluntary teacher participants in this

study were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. The pseudonyms begin with the letter T and are followed by a number; for example, T1, T2, T3, and T4.

The interview data transcripts, as well as submitted lesson plans, websites, multimedia tools, and additional artifacts, were read multiple times and highlighted to identify reoccurring phrases for analysis and possible theme distinction. The data were then grouped within a coding matrix according to similar and interrelated ideas and concepts (Gale et al., 2013). The clusters of ideas and concepts identified and illustrated (see Appendix B) became the foundation for the narrative findings and subsequent support for the emerging themes. In line with the four agreements to courageous conversations, which are interconnected and overlapping, the participant data collected are loosely organized by theme and overlap to allow educators the flexibility to use the strategies as a guide in their efforts to facilitate the discussion of SCIs in the classroom.

Research Question One: Student Engagement

Research question one explored how exemplary secondary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged. According to Singleton and Linton (2006), "Staying engaged means remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved" (p. 60) in conversations that are historically linked to reactive behaviors such as anger, disengagement, and silence. Based on interviews, lesson plans, other artifacts, and websites, participants offered specific strategies and tools used to reinforce how they discuss SCIs with students to help them stay engaged. The emerging themes were a collective belief that students learn through relating historical and factual content to student lived experiences and scenarios, building and reinforcing an intellectually safe environment, and through challenging and disrupting metanarratives.

Relating historical content to student lived experiences and scenarios. Each teacher participant provided their unique answer and explanation of how they discuss race with students to help them stay engaged. However, central to all participant perspectives was the use and relevance of relating historical content to student lived experiences and scenarios to not only draw students in but maintain their level of interest and willingness to participate in discussions about SCIs, such as race. Teacher 2 posited that student engagement in the social studies classroom is built on sharing out, reflecting, and learning from others. Teacher 3 shared similar sentiments but added that democratic theory and citizenry are grounded on the idea that the values, perceptions, and experiences of others are "apparent only when they are shared in an open market." Moreover, T3 emphasized that the goal of teaching is engaging students in historical sources through lived experience and reflection.

Consistent with the other participant teachers, T1 stated, "when students talk about their experiences, they can see themselves and how others see them." Learning from the lived experience of peers was cited several times from all participants as a vehicle to hear and understand other peoples' perceptions of the world. Teacher 2 echoed these remarks when he suggested relating historical content to things students care and talk about, such as logos, sports teams, and pop culture, "turns these things on their head and gets students to think about how things can and are perceived, interpreted, and considered by others." For instance, one of the participants asked questions such as "we have probably all heard of the Washington Redskins, but what would happen if there were the Cleveland Caucasians, or whatever, sports team and mascot?" How might that be perceived by others? Why is it acceptable or unacceptable?" The point is to draw students in through thought-provoking and inquiry-based discussions.

In the same manner, T3 used the passion of collegiate basketball within the state of his residence as a contemporary example for historical understanding in the discussion of how in minstrel shows, all the way up to the Cotton Club, and even now, how often "Whites are okay with people of color being a source of entertainment." Specifically, T3 used his students' passion for collegiate basketball to then pose a question of how members of their family, friends, and neighbors would react if one of the basketball team members of color dated their White sister or one of the White young ladies in class. Using both student lived experience and scenario-based teaching strategies, T3 modeled for students how to consider the other side of power structures and power dynamics in society, which challenges students to think about the other side of race, gender, and sexuality issues that "elevates and raises to the surface what is grounded in the objective documents but in a way that becomes much more authentic."

Teacher 1 elaborated on the diverse student population he taught and noted that this "wide range [of student diversity] … gets everyone [in the class] to see everyone else's point of view." In the context of his class, T1 uses lived experience or scenario-based inquiry to encourage students to consider and gain perspective about what it is like being different from everyone else in a room of people and recognizing that "everyone's story is their own and that each story is a little different for everyone." For example, T1 asks students questions, such as "how do people look at you or treat you if you go into a grocery store, convenience store, or restaurant?" While T1 stated many students, who are White, often say they do not notice anything, but then, for example, one student whose mother wears a hijab will share that people stare at her family. In line with the sentiments of the other three participant teachers, T4 added how important it is that students know their "[teachers] are not picking on one group … any one kind of race, ethnicity, any one religion, or whatever." Rather, as a class, the teacher and students

are exploring the people and places of the world through another lens and "another perspective because we only know what we know, and we all need to evolve."

For this reason, T4 stated she uses herself, her experiences, and her family as examples to get students sharing and providing their unique opinions. For instance, T4 stated she freely tells stories about her father, who could be perceived as racist to help students understand how older generations struggle to be as inclusive and accepting of change when compared to younger generations. For example, one of the stories T4 tells her students was when she was playing basketball, as a junior or sophomore in high school, and her father told her, "We don't talk to that boy" after being caught talking to a Black student and friend of hers after basketball practice. She relays this story to students because she wants them to understand that often older generations struggle with race more clearly. Whereas she did not negatively see color, her dad did. Subsequently, T4 stated that when she shares, inevitably, one or more students will share their experiences and perspective, which diminishes the fear of others asking questions and being inquisitive about the things [they] do not know and are too afraid to talk about with others. In fact, in one of her Advanced Placement classes, she predominantly teaches Indian, Pakistani, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese students who "have tons of stories to tell once … and if you are not afraid to talk and ask them, they are not afraid to talk about it."

Building and reinforcing an intellectually safe environment. Creating a safe environment in which students and teachers feel comfortable to share their experiences, perspectives, and opinions without repercussions was shared by all participants either directly or indirectly. One participant shared that he is sometimes apprehensive when talking about racial topics because they can be difficult for students to discuss appropriately; however, he feels it is vital for students to have an understanding of the ethnic and racial issues found in the world, but

particularly in the city where they live. For instance, T1 has students use their phones to take

pictures to highlight the uniqueness and diversity of their lives in a "My America is" assignment

(see Appendix D). By asking students to display via slideshow what America means to them,

their student peers can see the uniqueness and diversity of others in the class and in the school,

which helps the class understand each other and gain a new perspective of the many faces of

America.

Teacher 4 echoed the sentiments of T1 but added that she is "unusual because she

welcomes the challenge of discussing hot button issues because, most of the time, she gains the

opportunity to teach her students about perspective." Specifically, T4 uses strategies she learned

at a district-level training that focused on the use of restorative practices with students.

Specifically, she used the National Educators for Restorative Practices (NEDRP) Treatment

Agreement tool "to build and sustain relationships with her students" (Connection Toolkit, n.d.).

As a result, T4 stated,

> as a class, the students decide how the class will handle group work and the protocols for
> how the class will handle differences of opinion, differences in race, and general human
> differences that usually cause students to button-up and not say anything about
> something.

Teacher 3 offered another strategy to build a safe learning environment open to

discussion about sensitive and often controversial issues is being forthright and direct when it

comes to setting and developing group norms that establish that "anything goes as far as a

curiosity" and that anyone can "put things out on the table." In the same manner, located in the

Classroom Rules and Discipline Plan section of T1's published school webpage, students are

reminded to "treat everyone like you want to be treated," and all students are expected to

"respect the opinions, questions, and comments of other students by not laughing or denigrating

their points of view" (see Appendix E).

Teacher 2 echoed T1's sentiments when he stated that as early as day one of the school year, teachers need to establish that "peoples' voices are going to be heard because people have to feel safe and welcome." Moreover, T2 insisted teachers need to model respectful dialogue grounded on facts rather than emotions and opinions, which makes it "easier to have those heavier issue discussions" in a safe way. Although all participants referred to respectful dialogue and established norms as pivotal in building a balanced learning environment, T1 added that not all students will be receptive right away or might not come equipped to have these discussions initially. Therefore, teachers must model how to effectively communicate, listen, hear, and acknowledge other people's perspectives (see Research Question 2: Speak Your Truth).

Teacher 3 echoed T1's sentiments regarding effective communication strategies but added that teachers' willingness to explore their own beliefs, judgments, and experiences with race is significant because they will be confronted with issues they have never experienced. For instance, two of the four participants shared with their classes that as White men in America, they admittedly do not know what it is like to be a person of color in America. Explicitly, T2 posited that because he is in a position of privilege (a White teacher in America), he has never had to be concerned with many of the race issues his students might encounter. For this reason, he commented that regardless of the discomfort he might feel when sharing his experiences and stories, students must see, understand, tolerate, and accept the relevance of listening to the viewpoints and experiences of others. All the participants noted that students and teachers learn when honest communication through discussion and questioning is daily reinforced in a safe environment.

Challenging and disrupting metanarratives. In the context of this study, challenging and disrupting metanarratives refers to pulling apart shared stories and narratives of historical

meaning, experience, or knowledge that have been explained and legitimized through and over time, so students can not only gain perspective but form their own opinions based on facts. The theme of challenging and disrupting metanarratives was shared by all participants, either directly or indirectly. Teacher 3 stated the relevance of dismantling narratives that undermine, attack, or even reinforce bias, judgment, and stereotypes toward individuals and groups. For instance, T3 pointed out he is constantly "zooming in and out of what students are thinking" to determine if the knowledge they have acquired is based on facts versus stories linked to emotions that have been legitimized. A strategy he has used to disrupt metanarratives has been to share with his students that "some people might think [this] about [that]; however, in class, we are going to focus on what is grounded in reality and historical fact rather than what has been shared or passed down." Teacher 2 echoed T3's sentiments but added that he encourages or challenges students to find factual research that proves or disproves their perspective [metanarrative], which reiterates the significance of sharing and basing one's opinions on fact and not emotion. For example, the participant provided the artifact in Appendix F and discussed it as follows: Within the first six weeks of school, T2 assigns a "cafeteria assignment" to his students to help them better understand how stereotypes and judgments are often made about individuals and groups without evidence. In other words, T2 stated the cafeteria assignment provides students an opportunity to explore not only how they are perceived by others but also how they perceive others based on where a person or group sits, whom an individual interacts with, and how individuals interact with others within the group. Moreover, T2 stated that in many instances, his students discover that what they assumed about an individual or group was not always accurate. Therefore, the exercise challenges students to step out of their comfort zone and explore people for who they are rather than what they have heard or assumed.

In the same manner, T1 and T4 elaborated that any time a teacher can get somebody that is coming from a different perspective to speak to students is a "win-win" situation. For instance, T4 stated that during discussions on race and religion, she invited a Rabbi to speak to students about Jewish faith and history, and as an element of a religion-based project, had students visit a synagogue and report their findings. Teacher 4 emphasized that she does not convert or indoctrinate; rather, the goal is to expose students to the facts, put an end to the fear of the unknown, and start conversations and end hearsay. Moreover, T4 shared how one of her colleagues had students read the book, *The Hate you Give*, and then invited one of the campus-based police officers, who had also read the book, to provide their perspective, talk to the class, and field questions such as, "was the officer in the film right or wrong?" As a result, T4 stated not only the book but also the expert first-account of the officer serves to reinforce the idea of how significant it is to be a part of conversations about tough subjects and to hear the perspective and voice of others.

Whereas T4 uses face-to-face interaction to disrupt and challenge metanarratives, T3 uses multimedia outlets such as videos, clips, the results of research and experiments conducted, and Skype to challenge what students have come to think or have been taught to think. Specifically, T3 stated at the end of the semester, once students are accustomed to and have strengthened their willingness and ability to not only hear the voice of others but also discern fact from emotion-driven opinion, he has his students view the film, *Prom Night in Mississippi* (Saltzman, 2009). In-kind, T4 often explains to students that what has always been right in one part of the world or within a period of time does not make it right; rather, it is merely what happened, how that issue or situation was handled, and that that is how things were perceived. For example, T4 uses primary sources that bring to life how the colonists felt about Africans during the colonial period.

While T4 noted her students are stunned by what they learned, she emphasizes the relevance of perspective, and how in the 1400s, everyone colonists encountered were different from them and, therefore, thought they were doing the right thing in their mind. The colonists were going to bring Christianity to the Africans because that was what they were engrained to accomplish, and it was perceivably the right thing to do.

Research Question Two: Speak Your Truth

Research question two explored how exemplary secondary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them speak their truth. According to Singleton and Linton (2006), the courageous conversations strategy of speaking one's truth encourages the notion that all educators share the responsibility to engage in dialogue which validates their students' experiences, thoughts, and beliefs rather than "shutting them down, interrogating them, or redefining their experience into more familiar diversity terms" (p. 63). The participants offered specific strategies and tools used to reinforce how to speak one's truth when engaged in communication with others about often sensitive and controversial issues. The primary finding was a collective belief that teachers teach and model the skills and strategies needed to communicate effectively and critically about hard to discuss subjects such as race.

The consensus of the teacher participants was that tantamount to the dissemination of content, concepts, and social studies related curriculum, social studies teachers must teach and model how to share one's perspective backed by evidence and reasoning effectively. One of the participants elaborated on this by stating the importance of students learning to take a stance and "argue [one's] stance in a meaningful, civil, and critical way." Teacher 3 echoed the sentiments of T2 and added that when students are taught how to build arguments, they are then equipped to back up their thoughts and speak their truth. He concluded by stating, "There is an expectation in

a democracy to share, so that [we] all grow from the experience and perspectives." For example, T1 stated there must be an expectation that we (the students and the teacher) will not argue and will not engage in shouting matches. Teacher 1 stated that students need to know it is okay to be upset with a subject matter and become upset by what someone has said, but it is unacceptable to cause a person to feel uncomfortable, unable to share, and unable to participate in what is going on in the classroom. If needed, T1 provided a resource (facinghistory.org) that provides teachers and students with research-based strategies and tools. Specifically, T1 stated the website also contains a student code of conduct contract that can be used to hold students accountable for their words and actions when it comes to sharing one perspective about race and other controversial issues.

To build a classroom culture where students have the freedom and confidence to speak their truth, T4 relies on simple things such as the elementary based concept of circle time. According to T4, circle time refers to the activity used in many primary schools to develop and foster positive relationships and effective communication strategies between students. The goal of circle time, regardless of the age of the student participants, is to teach and model and provide the tools needed to engage with and listen to others. Teacher 4 stated that even at the secondary level of instruction, circle time "teaches kids to honor others by letting them speak" and be heard. The person in possession of the stick should be the only person speaking while the remaining students are expected to listen, not comment, and not laugh or scoff about what has been shared. Teacher 4 used a squishy ball globe as her version of a talking stick but noted anything that can be passed around the room would work. Introduced at the beginning of the year as a district-wide initiative, T4 and her fellow teachers introduced the concept of circle time by asking a silly question such as, "What was your favorite part of the summer?" and then allowing

a student to accept the squishy ball globe and respond or pass it along to the next person to speak. Using the strategy once or twice a week, the students quickly learned to use and abide by the rules of circle time, which has since opened the opportunity to use that time for more complex and difficult discussions about hard-hitting subjects.

Another strategy to model effective communication used by one of the participant teachers is to share with students their perspective and stance on one conservative issue, one liberal issue, and one issue that [they] have moved from being liberal to more conservative or vice versa. Teacher 3 stated the purpose and benefit of this strategy is that he is not only speaking his truth in an honest and forthright manner to students, but he is also able to track those things down that he said should a parent or anyone want to have a conversation about what is being presented to students in his class. On the other hand, T2 stated that while he does use life experience to model that there are multiple perspectives to consider in every situation, he does redirect students by explaining that his job is to encourage them to think about things such as race, religion, and other issues. Teacher 2 commented that although students often become frustrated when they are asked questions such as "What do you think?" "What has been your experience or observation?" Or even "What is your view of this or that?" Ultimately, students leave the class or the lesson knowing not only how to speak to others but that there are multiple perspectives to consider when critically examining what others say and how they think.

Research Question Three: Experience Discomfort

Research question three explored how exemplary secondary social studies teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations in which one might feel uncomfortable. According to Singleton and Linton (2006), people tend to avoid and will do almost anything to minimize uncomfortable situations and

conversations. The courageous conversation strategy of being willing to experience discomfort urges individuals to deal with the reality of sensitive and controversial issues such as race in an honest and forthright way (Singleton & Linton, 2006). To this end, Singleton and Linton urged educators and educational leaders to evolve and achieve real growth by allowing themselves to be active participants in authentic dialogue that includes a willingness to "open up and examine their core racial beliefs, values, perceptions, and behaviors" with others even though the dialogue might ignite personal and collective discomfort (p. 64). The courageous conversation strategy establishes a safe way to increase tolerance when faced with discomfort (Singleton, 2013).

The participants offered specific strategies and tools used to reinforce how to experience discomfort when engaged in conversations in which one might feel uncomfortable by recognizing their (students and teachers) need for continual learning and deep reflection. In the context of this study, the two emerging themes to facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations which one might feel uncomfortable were that teachers possess a willingness to continuously and consistently evolve and the use of critical inquiry and group-oriented activities to help students feel comfortable with the uncomfortable.

Teachers' willingness to continuously and consistently evolve. While the purpose of this study was to identify strategies exemplary social studies teachers use to facilitate discussions about SCIs, such as race with the students, a central theme to all participant responses was a strategic belief that teachers possess a willingness and desire to continuously and consistently improve their teaching and understanding of others. For instance, each of the four participants shared a belief that regardless of how long a teacher has been teaching, there are always opportunities to learn because there are always better information sources and always new information. Along the same lines, each of the four participants stated that teachers, first-year to

a veteran, must have a willingness to look inward and admit what they do not know or understand and adjust by reading, listening, being a part of difficult conversations, and learning from others.

For example, T3 stated that "discomfort learning" starts when a person can speak honestly and normalize that asking questions and understanding is the best way to approach discomfort. To this end, T3 mentioned a book that helped him understand the perspectives of others and how to approach conversations about SCIs such as race "in the right way" was *Between the World and Me* by Coates and Amann (2017). Although he admittedly disagreed with what was written in the book initially, he realized, as a White man, he had no idea about being a Black man raising a Black son. Therefore, from reading Coates and Amann's book, he not only learned to recognize the perspective of others better, but his awareness that all students are their own person and do not speak for all people of color was also strengthened. Another resource T3 used to raise his awareness and ability to be a part of and stay engaged in conversations in which one might feel discomfort was by reading about the life of Stokely Carmichael from whom he attributed learning that "as long as he is willing to raise his awareness about things such as race, it is all right to stumble, correct his mistake, and then move on."

Teacher 4 echoed the sentiments of T3 and added that staying engaged in uncomfortable situations is relevant to teachers in that they do not share their stuff or what they know or do not know because of what others might say. Therefore, similar to the students being taught, teachers "have to be willing to be vulnerable, which means [we] have to be able to take corrective criticism, [we] have to learn from others … and as soon as people wrap their head around that, it makes life a lot easier." Teacher 1 and T2 shared similar sentiments by emphasizing teachers

cannot expect their students to engage in conversations that they themselves are unwilling to listen to or participate in.

For example, T4 stated that as a part of a district-wide initiative, a Canvas discussion board (an online discussion platform) is now used to post "cool" things either observed in another teacher's classroom, things that a teacher has done in their own classroom, or to post a question that all teachers can respond to and begin a conversation. While T4 noted the process is not perfect, the online discussion forum has improved teachers' willingness and ability to discuss and learn from colleagues. For example, T4 was able to learn from another teacher how to incorporate what was originally a math lesson to fit the needs of her geography class. Teacher 4 stated that as important as it is to let students know that it is okay to be uncomfortable, a teacher also must learn to be okay with being uncomfortable. Teacher 1's comments coincided with T4 when he stated, "Teachers have to know how to have these conversations (about sensitive and controversial issues such as race) and be up to date and willing to have those uncomfortable talks and not turn away." By way of example, the participant teachers shared teaching strategies they used to help students feel comfortable with the uncomfortable, such as using critical inquiry and group activities.

Critical inquiry and group activities. In the context of this study, teaching strategies such as critical inquiry refer to the process of modeling and teaching students how to gather and evaluate information, ideas, and assumptions from multiple perspectives to then develop new ideas, create informed judgments and opinions, and even apply what has been learned. Furthermore, group-oriented activities refer to partner-based, small group (three to four students) and whole group discussions, projects, and activities used to teach students how to understand the voice of others better and be an active participant in often difficult conversations. By way of

example, T4 facilitates the whole group "Cussing and Discussing" sessions to discuss current events and social studies relevant topics in the area and around the world with students. Although the name "Cussing and Discussing" might raise eyebrows, T4 assured the researcher the sessions are PG (parental guidance) rated as students are not allowed to cuss but can freely use phrases such as "flim-flam" and "what the monkeys" when speaking about what they have seen or heard in the news or happenings pulled from the headlines. The introduction to discuss and analyze elements of whatever might have just happened in the news usually begins with "Hey, did you hear about this?" and is then followed up with, "Well, we should talk about it." After watching a video clip, reading an article excerpt, and then independently thinking about what was presented, the class then openly responds to questions and statements about things such as media bias. For example, T4 uses a variety of news sources to model for students that it is important to understand an issue from all sides (perspectives). Subsequently, T4 asks questions such as "why do you think they (the media or whomever) used that particular person to interview?" Or "Is there bias?" and "why do you think they are biased?"

Teacher 3's and T2's sentiments coincided with those of T4 when they stated the only way to raise students' awareness and consciousness to the surface is by "giving them challenging questions, challenging sources, and putting them in scenarios where they (students) have to discuss what they think." Specifically, T2 and T3 stated that in their respective classes, students do a lot of partner, small group, and individual activities that focus on consensus building and how to explain their perspectives to others. For instance, the participants suggested that two groups with opposing perspectives on a topic such as the legacy of Jim Crow today or the decision to drop the atomic bomb might be asked to work together to gain a bigger understanding of a topic. Also, T3 uses Socratic seminars that allow students to craft questions, framed by a

lesson, to discuss the questions posed and then answered, and ultimately test their ideas and new information learned. According to T3, these conversations supply a space to think as an individual and reframe their conversations using the right language and the shared ideas of others. Teacher 3 endeavors to teach his students that they have the "capacity to take informed action by taking a stance on issues and raise awareness by having solid conversations and creating questions and surveys to talk about sometimes uncomfortable things."

For instance, T3 remembered how a student who is Navajo once shared with the class how it felt not to have "textbooks talk about my people." While the student stated most people know about the Wind Talkers and how the Navajo helped this country defeat fascism, he commented that things such as the high poverty rate and advanced rates of suicide among his people are rarely discussed. When interviewed and asked the question, "What is the number one thing you wish folks knew about the Navajo?" the student replied "that my people have not gone away." Thus, T3 emphasized with students the relevance of not "couching conversations" and the significance of changing how individuals talk about things, continuing to have conversations, and continuing to disrupt the traditional and often wrong or misleading messages that students encounter.

Another strategy T3 implements to provide students the opportunity to be comfortable with the uncomfortable is to have students teach a class. According to T3, the students who choose to teach a class must "build an inquiry structure wherein they must formulate questions, tasks, identify and provide sources for students, and must lead the students in discussion." Admittingly, T3 stated, "the students who have taken him up on the offer to teach a lesson have always dealt with the most controversial and uncomfortable stuff in the world." For example, T3

spoke of a student-led lesson that stemmed from a lesson asking the question, should hate speech be protected?

In the lesson which T3 confessed was "one of the most popular lessons of the year," the student-led activity started with the question, "Can White America learn from Black music?" As a result, the student then led a discussion using excerpts from rap and hip-hop lyrics about race. Teacher 3 recalled that in the lesson, students listened to, investigated, evaluated, and even annotated rap and hip-hop lyrics to identify every aspect of the song to include "words that were a little weird, so even the communication and type of language used could be used as an accessible resource." Although T3 stated he and the students discussed whether the lesson would "get him fired," considering curse words were used and read in class, he received zero calls and pushback. In fact, T3 commented that one of his more conservative students shared with the class how she thought she would be thrown off by all the cussing, but instead noticed that when she really listened to and read the lyrics and the message being conveyed, that the rapper did not cuss early on in the lyrics but only showed his anger through cussing whenever he rapped about things such as violations of fairness and equity.

Teacher 1 echoed the sentiments of T3 but added that teachers must be able to recognize how their kids might react and respond to things and then decide whether to continue with a discussion or stop to identify why an idea or topic presented has caused some of them to feel uncomfortable. For example, T1 commented about how many issues discussed in class have caused students to feel a certain level of discomfort because some issues are "brutal and awful" to discuss. To this end, T1 stated that teachers must be able to lead their students in discussions that address "why they are feeling uncomfortable" or "why they might be feeling discomfort," and how to then move forward and not away from uncomfortable conversations.

Research Question Four: Accept and Expect Nonclosure

Research question four explored how exemplary secondary social studies teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved. According to Winters (2017), acceptance does not mean agreement. To this end, Singleton and Linton (2006) urged educators not to look at open dialogue about difficult conversations as a goal or objective to complete but rather an open-ended opportunity to dialogue about the issues that impact students and teachers the most.

The participants offered specific strategies and tools they use daily with students to reinforce each of the themes identified. Overall, the teacher participants conveyed that teaching and modeling the significance of acquiring the ability and willingness to recognize, understand, and take into consideration how an individual's experiences impact their perspective of the world is key. In the context of this study, the teacher participants facilitated how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved by placing emphasis on the significance of hearing the voice of others by being mindful of others' thoughts and perspectives and that acceptance of one's perspective does not mean agreement.

Perspective and perception. Teacher 3 said it best when he stated teachers must develop a mindset and commit to teaching students about perspective and perception the entire year because "it is not something that can only be talked about in February, for Black History Month." Indeed, he commented that the ability to reflect and be able to teach others and continue to learn about race or anything else is a "growing process" and is a part of one's evolving individuality. By way of example, when facilitating conversations with his students about issues such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or even the wall dilemma (immigration issues), T2 stated how from day one he teaches and then reminds students that they need to listen to and be a

part of conversations even when "there are things one can understand and not accept and also things one can accept but not understand." For instance, when asked a subjective question such as, is violence justified?, students need to know that there is not a closed approach to what they say if they base their perspective on objective facts. Therefore, open-ended questions and responses become less about whether there is accepting and not understanding or understanding and not accepting but more about "being able to take a position and then supporting it with evidence," especially when one knows that specific issues can lead to uncomfortable conversations.

An instructional strategy T3 uses to emphasize and model how perception is often filtered through the perspective of one's peers is to "constantly switch students' groups and the seating arrangement, so students never sit with the same people." As a result, T3's students "always must reevaluate their ideas and the perspectives of others." In fact, one of the many assignments the student groups must complete requires that each group answer a question such as, "Was the Declaration of Independence hypocritical?" Teacher 3 provided the artifact (see Appendix G) and discussed it as follows: Specifically, students must first individually read the reference document (the Declaration of Independence) and then, as a group, find pieces of evidence that support their side of the argument, YES the Declaration of Independence is hypocritical, or NO the Declaration of Independence is not hypocritical. The purpose of the activity is not only to teach and model effective communication and argumentation skills but also how to explain one's ideas backed by evidence and how to develop consensus among the groups.

Another strategy T3 used to teach and model the significance of perspective and perception was to show his students artifacts such as wartime propaganda and Dr. Seuss books to not only "look at what the message is but look at the racial caricature, drawings, and the font and

grammar used to see and understand the racial nuances that society, at the very least, can now recognize" as wrong and uncomfortable. In the same vein, T3 stated his students had discussed the media's coverage of more recent issues such as Blackface and how what was at one time permissible does not excuse a person from now not knowing that things such as Blackface and some Halloween costumes can be perceived as offensive to individuals and groups. As a result of these conversations, students learn to listen to multiple perspectives and form their own opinions and judgments, but also that a person is not a position to make excuses or ignore another's perspective. In short, T3 emphasized, "[You] cannot unknow it."

The same message was conveyed using a multimedia outlet to facilitate a discussion with students about the significance of listening to the voice of others when students viewed the film, *The Pianist* (Polanski, Sarde, & Benmussa, 2002). Using a scene from the movie, T1 stated he facilitated a discussion with students about the significance of getting to know and listening to the perspectives of the people "we daily" encounter. For instance, when referencing a scene from the film in which a brother tells his sister, "I wish I knew you better," T1 asks students, "Why would he [the brother] tell his sister that?" and "Why, if they had been raised together and grew up together, did they not know each other?" Subsequently, using his class and the students as a frame of reference, he asks students to consider "whom they talk to every day?" Who besides your family and friends do you see and interact with daily?" Also, "How do you get to know them better?" Do you say, "Hi" or ask them, "What is your name?" Teacher 1 stated the point of this exercise is to teach, model, and "challenge students" to go into their world and interact with others and then come back and report to the class what they learned about someone. He gives students a few days to complete the challenge and is always surprised by what he hears. For instance, T1's freshmen students are "kind of ridiculous" and will come back now knowing what

their dad does for a job because they finally had asked. To this end, T1 stated his students learn to communicate, listen, and hear what others have to say about things. In the same way, students learn that by listening to and accepting what someone has shared does not mean agreement.

Acceptance does not mean agreement. When teaching about cultural relativism, the idea that values, practices, and beliefs are based on a person's culture, T1 uses examples from the practices of specific cultures to examine how individuals deem something as right or wrong based on their unique perception and perspective. For instance, a strategy T1 uses with students is to have them verbally assign a "green light" (I wish we would do this here), a "neutral" (it is okay that someone else does it, but I would not want to do it), or a "big red light" (that should not be done, it is wrong) to "twenty or so examples such as foot-binding in China and how in Korea and China, they might serve dog on the menu." In fact, T1 stated that when discussing this topic, his students were stunned when they learned that one of their classmates hunted deer. Although the female student who hunted shared the reasons why she and her family hunt, many of the students assigned a verbal neutral, indicating they accepted her practices (to hunt deer) but would not try it themselves. To this end, T1 commented that "even in one's own culture, not everyone agrees, but at the least, there can be understanding of another's point of view."

Conversely, a strategy used by T4 to facilitate discussions about expecting and accepting nonclosure is to teach students how to apply in context what is presented in class by having students consider what it might be like to "be in somebody else's shoes." For example, T4 has used discussions about suicide to underscore how being different or how having alternative feelings, values, ideas, and practices should not be considered flaws and "are not weaknesses" but are a part of who we are or what we have experienced or have been taught. Subsequently, T4 relates those ideas to curriculum content and other real-world examples presented in class.

For instance, T4 and her students talk about North Korea and how the people of North Korea have been told their entire life that there is only one way of life and, as a result, "have never really seen the outside world." She then asks open-ended and higher-order thinking questions such as, "Is it their fault [North Korean's] that their perspective is totally different from ours [Americans]?" and "Is it their fault that they believe what they have been told?" Or "is it your fault that you [the students of her class] believe what you have been taught and told?" As a result, the students begin to understand and are then able to consider what it is like to see life through another lens and from another perspective. Specifically, she asks students to consider how it would feel to suddenly learn that "everything you [an American] once thought was wrong about North Korea is right" or vice versa. Along the same lines, T4 discusses how it is okay to not agree or understand another person's perspective without hating them for it. In fact, T4 stated students need to know when talking about issues such as race, communism, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender, and Queer community (LGBTQ), religion, etc. how to have conversations about differences and then "just walk away" and think "I can see where that person is coming from, but, for whatever reason, this is what I choose or believe." Another participant echoed these sentiments when he stated that "issues such as race are an ongoing process … chronic issues that are not going to be solved, so it is going to be a lifetime of being aware of it." Therefore, individuals cannot burden others to explain their day-to-day; rather, "people like me [White American male] need to immerse [themselves] as much as I can in the literature and ask as many questions as I can and move forward."

Research Question Five: Challenges Encountered with Students and Parents

The final research question addressed challenges the teacher participants have encountered when discussing sensitive and controversial issues such as race with students and

parents. The results of the teacher participant responses to this question varied. Whereas one participant commented they have no memorable issues regarding challenges they have encountered with students and parents regarding SCIs, the remaining three participants commented on having minimal challenges. The theme of these minimal challenges is the need to be sensitive to individual beliefs, whether through assignments or class discussions.

For instance, one participant commented that a teacher and parent conference was needed once when a parent disagreed with the summer reading book choice, which was not about race but about religion. Specifically, the participant teacher stated the parent perceived that the book assigned to students to read, which was about a different religion, would "proselytize" her daughter. Although the teacher did not speak on the outcome of the parent and teacher conference, the participant commented that she explained to the parent that "the book was just a book" used within her religion course to teach and facilitate discussions about alternative value and belief systems "to provide perspective about the cultures and practices of others within the world."

When asked the same question about challenges encountered with students and parents stemming from discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, another participant commented how, in the event that was "totally [my] fault, I remember asking a student of color a question that perceivably put him in a position to respond on behalf of or as a representative voice of others who were of the same race." Although the situation occurred "many, many years ago," the teacher stated he "distinctly remembers" his error and has since learned to be more mindful about his delivery of message when forming questions and when facilitating conversations with students. The participant added that teachers need to "reflect and try to

anticipate how discussions will proceed, what questions might arise from the conversations shared, and how they will facilitate discussions and present content to students."

Differences Among Participant Teachers

The four participant teachers have taught or currently teach social studies coursework within the public education sector and at the secondary level of instruction. The four participant teachers each reside in different states and regions of the continental United States. Therefore, each voluntary participant contributed their perspective on how to facilitate discussions about race based on their experience within the social studies classroom. The interview narratives are different based not only on the differences in the curriculum from one state to the other but also the historical background differences from each state and also the differences of demographic characteristics of the state, city, and the school district from which they teach.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a review of the purpose of the study and the research questions that were being investigated. Major themes that arose out of the analysis of the four participant teachers were identified and discussed. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the summary of the findings, implications, recommendations for future research, and the conclusion.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This qualitative instrumental collective case study explored best practices of exemplary social studies teachers who facilitate difficult conversations in the classroom. The foundation of this study was based on the framework of Singleton and Linton (2006), who identified strategies to use when engaging in courageous conversations. The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues, framed within Singleton and Linton's (2006) four agreements of courageous conversations. This chapter focuses on the interpretation of the findings and recommendations for future research. The importance of themes and how they answer the research questions are discussed, and recommendations for the use of the strategies and tools by teachers in the context of their setting are identified. This chapter ends with reflections and closing remarks.

Summary of the Study

This study utilized qualitative data collection. Semi-structured, online, one-to-one internet-based interviews were used to identify the lived experiences of exemplary secondary social studies teachers and the strategies they use when facilitating discussions about sensitive and controversial issues such as race in the classroom. Voluntarily submitted participant artifacts such as lesson plans, websites, and multimedia resources were utilized to provide in-class strategies and context.

Brief overview of the problem. Copur and Demirel (2016) suggested, "Teachers experience difficulty in introducing some issues into the classroom environment" (p. 82). In other words, not only do teachers not feel comfortable and lack the confidence to teach SCIs, they often reflect on teaching these issues as a continuous stress (Gindi & Erlich, 2018; Misco,

2016; Steinberger & Magen-Nagar, 2017; Van Beveren et al., 2018), and also have doubt about students' "ability or maturity to engage in meaningful discussions" which involve SCIs (Maxwell et al., 2018, p. 197).

Singleton (2013) argued that teachers must have the fortitude to discuss issues such as race despite racial issues being a seemingly taboo topic of discussion in the context of the current educational system. As a framework for understanding how teachers facilitate difficult conversations about SCIs such as race, the purpose of this study was to draw upon the work of Singleton and Linton (2006), Singleton and Hay (2008), Singleton (2013, 2015), who argued that four agreements are necessary for individuals to begin courageous conversations. The researchers' expansive work is focused on race and raising awareness about racism as a topic of discussion in schools to allow those who have knowledge about issues of race to share what they know and allow those who lack knowledge about race to learn and grow from the exchange. Because discussions about SCIs, such as race, can be dangerous, emotionally charged, and unpredictable, their four agreements of courageous conversations include the following:

- stay engaged,

- experience discomfort,

- speak your truth, and

- accept a lack of closure.

Singleton and Hays (2008) suggested that individuals who understand and commit to these four agreements provide a guide for "safe exploration and profound learning for all" when negotiating potentially polarizing topics of discussion (p. 18).

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating

classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues, framed within Singleton and Linton (2006) and Singleton's (2015) four agreements of courageous conversations. Utilizing a qualitative, instrumental collective case study, the primary source of data for this study was narrative teacher interview responses. The research questions posed in this study supported a qualitative and dialogical approach that denoted teachers' unique perspectives about how they engage students when facilitating difficult conversations. The interviews were analyzed to determine the participants' experiences and to identify resulting themes regarding the research questions. A purposeful sample of four exemplary social studies teachers were interviewed. This study utilized online, one-to-one internet-based interviewing (Gupta, 2017) because the sample population was gathered from different regions of the United States, and face-to-face interviews were not feasible. Online consent from voluntary participants was obtained.

The research questions were:

Q1. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged?

Q2. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group?

Q3. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations in which one might feel uncomfortable?

Q4. In what way do exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved?

Q5. What are the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers regarding facilitating courageous conversations with students?

Review of the study design. A qualitative instrumental case study approach was used to identify strategies exemplary secondary social studies teachers use when facilitating discussion about SCIs in the classroom with students. The data collected from the four voluntary teacher participants were analyzed. The interview data transcripts were read multiple times and highlighted the reoccurring phrases for analysis and theme grouping and distinction. The clusters of ideas and concepts identified became the foundation for the narrative findings and subsequent support for the emerging themes. The four purposefully selected secondary social studies teachers, three males and one female, met criteria to be included in this study by being a recipient of the National Council for the Social Studies, Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year award. Moreover, each participant is a current or previous classroom teacher of one or more courses under the content area of secondary social studies. Geographically, all participants reside within the continental United States. Four of the four participants interviewed are also recipients of one or more campus-based, district, region, and state-level Social Studies Teacher of the Year awards.

Summary of major findings. The major findings of this study are summarized by research question.

Research question one. Research question one explored how exemplary secondary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged. The findings were:

- relating historical content to student lived experiences and scenarios,

- building and reinforcing an intellectually safe environment, and

- challenging and disrupting metanarratives.

Research question two. Research question two examined how exemplary social studies teachers discuss issues such as race with students to help them speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group. The primary finding was:

- Teachers teach and model skills and strategies needed to communicate effectively and critically about hard to discuss subjects such as race.

Research question three. Research question three examined how exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations in which one might feel uncomfortable. The findings were:

- teachers' willingness to continuously and consistently evolve, and
- critical inquiry and group activities.

Research question four. Research question four examined how exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved. The findings were:

- perspective and perception, and
- acceptance does not mean agreement.

Research question five. Research question five examined the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers when facilitating courageous conversations with students. The results of the participant responses varied from no challenges to minimal challenges when discussing issues such as race with students and parents. However, the following theme emerged from the teacher participants who did experience a minimal level of challenge.

- A need to be sensitive to individual beliefs, whether through assignments or class discussions.

Interpretation of the Findings and Discussion

The qualitative instrumental case study was designed to investigate strategies utilized by exemplary secondary social studies teachers when facilitating discussions with students about sensitive and controversial issues such as race. An overall conclusion of the findings revealed that teachers need to teach and model how to communicate effectively by acquiring the ability and willingness to share, hear, understand, and accept multiple perspectives effectively both in and of the classroom. Soares (2013) acknowledged that schools should be a place to break down the barriers which cause division among groups and perpetuate social barriers in the classroom. Moreover, Alongi et al. (2016), Copur and Demiral (2016), Hartwick, Hawkins, and Schroeder (2015), Kuppens, Langer, and Ibrahim (2018), Kuş (2015), and Misco and Tseng (2016) echoed these sentiments when they stated facilitating conversations about controversial issues in secondary grade-level social studies classrooms are among the steps needed to prepare students of the 21st century to be productive citizens able to engage with local and global issues by being able to communicate, question, think and produce.

Research question one. Research question one examined how exemplary social studies teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged. Based on the findings, students learn through relating historical and factual content to student lived experiences and scenarios. Also, students learn best when teachers build and reinforce an intellectually safe environment and through challenging and disrupting metanarratives about sensitive and controversial issues such as race. These findings concluded that teachers "resist the natural inclination to move away from conversations" about often sensitive and controversial issues such as race (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 60). In fact, Soares (2013) stated the educational curriculum must be structured

to prepare students using real-life experiences, which will help them better reach and sustain "life outside schools' walls" (Soares, 2013, p. 69).

Indeed, the pedagogy of Walker and Carrera (2017) indicated social study educators use a backward design that facilitates deeper understanding and encourages students to speak and to focus on thinking skills rather than on the absorption of facts to which they do not relate to in their current life. Also, the authors suggested that in addition to reading the textbook and other primary sources, teachers should introduce the analysis of secondary sources such as articles, magazines, journals, movie and book reviews, and personal commentary that facilitate open discussion and exploration of issues. The findings were further supported when Rantala et al. (2016) suggested students learn when they are provided an arena to identify the feelings of historical figures and are challenged to contrast their feelings with the experiences in their own lives. Furthermore, incorporating historical empathy exercises requires the ability to use both prescribed curricula content while also "making connections between goals, beliefs, and values" to determine the motives and reasons of people and events (Rantala, Manninen, & van den Berg, 2016, p. 324).

In the same vein, Childs (2014) alluded to the need to create a safe place within the social studies classroom to not only engage in issues surrounding race but reverse or challenge the messages sent through popular culture and the media that tend to seep into these sites of learning and "reinforce old ideas about how individuals from certain groups should behave or think" (p. 299). Lastly, the participant teachers' use of strategies to build and sustain an intellectually safe environment to share one's experiences, perspectives, and opinions without repercussions is supported by Singleton's (2013) discussion of the relevance of the nine healthy ways to

communicate, which focus on listening, asking questions, and responding to the statements and inquiries of others.

  Research question two. Research question two examined how exemplary social studies teachers discuss issues such as race with students to help them speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group. The suggested conclusion based on the findings indicated that teachers teach and model skills and strategies needed to communicate effectively and critically about hard to discuss subjects such as race. This finding is supported by Copur and Demirel (2016), who argued student communication skills are strengthened when students are taught civic education and the skills and values learned through civic education.

  Fesnic's (2016) claim coincided with that of Copur and Demirel (2016) when he suggested "open societies," which are dedicated to teaching and modeling for students the skills that focus on speaking about and solving real-life problems often produce young citizens who are more inclusive and less oppressive and repressive as they grow older (p. 969). The findings of this research question are further supported by Cho (2018), who echoed the sentiments of Fesnic when he discussed the benefit of developing students' understanding that "joint struggles can be engaged in ways that do not subsume each group under the leadership of one understanding" (p. 277). In short, Cho suggested teaching and modeling civic education is relevant not only to facilitate discussions that challenge students to think critically but to develop students' social action skills to challenge the status quo and enact change. Furthermore, researchers recognized the relevance of teachers' role as an agent of change within the social studies classroom to teach the importance of educating and hearing the voices of all children (Graybill, 1997; Singleton, 2015).

Research question three. Research question three examined how exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations in which one might feel uncomfortable. The research suggested the conclusion that teachers must have a willingness to continuously and consistently evolve as a person and as a professional. A conclusion based on the results of data collected also indicated teachers utilize critical inquiry and group activities to teach students how to understand the voice of others better and be an active participant in often difficult conversations.

Based on the research, the conclusion was that teachers continuously seek out new information and challenge students to work together to evaluate information from multiple perspectives. According to Fish (2017), to meet the needs of a diverse population of students served, teachers need to evolve to assure all students obtain the education they are entitled to receive and are well adjusted and able to thrive within the educational setting. Also, Singleton (2015) acknowledged the demands placed on teachers when he stated that teaching "requires remarkable skill, substantial knowledge, and significant effort" to continuously evolve to meet students' educational needs with passion and desire (p. 19). Bersh (2018) echoed these sentiments and added that to teach all students and facilitate change in classrooms and beyond takes effort and is a lifelong journey. By extension, in their discussion of developing a Pedagogy of Teacher Education, Van Beveren et al. (2018) discussed the relevance of teachers' ability and willingness to continuously evolve and reflect on the choices they make and how one's attitudes and behaviors impact students.

The findings from question three were further supported by Alongi et al. (2016), who suggested that students benefit from in-class discussion and debate, which teaches them to effectively convey their thoughts, improve inferencing and higher-order thinking, problem-solve,

and make informed decisions. Indeed, Alongi et al. (2016) indicated classroom discussions, which include controversial issues presented by core concepts in social studies, provide opportunities for students to work together to develop and increase their willingness to apply learned concepts outside of class and connect the new knowledge gained to other background knowledge. In another study, Alongi et al. found that students who participated in group-oriented classroom discussions and activities about moral issues as an educational tool have developed and improved their moral development and decision-making skills in comparison to students who were not exposed to the alternative teaching strategies.

Research question four. Research question four examined how exemplary social studies teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved. The results of data collected from the participant interviews suggested that teachers teach students to hear the voice of others by being mindful of others' thoughts and perspectives. Also, teachers must convey to students that acceptance of one's perspective does not mean agreement. The findings were supported by the idea that one must align their beliefs and ideals (intrapersonal thoughts) to those of their intellectual and relational obligations (interpersonal actions; Singleton, 2013). Specifically, Singleton (2013) suggested that the nine healthy ways to communicate cultivates more mindful facilitation in preparation for and during courageous conversations by encouraging individuals to try to understand how a person's past affects who they are and how those experiences affect their relationship with them by staying with the process and the relationship, not just the solution, by being curious and open to what others are trying to say, and by being emotionally present and willing to try to relate how an individual is feeling (p. 46).

Research question five. Research question five examined the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers when facilitating courageous conversations with students. The finding for this question emphasized that teachers need to be sensitive to individual beliefs, whether through assignments or class discussions. The finding was supported by Singleton and Hays (2008), who noted that because discussions about sensitive and controversial issues can be dangerous, emotionally charged, and unpredictable, teachers must be willing and able to facilitate conversations with others such as students, peers, colleagues, and by extension, parents. Along the same lines, Singleton and Hays (2008) and Soares (2013) argued schools should be a place where discussions about different beliefs, values, and perspectives can be shared when teachers are sensitive and empathetic rather than a place where real-life issues are ignored and perpetuated.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings of this study can be used by secondary social studies teachers to identify strategies and tools to use when they facilitate discussions about sensitive and controversial issues such as race in the context of their educational setting. Also, the implications of this study could help administrators, department coordinators, and content-level leads craft professional development (PD) and professional learning communities (PLCs) in the following ways.

- Teachers should not shy away from addressing controversial issues in the classroom. Although there is opposition geared to ban the teaching and discussion of controversial issues in schools, others insist that the inclusion of these issues is an essential part of what constitutes a true learning environment (Boyd & Glazier, 2017; Camicia, 2008; Yacek, 2018; Zimmerman & Robertson, 2017).

- Teachers should have a passion for education, their profession, and the growth potential of all students. According to Graybill (1997) and Singleton (2015), teachers must set high expectations for their students, encourage students to ask questions and delve deeper into the injustices of the world, and promote excellence among all children regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

- Educational staff should continuously reflect on how their attitudes, behaviors, biases, judgments, and opinions impact students within the learning environment. Günel (2016) suggested not all pre-service and in-service teachers have the critical thinking capacity not to allow their personal prejudices and beliefs to not negatively influence their teaching.

- Teachers need to have a desire to fight for racial equality in schools and communities. Singleton (2013) suggested the relevance of finding one's place as a "human first and as a school leader second" (p. 22).

- Teachers should avoid silencing others' realities. According to Singleton and Linton (2006), when educators rebuke or question one's truth, they become accomplices to the silenced dialogue that perpetuates fear about controversial issues such as race.

- Educators should not overlook and disregard people's differences. Educators must be aware that by not having difficult conversations, they are silencing voices and nullifying others' perspectives.

- Educators must understand not all individuals are ready, willing, and equipped to discuss how sensitive and controversial issues such as race impact students within the learning environment. However, as educators, "We must stay collectively engaged

throughout the continuous, challenging, and always evolving dialogue" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 65).

Recommendations for Future Research

The teaching and discussion of SCIs such as race are not only reasonable and logical, they are necessary to raise student-citizens who have a global viewpoint and who are able to make sound judgments and decisions through the development of toleration and support for equality (Baloğlu Uğurlu, N., & Doğan, 2016; Copur & Demirel, 2016; Kello, 2015; Kuş, 2015; Misco, 2016). If educators are interested in raising their current education and curriculum standards to embody more authentic learning experiences, teachers and other educational leaders must commit to engaging in courageous conversations about the racial issues faced in society and in schools (Singleton & Hays, 2008; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Soares, 2013). This can ultimately work if a better understanding of how teachers teach and facilitate difficult conversations is provided. Since the four agreements of courageous conversations are based in open dialogue, educators can "muster the strength" to tackle topics like race (Singleton & Hays, 2008, p. 19). This study has examined and identified current strategies used by exemplary secondary social studies teachers when facilitating discussions about sensitive and controversial issues such as race in the classroom. The four teacher participants interviewed are recipients of the NCSS Outstanding Secondary Teacher of the Year award. Future research recommendations could include the following:

- Study the teaching strategies of secondary social studies teachers within a specific state or region of the United States.

- Replicate the study interviewing teachers from other core content areas such as English or science.

- Implicate a qualitative research study that identifies students' perceptions of the strategies used by secondary social studies teachers to facilitate discussions about sensitive and controversial issues.

- Implicate a qualitative research study that identifies parents' and community members' understanding of current sensitive and controversial issues and how these issues impact children of the 21st century.

- Study the strategies parents of children of the 21st century use when facilitating discussions about sensitive and controversial issues.

Reflections and Closing Remarks

This study examined the strategies exemplary social studies teachers use to facilitate discussions with students about sensitive and controversial issues such as race. During the online and face-to-face interviews, I was impressed by the level of passion and commitment to not only their students' growth but their personal and professional growth. The teachers appeared confident and genuinely invested in teaching and modeling for students the skills needed to speak, hear, understand, and accept the voice and perspective of others. I have walked away from this experience with a firm belief that teachers across the curriculum should seek out opportunities to safely discuss real-life issues that impact our students and which cause division in the world and within the classroom. Tantamount to helping me further my leadership skills, I feel confident in my ability to have the courage and fortitude to stay engaged, speak my truth, experience discomfort, and accept nonclosure when participating in dialogue about sensitive and controversial issues such as race with those I daily interact.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Background Information on Voluntary Participant

Date: _____

Name: _____

State in which you teach: _____

Review of Participation Rights to This Interview

Initial Statement of Inquiry: Before the interview questioning begins, I would like to tell you about my study:

The purpose of this qualitative, instrumental collective case study is to identify strategies that exemplary secondary social studies teachers implement when facilitating classroom discussions about sensitive and controversial issues, specifically racial issues. It is the intent of this study to use the framework of Singleton and Linton (2006) and Singleton's (2015) four agreements of courageous conversations to gain a better understanding of how teachers teach and facilitate difficult conversations within the secondary social studies classroom. Participation is voluntary, and participants are free to end their participation in this study at any time. There are no risks associated with participating in this study.

To provide clarity of my topic, I would like to inform you of the four agreement of courageous conversations: stay engaged, experience discomfort, speak your truth, and expect and accept nonclosure.

Guided Protocol

1. **In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged?**

   - What do teachers do to help students see the moral issues of building relationships with other races?
   - What do teachers do to help students control their emotions when discussing
   - racial issues?
   - What do teachers do to help students understand racial issues intellectually?
   - What do teachers do socially within the classroom to contribute to staying engaged?

2. **In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers facilitate how to speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group?**

   - What do teachers do to assist students in forming their opinions about racial issues?
   - What do teachers do when students ask their teacher to speak their truth?
   - What teaching strategies do teachers use to facilitate guided discussions where students are encouraged to speak their truth?

3. **In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations which one might feel uncomfortable?**

- What do teachers do to assist students to not avoid or leave difficult conversations?
- What communication strategies do teachers use to assist students in relating to how they and others are feeling.
- What teaching strategies do teachers use to facilitate guided discussions where students are encouraged to participate in difficult conversations about sensitive and controversial issues.

4. **In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved?**

- What teaching strategies do teachers use to assist students in understanding that acceptance of another person's truth does not mean agreement?

5. **What are the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers regarding facilitating courageous conversations with students?**

6. **Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding how you facilitate difficult conversations?**

Appendix B: Coding Matrix

Research Question 1: In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged?

Theme	Categories	Description	Supporting Evidence
Relating historical content to student lived experiences and scenarios	-Shared learning -Perspective -Interest and willingness to participate -Historical to contemporary significance	How teachers discuss race with students to help them stay engaged	We're exploring, and the lived experiences of the students, which then get elevated and raised to the surface in a way that becomes much more authentic. Using a contemporary example for historical understanding. Apparent only when they are shared by individuals coming with values... open market. The goal of the class is to make it individual. Talking about sports teams and logos and turning on its head and causing students to think. How people see themselves and how others see them. And so a lot of that will do through this class discussion where they'll talk about their own life experiences.

			Jewish kid, I got a Muslim, a couple of months, three Muslim girls, I've got, you know, three African Americans. So is there is a wide range in there. And so trying to get everyone to see everyone else's point of view. One part of that question might be scenario-based...And so they give they kind of give that perspective about, you know, what's it like being them for everyone else in the room to kind of recognize that, you know, everyone's story is their own. It's a little different for everyone else. When she shares, inevitably, one or more students will share their experiences and perspective, which diminishes the fear of others asking questions and being inquisitive about the things [they] do not know and are too afraid to talk about with others. if you are not afraid to talk and ask them, they are not afraid to talk about it."

			when she was playing basketball, as a junior or sophomore in high school, her father told her, "we don't talk to that boy." exploring the people and places of the world through another lens and, "another perspective"
Building and reinforcing an intellectually safe environment	-Safe environment -Comfort in sharing -Sharing without fear (perceptions, opinions) -Culture and norms -Honest communication -Respectful dialogue	A culture conducive to sharing and hearing others	We can have these hard conversations using these slippery and indeterminate sources that deal with very hard things. And so, with intellectual safety is a foundation with sources and questions as the process We could talk about anything under the sun. The idea of privilege exists that I think for some probably makes them a little bit uncomfortable because they're confronted with it. Build up to these kinds of things because the kids are not going to be receptive right away or be umm they don't all come equipped, now their comfort zone so, so by the end of the year, I kind of

			like stretching a little bit.
			Discussion is kind of interesting to talk about stop, you know, and you know, when we watch we saw we talking, discuss a few things.
			"My America is" assignment. It helps the class understand each other and gain a new perspective.
			Restorative practices with students in her classes.
			"As a class, the students decide how the class will handle group work and the protocols for how the class will handle differences of opinion, differences in race, and general human differences that usually cause students to button-up and not say anything about something."
			Regardless of the discomfort he might feel when sharing his experiences and stories, students must see, understand, tolerate, and accept the relevance of listening to the

			viewpoints and experiences of others. As early as day one of the school year, teachers need to establish that "peoples' voices are going to be heard because people have to feel safe and welcome." Being forthright and direct when it comes to setting and developing group norms that establish that "anything goes as far as a curiosity" and that anyone can "put things out on the table."
Challenging and disrupting metanarratives	-Relying on the facts, sources of information -Multiple ways to share out - Compelling and supporting questions -Teacher as guide -Reflection -Acceptance	challenging hearsay versus facts where is the information coming from?	I try to kind of engage them and kind of thinking about the other you know, that's a big part of my facing history class is how do we treat the other people that aren't like us and, and one of the things I do is we do a lot of videos and a lot of little short clips, and I'll show in class, or that particular class and so like, you know, there's the one common video that kind of comes out with That would be like the Eye color experiment that was

			an Iowa class divided. So I show a little clip of that... prom night, Mississippi.
			Dismantling narratives that undermine, attack, or even reinforce bias, judgment, and stereotypes.
			What students are thinking?
			" Some people might think [this] about [that]; however, in class, we are going to focus on what is grounded in reality and historical fact rather than what has been shared or passed down."
			Challenge students to find factual research that proves or disproves their perspective.
			The strategy of colonists of 1400s
			What has always been right in one part of the world or within a period of time does not make it right.
			face-to-face interaction/ media outlets and multimedia

			Invited campus-based police officers - provide their perspective, talk to the class, and field questions such a, "was the officer in the film right or wrong?" The goal is to expose students to the facts, put an end to the fear of the unknown, and started conversations and ended hearsay.

Research Question 2: In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers facilitate how to speak one's truth when sharing one's perspective with another person or group?

Theme	Categories	Description	Supporting Evidence
Teachers teach and model effective communication	-Sharing one's perspective -Backed by evidence -Keep out emotion -Basis of democracy -Learn to listen to others -Set expectations -Honor others experiences and voice	How secondary social studies teachers discuss	-Circle time "Teaches kids to honor others by letting them speak." share with students their perspective "What do you think?" "What has been your experience or observation?" Or even "What is your view of this or that?" Students leave the class or the lesson knowing not only how to speak to others but that there

			are multiple perspectives to consider when critically examining what others say and how they think.
			students learning to take a stance and "argue [one's] stance in a meaningful, civil, and critical way."
			Equipped to back up their thoughts, speak their truth.
			Expectation that we will not argue and will not engage in shouting matches.
			Build a classroom culture where students have the freedom and confidence to speak their truth.
			resource facinghistory.org
			that it is okay to be upset with a subject matter and become upset by what someone has said

Research Question 3: In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers facilitate how to experience discomfort when participating in and staying engaged in conversations which one might feel uncomfortable?

Themes	Categories	Description	Supporting Evidence

Willingness to consistently and consciously evolve	Teachers	What teachers need to do to then teach students	You have to...change it up...always better information, there's always newer information
			willing to evolve and to realize that things change with, you know, whatever is happening
			We (teachers) had to be willing to be vulnerable, which means we've got to be able to take corrective criticism, we've got to be able to learn from others, whether their first-year teachers or veteran teachers that you could always be learning something. And as soon as people wrap their heads around, that just makes life a lot easier.
			whole staying engaged in uncomfortable situations is relevant to teachers in that they don't, they don't like to share their stuff, because they don't want people to say, Oh, that's not good…
			I need to be prepared to approach things in

			the right way… up on the right lingo, don't make others feel as if they must represent
			It's more about trying to raise my own awareness, just to the situation that I may not be able to get things right doesn't matter. It's more about the awareness of it. So that if I were to stumble, that I just correct myself, and then I move on.
			willing to evolve and to realize that things change with, you know, whatever is happening,
			throw down the gauntlet of things that we have to do and new things and oh, I read
			Teachers have to know to do that too. To have the gumption to look in themselves and see where they are before they can go forward to expect their students to do it. And ya know some people don't do that or know how to or are not willing to kind of look inward and learn from and keep up.

| | | Strategy | pulling things out of the headlines, hey, did y'all hear about this? Well, let's talk about it. We call it I call it, cussing and discussing

say Yes and…

World and Me by Todd Nessie Coats

depend on students to help think through their understanding

interviewed Black students

Stok Carmichael |
|---|---|---|---|
| Raise students' level of awareness | Students | Strategies to help students be comfortable with uncomfortable | students begin in the class as individuals, and that in order to really get at where they are in their understanding, we have to raise their consciousness to the surface.

Only share that what you feel comfortable that, but at the same time, again, with the intellectual safety aspect of it, it's okay to ask questions right about Race, it's okay to ask questions about sexuality and gender and things like that. So it's more about to honestly sort of normalizing that understanding is the |

		Strategy	best way to sort of approaching it. It's mind-blowing to me that students actually have no discomfort and talking about a lot of this stuff. It's the teacher that does teach give them all these adjectives that relate and have students describe and explain-tells where students are and their of comfortability Cafeteria assignment Giving them challenging questions, challenging sources, and putting them in scenarios where they have to discuss what they think, and that the arguments in which they created my class. Lot partner, we would do a lot of small groups, we would do a lot of consensus building inside the class...Socratic seminar Students take ownership and work together to get a bigger understanding

			students defend and validate and reframe their own conversation - forces students to critically think and not shy away from the uncomfortable capacity to take informed action, right, where they could raise these kinds of issues and awareness side of it I gave the opportunity for students to teach a class, they could build an inquiry structure where they had to have a question. They had to have tasks, and they had to have sources for students, they had to have the discussions that students were going to have. And the only students whoever took me up on that always dealt with the most controversial stuff in the world. (rap scenario)

Research Question 4: In what way do exemplary social studies, teachers facilitate how to expect and accept nonclosure when not all issues can or will be resolved?

Theme	Category	Description	Supporting Evidence
Perspective and perception and	Teachers and students	What do teachers do to teach and facilitate...Consider	Constantly having to reevaluate those ideas.

Acceptance does not mean agreement			The mindset that you're going to commit to this for the entire year, that it's not something that you talk about in February, for Black History Month Back then, it wasn't considered bad. So but here's the thing. If you can't say after this that you don't know, you can't use that excuse. At the very, very least, you have to know that this is uncomfortable. To help model that and show them how to hear these things and form their own opinion but be mindful of other's thoughts and perspectives. Education I think that we do a poor job of communicating is the idea that knowledge is tentative. I'm just going to immerse myself as much as I can in the literature, and ask as many quality questions as I can as I move forward. So to me, it's an ongoing process. It's a chronic issue, it's not going to be solved by the

			thing. It's going to be a lifetime of being very aware of it.
			We don't agree with what everyone does, right? But at least we can understand why she does it.
			It still goes back to the, the perception, like, how people perceive me and how people perceive where somebody, you know, being in somebody else's shoes
			We used to be able to have conversations about our differences, and then just walk away and go, yeah, they're fine. I can see where they're coming from. But this is, for whatever reason, this is how I believe.
		Strategy	Switch groups, right? So you can never sit with the same people - constantly getting to know your classmates so that the perspectives of that which you're learning about are filtered through the perspectives of your classmates
			Show then propaganda and Dr.

			Seuss books… discuss racial nuances
			Discuss Blackface and Halloween costumes
			Compelling questions - Is violence justified?
			The Pianist - multimedia
			Cultural relativism - green, neutral, red light
			North Koreans - questioning

Research Question 5: What are the challenges encountered by exemplary social studies teachers regarding facilitating courageous conversations with students?

Theme	Categories	Description	Supporting Evidence
need to be sensitive to individual beliefs, whether through assignments or class discussions	Reflect	challenges with students and parents	Reflect and try to anticipate how discussions will proceed, what questions might arise from the conversations shared, and how they will facilitate discussions and present content to students

Example of parent disagreeing with book choice - proselytizing

Consider delivery of message - student |

			speaking for the whole

Appendix C: IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

Dear Candice,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled

(IRB#19-076)is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Appendix D: My America is…

My America is…

The Assignment:
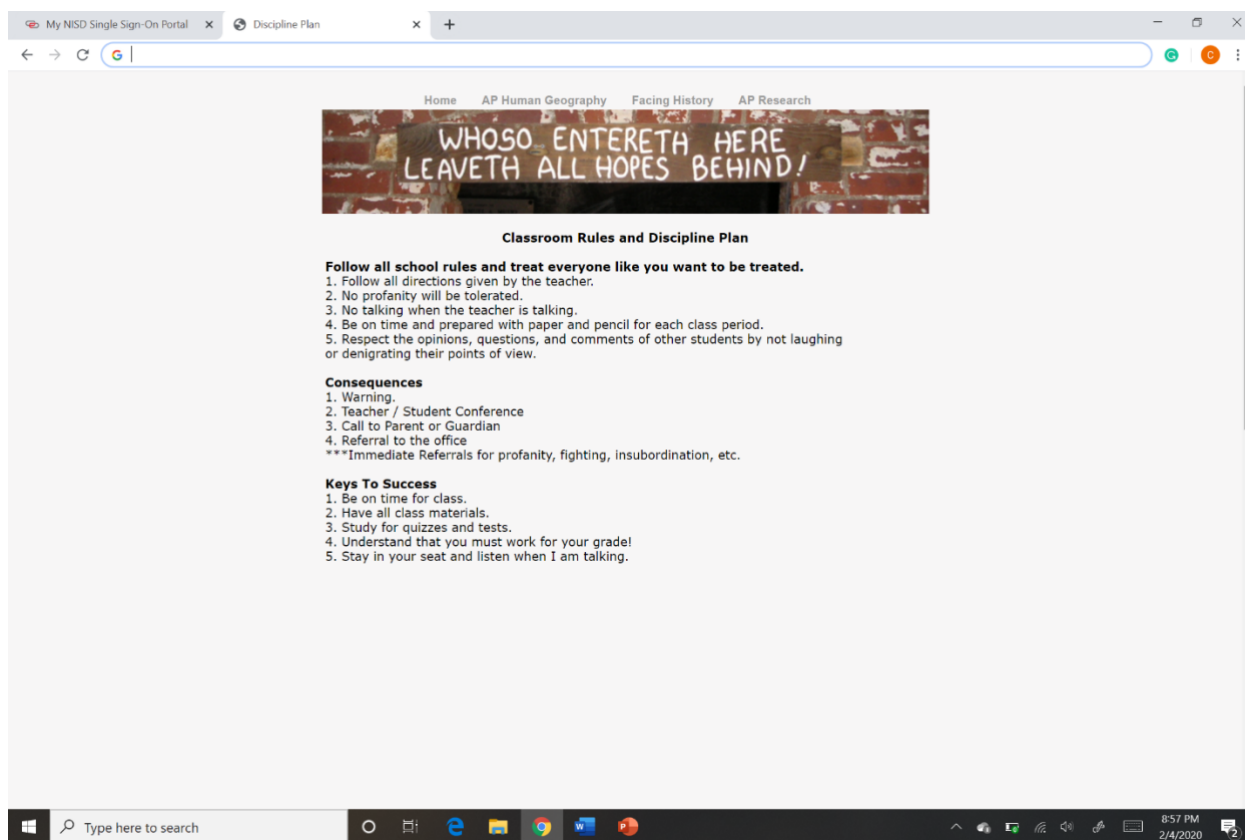
1- Take a picture with the My America is...paper.

2- Write one or two words on the My America is...paper.

3- The word(s) should represent what your life is like with an emphasis on diversity (race/ethnicity). How unique and diverse are the students at HHS?

For example: language, religion, customs, hobbies, beliefs, work, school, sports, etc.

My AMERICA is... Questions: 1. What stereotypes do you think others have concerning our school and student body?

2. What stereotypes have you personally experienced?

3. From viewing the photos of My America... what did you learn about the students in the class?

4. By viewing all the photos, how do many of the pictures refute the stereotypes?

5. How can AND do public schools help disprove stereotypes found in our many communities?

Appendix E: Teacher Webpage

Appendix F: Cafeteria Assignment

Cafeteria Grouping Exercise　　　　　　　**Name:**_____

Directions: Give the following information for five groups you identify during your lunch period in the school cafeteria:

1. Original **name** for the group.

2. Estimated **total number** and **percentage** (of total students for that lunch period) of members in the group.

3. General **characteristics** for the members: appearance, attitude, behavior, etc..

4. **Qualifications** for membership into the group (What must one do or be to be a member?).

5. Overall **impression** of the group (positive, negative, etc.). Explain your answer.

Lunch Period:_____　**Approximately Total Number of Students during the lunch period:**_____

Group 1

1- Original Name:	
2- Total Number:	2- Percentage of Lunch Total:
3- Characteristics	
4- Qualifications	
5- Impression	

Group 2

1- Original Name:	
2- Total Number:	2- Percentage of Lunch Total:
3- Characteristics	
4- Qualifications	
5- Impression	

Cafeteria Grouping Exercise　　　　　　　　Name:_____

Group 3

1- Original Name:	
2- Total Number:	2- Percentage of Lunch Total:
3- Characteristics	
4- Qualifications	
5- Impression	

Group 4

1- Original Name:	
2- Total Number:	2- Percentage of Lunch Total:
3- Characteristics	
4- Qualifications	
5- Impression	

Group 5
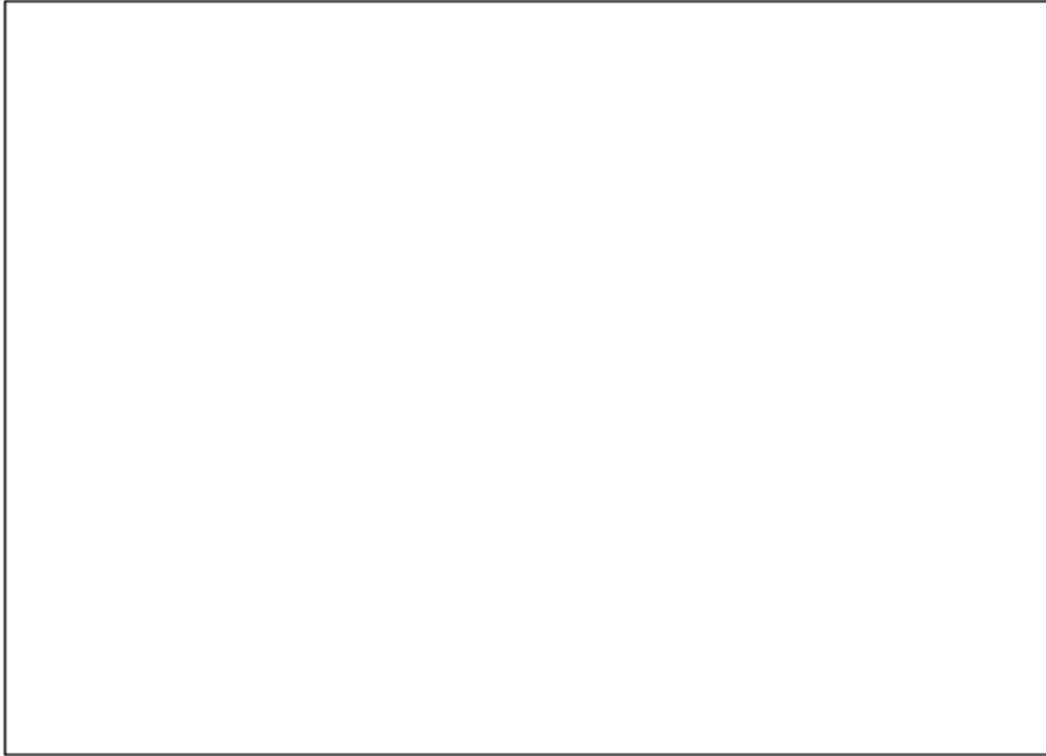
1- Original Name:	
2- Total Number:	2- Percentage of Lunch Total:
3- Characteristics	
4- Qualifications	
5- Impression	

Cafeteria Grouping Exercise   Name:_____

I. Diagram

Complete a diagram below of the cafeteria showing where the five groups you described were seated. Be sure to include a Key for your diagram identifying the five groups.

II. Questions

Complete the questions concerning your experiences in the Cafeteria.

1. Describe the group you selected to sit with that was not the normal group you sit with during lunch. Why did you select this particular group among the many other groups?

2. What preconceived ideas / stereotypes did you have of this group before you sat down with them?

3

Cafeteria Grouping Exercise   Name:_____

3. Detail the experience below. How did the group respond to you sitting with them? How was the interaction between you and the group members? Did you feel welcomed?

4. What level of discomfort did you and/or the members of the other group feel when sitting together? What did you do or they do to deal with the discomfort?

5. Did this group behave in such a manner to where they confirmed your preconceived ideas / stereotypes? Explain.

6. What preconceived ideas / stereotypes do you think this particular group had of you and your friends? Did you act in such a manner to where these ideas were confirmed? Explain.

7. What did you learn about yourself or others from completing this assignment?

Appendix G: Was the *Declaration of Independence* Hypocritical?

SAC: Was the *Declaration of Independence* hypocritical?

Reference Document: *Declaration of Independence* July 4, 1776
We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.
- Students should have a background on the view of natural rights
- Students should have an understanding of the social compact

Further information on SAC
Day 1
Building Arguments from readings 90 minutes (carry 30 minutes to the second day)
1. Stage the Question: 10 minutes
   a. Staging the Question:
      i. Talk about a time that you've seen hypocrisy.
      ii. Connect to ideas of principles and what might produce a hypocrite
   b. Refresh on the *Declaration of Independence*

2. Reading routine (x8)
   a. 4 minutes to read individually and complete the task (individually)
   b. 3 minutes to discuss with partners and complete task (modify)
   c. 3 minutes for teacher facilitation
   d. Take out D and H if you're pressed for time.

Day 2
Structured Academic Controversy
1. Divide students into groups of four and then divide each group of four into Team A and Team B.
   a. Team A will argue: YES, the *Declaration of Independence* is hypocritical
   b. Team B will argue: NO, the *Declaration of Independence* is not hypocritical

2. **PROCEDURE 35 minutes**
   a. With your teammates, find three pieces of evidence that support your side of the argument (10 minutes)
   b. Team A presents (3 minutes), explaining how the evidence supports their side of the argument
   c. Team B takes notes of Team A's argument and repeats back to them with their evidence (90 seconds)

d. Team B presents (3 minutes), explaining how the evidence supports their side of the argument
e. Team A takes notes of Team B's argument and repeats back to them with their evidence (90 seconds)
f. Team A and B abandon positions to develop a consensus among the group (6 minutes)
g. Whole group shares out, the teacher facilitates and records consensus of the group. (10 minutes)

TASK: Complete the following organizer based on evidence for and against the compelling question "Was the *Declaration of Independence* hypocritical?"

YES (Team A) Evidence from sources	Was the Declaration of Independence hypocritical?	NO (Team B) Evidence from sources
	Source A	
	Source B	
	Source C	
	Source D	
	Source E	
	Source F	
	Source G	
	Source H	

What are three major arguments for your side? Which evidence supports your position?

Contextual Document: *Declaration of Independence* **July 4, 1776**

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Supporting Question 1: How was the *Declaration of Independence* received at the time it was

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Source A: John Adam letter to Abigail Adams, July 3, 1776

The Second Day of July 1776 will be the most memorable Epocha in the History of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding Generations as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shows, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forevermore. You will think me transported with Enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the Gloom, I can see the Rays of ravishing Light and Glory. I can see that the End is more than worth all the Means.

Source B: William Ellery, a delegate from Rhode Island, letter to his brother, Benjamin Ellery, 10 July 1776.

We have lived to see a Period which a few years ago, no human forecast could have imagined. We have lived to see these Colonies shake off, or rather, declare themselves independent of a State which they once gloried in calling their Parent I said declare themselves independent, for it is One Thing for Colonies to declare themselves independent and another to establish themselves in Independency. For this Establishment, Congress is exerting every Nerve, and I rejoice to see this as well as the other American States ready to execute their Measures.

Source C: William Whipple, a delegate from New Hampshire, letter to his brother, Joseph Whipple, July 29, 1776.

The People in this Country are in high Spirits. Gentlemen of the first Fortunes take up their Muskets and March. No late accounts from abroad; it's probable our Letters have fallen into the hands of the Enemy. I agree with you that we are too late in all our movements. However, these delays answer one good purpose; they certainly tend to produce unanimity, which is a desirable object in perfecting the Revolution.

Source D: Thomas Jefferson letter to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825 [Modified]

The object of the Declaration of Independence was not to make new principles or new arguments but to declare the common sense of the subject that justify our independence, which we were forced to declare. While not completely original, yet not found anywhere else, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind and to give that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion. Its power comes from the time it was produced, yet its ideas are found in the ideas that reach back to the Enlightenment and to ancient Rome and Greece.

Supporting Question 2: How was the *Declaration of Independence* interpreted by African

Source E: Slavery Population 1790-1860

Year	Total US Population	African American	% of Total Population	Slaves	% of African Americans in Slavery
1790	3,929,214	757,208	19.27%	697,681	92%
1800	5,308,483	1,002,037	18.88%	893,602	89%
1810	7,239,881	1,377,808	19.03%	1,191,362	86%
1820	9,638,453	1,771,656	18.38%	1,538,022	87%
1830	12,860,702	2,328,642	18.11%	2,009,043	86%
1840	17,063,353	2,873,648	16.84%	2,487,355	87%
1850	23,191,876	3,638,808	15.69%	3,204,287	88%
1860	31,443,321	4,441,830	14.13%	3,953,731	89%

Source F: David Walker, "Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World," September 1829
For what is the use of living, when in fact I am dead. But remember, Americans, that as miserable, wretched, degraded and abject as you have made us in preceding, and in this generation, to support you and your families, that some of you, (whites) on the continent of America, will yet curse the day that you ever were born. You want slaves and want us for your slaves!!! My colour will yet, root some of you out of the very face of the earth!!!!!! See your Declaration Americans!!! Do you understand your own language? Hear your languages, proclaimed to the world, July 4th, 1776 -- "We hold these truths to be self-evident -- that ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL!! that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness!!" Compare your own language above, extracted from your Declaration of Independence, with your cruelties and murders inflicted by your cruel and unmerciful fathers and yourselves on our fathers and on us -- men who have never given your fathers or you the least provocation!!!!!!

Source G: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Rights and Sentiments," Seneca Fall Convention, July 19, 1848
We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these rights, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on

such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

- He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.
- He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.
- He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.
- He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.

Source H: Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" July 5, 1852.
Fellow citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, today, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them… My subject, then fellow citizens, is AMERICAN SLAVERY. I shall see, this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave's point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future.