TOWARDS AN ANTI-RACIST LEADERSHIP DESIGN: A FACULTY SELF-STUDY ON AN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM

A Dissertation
by
KAREN ANDERSON

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Abstract

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This qualitative case study examines the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating anti-racist leadership design into educational leadership programs in North Carolina. The study aims to explore how faculty in an educational leadership program self-reflect and examine their course content using a self-study toolkit to align with anti-racist leadership design. Additionally, it investigates how faculty navigate the challenges and barriers of creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership. The study's participants are four faculty members with extensive experience in educational leadership and curriculum development at a university-based Master of School Administration program. The program aims to prepare leaders to serve as licensed administrative professionals in schools and central office settings, particularly in high-needs and rural areas The findings suggest that faculty engage in a deliberate process of self-examination and reflection to align their course content with anti-racist leadership

design, but face challenges in creating or sustaining such a program. The study has implications for principal preparation programs endeavoring to adequately prepare anti-racist leaders who can transform schools and improve student outcomes. Furthermore, the study contributes to the field by providing a framework, process, and a self-study tool that faculty can use to update and redesign their programs to align with equity and anti-racism in education. Furthermore, the study contributes to the field by providing a framework, process, and a self-study tool that faculty can use update and redesign their programs to align with equity and anti-racism in education.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to God for giving me the vision, strength, resilience, and guidance throughout my academic journey. May my work and legacy bring you glory. To my husband, son, and unborn children, you are my motivation. I remain committed to helping shape a world where you will feel safe, seen, and appreciated as Black men. Your unwavering support and love have been the foundation of my success. Thank you for understanding the long hours and still holding me accountable for maintaining self-care and balance. Your encouragement and belief in me have kept me going. To my family, thank you for always cheering me on and for being my biggest supporters. Your love and constant motivation have been instrumental in my accomplishments. Mom, you helped keep my lamp light lit as I burned the midnight oil. You sat with me, listened to my ideas, and affirmed and reminded me of my purpose when I felt too tired to continue. Dad, you reminded me daily that God is with me and within me and that because of that I would not fail. To my sister, Dr. Coretta Walker, you provided strategy and feedback when I felt stuck. You trailblazed before me as a doctoral student and lit my path so that I could accomplish this work. Thank you to all my family, I could not have completed this labor of love without you. I am immensely grateful to my dissertation committee for their invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and steadfast support. Your expertise and knowledge were pivotal in shaping my research and helping me achieve my academic goals. I also extend my sincere appreciation to all the participants who generously gave their time and shared their experiences with me. Your insights and perspectives have been

crucial in advancing the understanding of the research topic. I admire your courage and compassion and I am forever thankful for you inviting me into your reflective learning process.

Lastly, I want to thank the Education Development Center (EDC) and Cheryl King for allowing me to modify the tool for my research. Your organization's support and commitment to improving educational practices have made a significant impact on my research and the academic community as a whole.

Dedication

To the faculty who endeavor to be anti-racist, this dissertation is dedicated to you. This dedication is not only a reflection of my gratitude, but also a call to action. As you "Rize to the CALL", you are responding to the urgent need to build a more just, equitable, and anti-racist society. I hope that this research will fuel your courageous commitment to dismantling systemic racism in academia. I hope that you are inspired to envision a world where diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism are not just buzzwords but realities.

As I reflect on my academic journey, I am reminded of the challenges that I have faced as a person of color in academia. However, our collective presence and dedication to equity, justice, and anti-racism can become an example of strength and courage to other colleagues to persevere in the face of racism. May you be a beacon of light, guiding other educators through the dark moments in our history and present context. May you empower others to rise above challenges and barriers that seek to maintain anti-Blackness. Your commitment to being anti-racism is not just a goal but a way of life. Your actions and words will have a ripple effect that extends far beyond the walls of academia. As you challenge others to think critically, to question the status quo, and to be agents of change, I hope that this research will contribute to your ongoing work. Furthermore, as you courageously and compassionately challenge the dominant narratives and your own beliefs you give others permission to do better, be better, and create a better future for all.

Through your teachings, scholarship, mentorship, and advocacy, you will uplift and empower countless students, staff, and community members. As we continue to navigate the complexities of racism and oppression, I am confident that your leadership and guidance will help us move forward with compassion, empathy, and wisdom. Your work is vital, your impact is significant, and your legacy will inspire generations to come. Education can be a transformative tool for liberation and social change, and it is our responsibility to use it to make a positive impact in the world. We have the power to disrupt systems of oppression and racism. Let us Rize to the CALL together. Thank you for being the change we want to see in the world. This dissertation is dedicated to you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

University educational leadership programs (ELP) are essential in preparing school principals (Mendels, 2016). However, historically the curricula in principal preparation programs do not emphasize leadership skills that are most relevant to the work of today's principals (Wang et al., 2018). While most programs emphasize technical knowledge, such as law, finance, and research skills, many do not address the daily challenges that principals face, specifically race, racism, and race-related issues. Furthermore, many university programs need more coherent, authentic learning experiences because their courses are separate, stand-alone, and often disjointed.

Research supports that principal preparation programs have identified key elements that define how exemplary program design (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; Orr et al., 2006), and that socially just leadership is essential in improving inequitable outcomes (Boske, 2012; Furman, 2012; Lumby, 2012; Mansfield, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2006, 2008; Miller & Martin, 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2010; Santamaría, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009; Theoharis, 2007; Tillman & Scheurich, 2013). Pre-service teachers address anti-racism in education using anti-racist pedagogy; yet the extent to which anti-racist practices cohesively integrate into principal preparation programs is unknown. While there is a large body of conceptual scholarship on anti-racist (Dei, 1996; Diem & Welton, 2020; Genao & Mercedes, 2021; Gooden et al., 2018; Lightfoot, 2003; Miller, 2021) and transformative leadership (Shields, 2010), little empirical research provides detailed descriptions of how educational institutions might transform when leadership preparation programs enact an anti-racist framework. Exploring how faculty engage in self-assessment efforts to interrogate their

current curriculum to move toward a more coherent and comprehensive anti-racist curriculum remains largely unanswered.

Background of the Problem

Public education is a widely accepted remedy to inequality in America. Horace Mann (1848) and, more recently, Gonzalez (2008) asserted that education is the "great equalizer" that balances the pre-existing ills within a democratic society (p. 2). Gonzalez (2008) continued by stating that the "civil rights question of our nation today is that of access to quality education" (p. 2). Access to quality education has led to ongoing and various educational reform efforts. A significant reform strategy was improving school leadership development to address the shortage of school leaders prepared to lead in low-performing schools. Leithwood et al. (2004) found that quality school leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on improving student achievement and outcomes. Building on the abovementioned research, Grissom et al. (2021) determined that a competent principal's value often escapes recognition. Thus, pre-service training programs should persist in redirecting the focus of school principals toward achieving educational equity.

School leadership matters: however, many principals feel unprepared to address student needs and school issues (Kutash et al., 2010). Leaders in schools that require significant changes to improve inequitable student outcomes engage in what Heifetz and Linsky (2002) called "dangerous" and "risky business" (p. 2). Furthermore, Heifetz and Linsky asserted that when principals evoke change and new learning within their schools, the resulting resistance is the "greater danger" for the leaders (p. 2). Therefore, as educational leaders commit to making the critical and necessary changes to meet the persistent needs within their schools, they need

explicit preparation on how to engage in this "risky business" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 2) so they can lead innovatively even in the face of resistance.

As U.S. demographics continue to change to include a more diverse population of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), principals need a specific skill set to redress the inequities that have permeated education. Principals and teachers must increase student achievement regardless of race, class, socioeconomic status, and ability. The persistent achievement inequities across racial lines between White students and students of color continue to plague the educational system. In 2020, as COVID-19 safety measures moved to learn to online platforms, the pre-existing inequities in education were made more visible. Concurrently, the violence against and death of Black individuals was also made visible through inescapable video documentation circulating through multimedia outlets while many individuals sheltered in place in response to COVID-19 restrictions. The current heightened racial violence, bigotry, hatred, and hardships targeting marginalized and minoritized students and their families directly impact the learning processes for students in our nation's schools. Principals must address race, racism, and race-related inequitable outcomes. Scholars contend that graduates from educational leadership programs feel inept in navigating issues of race, racism, equity, or social justice (Rogers & Tienken, 2020). Therefore, principal preparation programs must consider how they will respond to meet the current need for principal development in race, racism, and equity.

The Urgency to Improve Principal Preparation Programs: The North Carolina Context

There is an urgent need to develop anti-racist leaders in North Carolina. Recent state legislation and policy changes encourage traditional principal preparation programs to make programmatic shifts to become anti-racist organizations. North Carolina's constitutional

commitment to a basic sound education for all children, the need for highly qualified and well-prepared principals in high-needs schools, the vision for transforming principal preparation, and the imperative to develop an equity standard for administrators create the impetus for anti-racist principal preparation redesign.

Legislation: The Constitutional Commitment to Sound Basic Education

North Carolina made a constitutional commitment to provide a sound basic education for every child through a "general and uniform system of public schools" in the 1868 State Constitution (Etheridge, 1993, p. 10). From 1984–1989, following the release of The Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983) report, the North Carolina Commission on Education for Economic Growth (NCCEEG) researched the status of the public education system. The NCCEEG proposed a plan for "ensuring the future prosperity and well-being of our children and the continuing soundness of our state's economy" (Etheridge, 1993, p. 20). Despite these reform efforts, North Carolina public schools continued to struggle to fulfill their commitment to providing a sound basic education ensuring future prosperity and children's well-being.

The failure to provide an adequate education led to the *Leandro v. North Carolina* (1996) case and the landmark *Leandro v. State* (1997) decision in which the Supreme Court of North Carolina affirmed that every child could receive a sound basic education in public schools. In response to the 1 February 2018 order by Judge W. David Lee, the Sound Basic Education for All: Action Plan for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) was developed to provide recommendations for actions to advance the state's efforts to achieve compliance with the *Leandro v. State* decision. The comprehensive action plan emphasizes the need to strategically improve and transform multiple educational system

components (WestEd, 2019). However, for this proposed study, the specific action area *strengthening the educator workforce by ensuring a qualified and well-prepared principal in every school*, is the primary focus.

Qualified and Well-Prepared Principals in Every School

Research by WestEd (2019) identified providing a qualified and well-prepared principal in every school as a critical need for the state. This research suggested that principals should "be prepared and supported to lead continuous school improvement effectively; support the use of a well-designed curriculum aligned with state standards; and establish a culture in which all students feel welcome, safe, supported, and challenged as learners" (WestEd, 2019, p. 70). Furthermore, North Carolina's judicial system recognized the inextricable link between school leaders and the provision of a sound basic education when the Supreme Court of North Carolina included as a *Leandro* requirement that:

> Every school be led by a well-trained, competent principal with the leadership skills and the ability to hire and retain competent, certified, and well-trained teachers who can implement an effective and cost-effective instructional program that meets the needs of at-risk children so that they can have the equal opportunity to obtain a sound basic education by achieving grade-level or above academic performance. (*Leandro v. State*, 1997, n.p.)

The action plan designed to detail the restructuring needed within North Carolina's educational system to provide a sound basic education for all students insufficiently addressed the impact race and oppression have on student outcomes. Furthermore, this plan failed to emphasize the importance and need for equipped educators to address racism and its implications in education. The report highlighted the need to support the improvement of low-

achieving, high-poverty schools and noted that students that attended these schools were at-risk. However, it failed to acknowledge the varying factors leading to BIPOC's disproportionate representation in the at-risk category.

Legislation: Transforming Principal Preparation in North Carolina

The WestEd (2019) report acknowledged that the context in which schools operate is constantly evolving, resulting in greater demands on principals to possess a wide range of knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the report emphasized the need for effective leadership in low-performing schools that served economically disadvantaged students (WestEd, 2019). The Transforming Principal Preparation Program (TP3) emerged as a system to build the principal pipeline to meet the need for the ever-changing context (WestEd, 2019, p. 72). TP3 is a competitive state-funded grant program. The TP3 program aims to transform how principals prepare for their role preparation programs. By focusing on how preparation programs recruit and develop equity-centered educational leaders, TP3 endeavors to improve the rigor and relevance of principal preparation as a transformational effort to redefine principal preparation across the state.

Through the investment in principal preparation programs, TP3 strives to increase the "caliber and quality of principals specifically trained to serve in high-need schools" (Business for Educational Success and Transformation [BEST NC], 2018). To achieve this goal, TP3 provides systems of support and accountability to the designated, grant funded TP3 programs to help faculty consider how they equip leaders to lead in a manner prioritizing equity, excellence, and innovation. This initiative further supports the idea that educational leaders in North Carolina must prepare to lead in a way that ensures that all students receive a high-quality and sound basic education, regardless of their background or circumstances. TP3 grant recipients

prioritize equity explicitly and integrate equity culturally responsive pedagogies throughout their curriculum. Grant recipients integrate research-based components of effective and exemplary leadership development, such as rigorous, relevant, and coherent coursework (BEST NC, 2018).This program is one of the ways that the state legislators have fervently worked to address inequities in education across the state.

Policy Changes: North Carolina Standards for School Executives

In December 2006, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted new standards for school administrators called the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (NCSBE; Department of Public Instruction [DPI], 2006). These standards, resting on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders, became law requiring the SBE to adopt new standards for principal preparation programs. The North Carolina School Executive Evaluation Rubric for Pre-service Candidates arose as an evaluative tool for pre-service candidates. ISLLC standards guided leadership preparation, practice, and evaluation. The standards acted as guideposts for the profession that elevated specific knowledge and defined the most critical practices in the field (Farley et al., 2019). However, equity, social justice, and race were not elevated or included in these standards as specific knowledge regarded as an important practice in the field. As a result, the North Carolina Standards for Executives do not currently reflect this language either.

Professional standards are key influencing factors on program content and field experience (Young & Laible, 2000). Suppose the state standards fail to name equity, social justice, or race explicitly. In that case, programs may be less inclined to infuse these elements into their curriculum or redesign it to reflect these topics. The North Carolina Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC) requested a review of the state

standards in fall 2018. A new standard may replace the antiquated, color-evasive standards for North Carolina school executives. The original standards for practicing leaders included: (a) strategic leadership, (b) instructional leadership, (c) cultural leadership, (d) human resources leadership, (e) managerial leadership, (f) external development leadership, and (g) micro-political leadership. A newly proposed equity standard has a more precise, action-oriented language (Sox, 2020). While adding an equity standard is promising and much-needed, programs will need support to integrate this standard into their curriculum. More specifically, faculty could benefit from a reflective process to help them transition and improve their program once new standards are released.

Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education Task Force

In December 2020, the Developing a Representative & Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE) Task Force, appointed by Governor Roy Cooper and led by Dr. Anthony Graham, was created in response to the Governor's Executive Order Number 113, signed on 9 December 2019. This task force addressed the rapid change in North Carolina's population, particularly in school-aged children. Dr. Anthony Graham encourages different sectors in North Carolina to "join in a collective agenda that challenges the structural racism inherent in our educational system" (The Hunt Institute, 2021, p. 1). Dr. Graham further elaborated that the goals, strategies, and recommendations require that "we think differently about our existing policies, funding practices, accountability structures, standards, pedagogical strategies, educator preparatory programs (EPP), and educator support and retention models" (The Hunt Institute, 2021, p. 1). Dr. Graham suggested that to disrupt the status quo and a historically failed system, "we must acknowledge its racist history and chart an ambitious new path toward educational equity" (The Hunt Institute, 2021, p. 1).

The task force provided 10 key recommendations. One recommendation included a revision in the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (NCPTS) directly incorporating anti-racist, anti-bias, culturally responsive, and sustaining pedagogy and require EPPs to report how they incorporate these proficiencies across their course offerings and programming (The Hunt Institute, 2021). This recommendation also suggested explicitly incorporating anti-racist, anti-bias, culturally responsive, and sustaining pedagogy and practices into North Carolina standards for all other educators, such as superintendents, school leaders, counselors, and other staff members. As a result, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and EPPs became responsible for developing curricula and coursework to address these new anti-racist standards adequately. The report encouraged EPPs to "create more inclusive spaces that work to de-center Whiteness by critically examining their current climate and culture and revising policies that perpetuate White supremacist culture in K–12 and higher education" (The Hunt Institute, 2021, p. 10). Additionally, EPPs must "critically reflect upon ways their program may contribute to upholding structural racism and develop policies that create an anti-racist and anti-biased culture" (The Hunt Institute, 2021, p. 10). There is an urgent need to develop equity, anti-racist-oriented leaders in North Carolina. Educational Leadership Preparation programs must consider how institutional racism and the historical nature of principal preparation programs may limit or hinder the programmatic improvement that contributes to the development of anti-racist leaders. Faculty will likely need support and resources to engage in this type of critical reflection.

Institutionalized Racism in Education

University principal preparation programs reside within institutions of higher education (IHE) that have historically maintained the legacy of White supremacy and dominance. Research on Whiteness in IHEs has highlighted the need to dismantle historically oppressive

structures that manifest racism inherent on college campuses (Brunsma et al., 2013). For anti-racist work to begin on college campuses, faculty must engage in conversations about race, confront their discomforts, and commit to changing traditional ways of doing into anti-racist action (Cabrera et al., 2016).

Brunsma et al. (2013) conducted a study that analyzed the challenges of educating White college students on race and racism. Brunsma et al. identified three barriers to teaching race and racism: (a) spatial walls, (b) curricular walls, and (c) ideological walls. Spatial walls define the physical and racialized separation of students. Curricular walls emphasize formal and informal teaching on race, evident through programming and policies. Ideological walls represent the color-blind and race neutrality that limit the interrogation of race and racism, affecting access, policies, and resource allocation.

Tate and Bagguley (2017) asserted that leaving Whiteness invisible is why anti-racism efforts fail. They suggested that faculty decolonize knowledge, curriculum, and programming to address the problem. Likewise, Hikido and Murray (2016) maintained that university faculty must educate students on racism, but they lack the direction to accomplish that end. Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) suggested that students can handle race and racialized issues when they graduate from programs that explicitly center race and race language and intentionally use liberatory praxis. Extending this notion, Stone-Johnson and Weiner (2022) noted that educational leadership programs must commit to centering race to develop leaders who can navigate and address race-related issues.

Waite (2021) examined the liberatory pedagogical practices in graduate-level courses in educational leadership preparation programs. These practices developed the student's critical consciousness of anti-racist and social justice-oriented leadership. Waite conducted a self-study

and collected data from student course evaluations and assignments in courses taught across 2 years, finding that centering race and using liberatory pedagogy moved students toward disrupting their misconceptions about issues of race. Waite noted the moral imperative for educational leadership programs to engage in educational practices that challenge White supremacy, racism, and anti-Blackness. The curriculum should support students in examining their epistemologies, and the curriculum content must prepare graduates to counter and interrogate dominant structures that perpetuate educational inequity for students (Waite, 2021). Thurman et al. (2019) identified the need for nursing faculty to take responsibility for increasing their theoretical knowledge about race and racism. Faculty and academic leaders should reflect inwardly to explore prejudices and unconscious biases when considering the curriculum.

Kishimoto (2018) posited that faculty must critically reflect on institutional racism and their prejudice for a broader contextualization of race and power for change to occur. Faculty engaging in anti-racist work must analyze their course content and pedagogy with an anti-racist lens and then extend their analysis to their instruction and beyond. Anti-racist pedagogy challenges Whiteness by including racial content in the syllabi, course content, course activities, and curriculum (Kishimoto, 2018). Discussions on race, racism, and the political, historical, and economic implications of racism should be integrated throughout the curriculum and isolated as a tokenized experience (Kishimoto, 2018). Genao and Mercedes (2021) contended that principal preparation programs are not explicitly prioritizing anti-racist school leadership. Programs lack the integration of anti-racist dispositions and racial discourse while maintaining anti-Blackness by failing to examine how Whiteness exists in the curriculum as the standard (Genao & Mercedes, 2021). Wang's (2018) research revealed that the historical, theoretical grounding of educational leadership research lacked the presence of social justice-oriented leadership.

Additionally, principal preparation programs evolve slowly, limiting their ability to meet school leaders' critical and urgent needs (Wang, 2018). This finding highlighted the need to explore the topic of anti-racism within the field of educational leadership and the need to identify a process that promotes swift programmatic evolution.

Historical Principal Preparation Research

Wang (2018) explored how the theoretical groundings in educational leadership evolved using co-occurrence networks to identify the prominent theories and concepts espoused within the field. Focusing on four leading educational leadership journals, Wang identified influential concepts that are closely interconnected using the measure of centrality to suggest a concept's relative importance and influence. From 2000–2007, educational leadership began focusing on school improvement, inequity, and social justice issues. Social justice leadership ranked last among educational leadership research's 21 most influential concepts. Wang's analysis highlighted the perceived importance of social justice leadership yet underscored the lack of social justice-oriented leadership as a widely integrated concept in educational leadership research. Wang concluded that prolonged periods of knowledge evolution revealed an incremental change. Therefore, the research presented evidence that educational leadership has remained relatively unchanged and has not undergone a significant paradigm shift.

Seminal research in principal preparation is also widely accepted and has remained unchanged. Standard features of exemplary leadership programs include research-based content, curricular coherence, field-based internships, problem-based learning, cohort structures, mentoring or coaching, and collaboration between the university and school districts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Orr et al., 2006). Recently transformative social justice leadership efforts were widely accepted by preparation programs to better prepare effective leaders who

could affect positive school improvement. Scholars produced vital insights on social justice leadership in response to the need for more equitable schools (Boske, 2012; Furman, 2012; Lumby, 2012; Mansfield, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2006, 2008; Miller & Martin, 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2010; Santamaría, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009; Theoharis, 2007; Tillman & Scheurich, 2013). Tools such as equity audits (McKenzie et al., 2006) and discussion protocols to address race in education (Gooden & Dantley, 2012) are widely adopted practices to prepare principals to examine inequities. Most of the research on social justice leadership has suggested that social justice should coherently integrate within leadership preparation programs; however, there is little evidence to support that preparation programs have widely updated their curriculum or overall programs to reflect this research (Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Trujillo & Cooper, 2014).

More recently, researchers explored anti-racist leadership in principal preparation (Diem & Welton, 2020; Genao & Mercedes, 2021; Gooden et al., 2018; Lightfoot, 2003; Miller, 2021). However, detailed descriptions of outcome emerging from when leadership preparation programs enact an anti-racist framework is limited in the literature. Scholars have proposed that social justice-oriented and anti-racist leadership pedagogy requires critically examining distinct forms of anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism within education (Caldera, 2020; Lopez, 2020; Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021; Waite, 2021). This call to action for educational leadership research has highlighted the need for more empirical studies to assess the pedagogical effects of leadership preparation programs and how specific components influence attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions of anti-racism, racial equity, and anti-Black racism. Additionally, detailed descriptions of how faculty reflect, re-envision, and redesign their curriculum to reflect anti-racism will provide meaningful insight into the field of educational leadership.

Problem Statement

Anti-racism and equity are moving to the forefront in North Carolina as restructuring the educational system becomes an economic and moral imperative. This renewed focus requires educational leadership programs to update or redesign their program to align with the new legislation, policies, professional standards, and task force recommendations. In an increasingly complex and diverse society, effective principals must address the inequities in education along racial lines, discrimination, and race-related issues. The North Carolina Sound Basic Education for All Action Plan (WestEd, 2019) highlighted the need to develop qualified and well-prepared principals who can lead improvement efforts for low-achieving, high-poverty schools, disproportionately students of color. However, principal preparation programs lack a curriculum addressing race, power, and privilege, contributing to educational inequities. Therefore, preparation programs need to engage in a process to revise their programs and curriculum to adequately prepare anti-racist leaders who can transform schools, improve student outcomes, and meet the constitutional right of all students.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative case study aimed to explore how faculty in an educational leadership program in North Carolina self-examined and reflected on how their course content using a self-study toolkit aligned with anti-racist leadership design. The study also sought to understand how faculty navigated the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflected anti-racist leadership.

Population and Sample

The participants in this study were faculty at a university-based educational leadership program. The program faculty had extensive preparation in the field as former or current school

leaders and scholar-practitioners. Four faculty members who worked closely with curriculum development participated in the study. The Master of School Administration (MSA) program allows graduates to receive their initial principal licensure. The program prepares leaders to serve as licensed administrative professionals in an elementary, middle, high school, or central office setting. As one of the largest public state universities in its region, the historically White institution, the ELP addresses the persistent problem of recruiting, preparing, placing, and retaining excellent principals for high-needs schools, particularly in rural North Carolina.

Significance of the Study

This qualitative case study contributed to the limited literature and empirical research addressing the gaps in research about how to prepare anti-racist educational leaders, particularly in the context of North Carolina. Additionally, this study provided insight into other principal preparation programs in North Carolina as they may adjust their curriculum to address the equity standard anticipated to be released in 2023 (Sox, 2020). Davis (2016) suggested that institutions of higher education tend to change slowly. Therefore, when the new state standard is released, programs need a guided process to help them intentionally reflect on areas of their program to redesign. This study produced a self-study process and key findings that inform how faculty in educational leadership programs can take corrective action to improve their leadership curriculum design. This reimagined curriculum could develop a qualified and well-prepared principal for every school. The implications and findings from the study may prove helpful at the local university level, local school district level, state board of education, and state department of public education. Additionally, this reflective, self-study process could be utilized by other universities seeking to promote internal inquiry cycles for programmatic improvement

both locally and nationally. Finally, this study provided a framework and practical approach to curriculum review and development that can lead to a more effective preparation program.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative case study used a self-study approach (Samaras, 2002; Zeicher & Noffke, 2001) to explore how faculty reflect on their curriculum to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the course content when aligned with anti-racist principles and research. Participants received a self-study guide called *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty* to help participants interrogate their current curriculum to move toward a more coherent and comprehensive anti-racist curriculum. The Education Development Center's (EDC) *Quality Measures principal preparation program self-study toolkit* (10th ed.) by Dr. Cheryl King (2018) inspired the guide's development. This toolkit materialized to help the principal preparation program develop, assess, and improve its program. EDC is a nonprofit organization that focuses on improving education and health worldwide and has championed and supported excellence in preparing school principals.

Since 2004, the Quality Measures Center for Program Assessment and Technical Assistance at EDC has worked to provide a detailed vision for high-quality principal preparation, drawn from current research and articulated through the rubric of program domains and indicators at the heart of their QM Toolkit. This tool has been used as a guide to help engage faculty in principal preparation programs, their district partners, and state partners in conducting evidence-based self-assessments of program quality. The Quality Measures tools and protocols have yielded a breadth of insight into educational leadership. This tool utilizes a self-study approach that encourages reflection, dialogue, and identification of areas for improvement. Building upon Dr. Cheryl King's legacy of work and the rich evidence-based

tool, I developed a singularly focused rubric inspired by the QM toolkit that elevates and explicitly infuses anti-racism into coursework analysis.

With written permission to modify the Quality Measures principal preparation program self-study toolkit, my rubric consists of only one domain; the: *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty*. The singular domain is inclusive and anti-racist coursework which integrates anti-racist research, principles, and criteria. Within the singular domain of anti-racist curriculum, there are six key indicators for faculty to consider. These indicators include (a) professional standards, (b) learning goals, (c) course design and sequencing, (d) course content, (e) course materials, and (f) ongoing curricular improvement. Each indicator has explicit criteria that align with research on how an anti-racist curriculum must transcend the traditional leadership curriculum. Participants used this tool to deconstruct the perpetuation of Whiteness and epistemological racism within their curriculum and coursework. This tool helped participants on their journey as they critically reviewed, revised, and reimagined their curriculum.

Research Questions

This qualitative case study aimed to explore how faculty in an educational leadership program in North Carolina self-examined and reflected on their course content's alignment with anti-racist leadership design. The study also sought to understand how faculty navigated the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflected anti-racist leadership design. Two research questions guided this study:

RQ1) How do faculty in educational leadership programs self-examine and reflect on how their course content aligns with anti-racist leadership design?

RQ2) How do faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is composed of three complementary theories: (a) critical race theory (CRT; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), (b) critical White studies (CWS; Gillborn, 2006; Matias et al., 2014), and (c) critical anti-racist theory (CART; Dei, 2013). CRT acknowledges that our societal structures (e.g., institutions of higher education where principal preparation programs reside) are not race-neutral (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Therefore, the theory can help provide a critical lens to consider how the principal preparation curriculum may uphold Whiteness and White supremacy. CRT also centralizes experiences and perspectives (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), allowing for detailed descriptions of how faculty engage in race-conscious efforts to examine the normative ways their preparation program functions. CRT is useful to identify and name the ways the curriculum or program may be void of race-conscious language or marginalize diverse thoughts and people.

Critical White studies (CWS) is a conceptual tool of CRT that allows for a "deeply critical and radical nature of questioning" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 104). It is necessary to dismantle White supremacy, but it is also important to understand the foundations of race to engage in anti-racist work. Therefore, CWS provides a framework for examining and breaking down Whiteness's material, physical, emotional, and political power. This study used this concept to deconstruct the way Whiteness was unmarked, unnamed, normalized, and color-blind in the principal preparation curriculum using a modified version of the Quality Measures principal preparation program self-study toolkit (King, 2018). Historically, preparation programs used the tool to encourage self-led, critical reflection, and self-examination to lead to program

improvements and effectiveness. With permission, tool modification occurred to explicitly reflect race, racism, and anti-racism to disrupt hegemonic Whiteness. The selected participants for this case study used the modified self-study toolkit to guide their reflection and self-assessment.

CART is a theoretical framework emphasizing the need for anti-racism to be central to understanding race. It argues that one cannot simply be objective or rational when discussing race and racism because these issues are deeply personal and political (Dei, 2013). Faculty in a principal preparation program may use (CART) to analyze their curriculum to ensure it includes diverse perspectives. CART allows faculty to challenge dominant, often Eurocentric theories that fail to consider the experiences of colonized and oppressed bodies. Using CART, faculty can critically examine their curriculum and challenge any theories and knowledge that may perpetuate systemic racism and inequity. Finally, CART supports faculty in identifying where Whiteness is centered in their curriculum and considering how they might develop a counterhegemonic curriculum that challenges dominant thinking in education and society (Dei, 2013).

Definition of Terms

Anti-racism: Anti-racism refers to the explicit focus on White racial dominance, how such dominance is maintained and reproduced, and how individuals can consciously and deliberately challenge the impact and perpetuation of White racial power, position, and privilege in institutional, cultural, and individual settings (Dei, 1996; Young & Laible, 2000).

Anti-racist: Anti-racists encompass a proactive strategy for dismantling racist structures and building racial justice and equity (Horsford, 2010).

Anti-racist Education: Anti-racist education includes the commitment to educating students in ways that make racialized power relations explicit about deconstructing and analyzing the interlocking systems of oppression that serve to marginalize and exclude some groups while privileging others (Hassouneh, 2006).

Anti-Blackness: Anti-Blackness is a distinct form of antagonism aimed or directed at people perceived as Black, enacted through informal and formal policies and practices that stem from feelings of disgust for and the desire to control Black bodies (Caldera, 2020, p.6).

Anti-Blackness in Education: Anti-Blackness in education refers to the presumed ineducability of Black children that normalizes and justifies Black suffering in schools and the need to contain and discipline Black bodies and their knowledge (Dumas, 2016, p. 9).

Anti-Black racism: Anti-Black racism includes the "expressions of verbal, nonverbal, interpersonal, and environmental violence directed at Black individuals to degrade, dehumanize, or create racially toxic conditions for Black persons" (Hines & Wilmot, 2018, pp. 65–66).

Color-evasiveness: Color-evasiveness is the deliberate avoidance of discussions about race and racism and the outright denial that the structural and everyday racism BIPOC face exists in society (Annamma et al., 2016).

Educational Equity: Educational equity is policies and practices that eliminate the racial predictability of outcomes foster racial equity by explicitly naming and countering racism and narrowing disproportionate outcomes between racial groups (National Equity Project, n.d.).

Epistemological Racism: Epistemological racism is how knowledge is constructed and validated in a way that perpetuates racial inequality and reinforces the dominant position of White, Western knowledge systems. It is a form of racism that operates through the

epistemological assumptions and practices of dominant knowledge systems, often built upon White Eurocentric values and perspectives (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Smith, 2012).

The Hegemony of Whiteness: The hegemony of Whiteness is the perpetuation of racism through the pervasive and systemic dominance of White cultural norms, values, and perspectives in society, which marginalizes and subordinates non-White individuals and communities by operationalizing Whiteness as the standard by which all other identities are judged and valued (Bonilla-Silva, 2001).

Institution of Higher Education: An institution of higher education is a setting that is a shifting, dynamic, complex space where racism and anti-racism coexist both consciously and unconsciously (Scheurich & Young, 1997).

Race: Race is a term used to describe the social construction used to classify people using racial descriptors such as White, Black, or Asian (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Glenn, 2015; Lipsitz, 2006).

Racism: Racism is a systemic and institutionalized set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors that assign value and power to people based on their perceived racial or ethnic identity, both consciously and unconsciously. Racism operates through individual attitudes and behaviors and social and institutional structures and policies that create and maintain racial disparities and inequities (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Tatum, 2007).

White Racism: White racism is the ontological, epistemological, institutional, and societal assumed dominance of White cultural norms, standards, assumptions, and philosophies that exclude and serve as the measure of reality (Scheurich & Young, 1997).

White Supremacy Culture: White supremacy culture is a system of power and oppression that reinforces the dominance of White people and White ways of knowing, being,

and doing in a society characterized by a set of norms, values, and behaviors deeply embedded in many organizations and institutions, and that perpetuate systemic racism and inequality (Okun, 2001).

Whiteness: Whiteness refers to the ever-present dimension of racism that rewards the White identity with power, opportunity, resources, and the ability to exclude through policies, practices, rights, and experience (Lipsitz, 2006).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This qualitative case study is limited to one educational leadership program for K–12 administrators at a public IHE in North Carolina that self-identified as an equity-focused principal leadership program. Case studies are not generalizable to the broader population by design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The potential limitations of focus groups included the potential for bias and manipulation, a false consensus among the group, and difficulty distinguishing individual viewpoints from group views (Litosseliti, 2003).

Chapter Summary

This qualitative case study provided insights for other principal preparation programs interested in reflecting on their curriculum's alignment with anti-racist principles for curriculum redesign and improvement. University-based principal preparation programs are not thoroughly preparing leaders with the skills needed to be anti-racist leaders. As North Carolina prioritizes restructuring its educational system in the interest of economics and morality, anti-racism and equity faculty must take corrective action related to their curriculum and programming to meet the current needs of our schools and society. The study produced a self-study process and key findings that inform how faculty in educational leadership programs can improve their curriculum design to produce well-prepared, anti-racist principals in every school.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. In Chapter 1, I discussed the need for principal preparation programs to change their curriculum to better address race, racism, and race-related inequities and the purpose and significance of the study. Additionally, I stated my research questions, defined the key terms used, and briefly described limitations. In Chapter 2, I present my critique of the literature on educational leadership for social justice and anti-racism and present research that supports the need for anti-racist leadership development. Chapter 3 details my methodology and research design, including information about the study participants, data collection, data analysis, reliability, and validity. In Chapter 4, I describe the data analysis and findings of the research. In Chapter 5, I discuss these findings, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for further study. The implications and findings from the study may be useful at the local university, local school district, the state board of education, and the state department of public education levels. The reflective, self-study process developed in this study can also be used by other universities seeking to improve their programmatic approach to curriculum review and development. This study provided a framework and practical approach to curriculum development that can lead to more effective principal preparation programs. The Appendices include the request for participation, participant consent form, focus group interview protocols, and the *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty* self-study guide.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is substantial research regarding principal preparation in the United States. Most published works address the role of preparation programs in developing school administrators, determining the quality of programs, and the necessity for program redesign to adequately prepare future administrators to address contemporary issues in the field. However, few studies have explored how to program faculty self-assess and reflect on their curriculum needs to adequately prepare future administrators to lead in the amplified post-truth era that has emboldened "White supremacy, capitalism, racism, neoliberalism, patriarchy, and more" (Castrellón et al., 2017, p. 936).

While the post-truth era was personified and amplified by Donald Trump's election in 2016, scholars argued that the national divide related to race and the misinformation, oppression, and discrimination against BIPOC was not new (Childs & Johnson, 2018). The amplification of the post-truth era has produced vitriol and violence in historically marginalized communities consisting of BIPOC. As the proportion of people of color increases in the U.S., there is a moral imperative to address how racial violence and racism impact society and the educational system. By 2025, schools will be more diverse as enrollment drastically increases for Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and students of two or more races (Hussar & Bailey, 2017).

There is scant research on how principal preparation programs are shifting to develop the racially conscious leaders needed to meet the needs of racially diverse schools. Research is also needed to explore how preparation programs are shifting to address contemporary issues like discrimination, inequity, and anti-Black racism since the heightened national and racial tension following the 2016 presidential election and the 2020 murder of George Floyd. Rich

descriptions of how higher education faculty engage in reflective conversations about how their curriculum may or may not explicitly center race and anti-racism could contribute to the scholarship on educational leadership.

The literature on how educational leadership faculty use self-reflection and assessment to confront and disrupt White supremacy ideology within their curriculum to prioritize anti-racism leadership explicitly is lean. The review and synthesis of the literature a historical context of racism in education and trends in principal preparation efforts in the U.S. The review also highlights shifts in educational leadership aimed at ameliorating the inequities in education through social justice initiatives. This research scaffolding illuminates the importance and timeliness for faculty to critically consider how White supremacy ideology and racism may influence their curriculum and practices, thereby hindering the development of anti-racist principles. Theories that can inform and shape the proposed study will illuminate ways traditional preparation programs may need to modify their curriculum to meet the contemporary skills needs of the principal's job.

Review of the Literature

The search strategy used a literature review outline that noted key ideas for the study. The keywords included but were not limited to *anti-racism, anti-Black racism, racial equity, equity, faculty reflective practice, principal preparation, educational leadership preparation, principal pre-service preparation, university-based principal preparation, principal preparation redesign, organizational improvement, race, reflection for improvement, racial inequity/racial equity, self-assessment, self-study, social justice, high-quality principal preparation,* and *exemplary principal preparation.* The following databases provided results: ProQuest, ERIC, EBSCOhost, and SAGE. Older sources give the reader a perspective on the

longevity of the topics. Sources such as empirical studies, peer-reviewed journal articles, and books better leveraged the literature review.

Theoretical Framework Literature

In a complex and racially charged society, racism and oppression permeate every system in the U.S. Schools are not exempt from what is happening in society because schools are microcosms of the societies in which they exist. Educational leaders must prepare to confront the racism, hate, and racial disparities plaguing our educational systems. Principal preparation programs must "prepare tomorrow's leaders for the highly contentious political environment" within schools (Diem & Carpenter, 2012, p. 62). Principal preparation programs are the primary pathway to becoming a principal in the U.S. Programs must take responsibility for equipping educational leaders with an anti-racist skill set to address the issues of racism and eliminate inequities in their schools.

Critical race theory (CRT), critical White studies (CWS), and critical anti-racist theory (CART) helped provide the theoretical approach for this study. While these approaches are closely related and complementary, each provided a distinct perspective to examine anti-racism in educational leadership preparation. Therefore, a background of each theory is necessary to thoroughly review the historical trends in educational leadership and the pedagogical concepts and practices of anti-racism and racial equity.

Critical Race Theory

CRT is an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that centers race and racism in its analysis as the driving force for racial inequity. CRT tenets help to unearth the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, and the critique of liberalism in the educational leadership curriculum to disrupt the normative ways in which preparation programs develop curriculum,

practices, and policies that may perpetuate Whiteness and White supremacy (Capper, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This study examined the inherent ways that Whiteness as the property may silence or exclude BIPOC scholars and diverse resources, as racism is endemic and pervasive in life, education, and the United States.

Scholars have used the CRT tenet critique of liberalism to critically examine equity-oriented initiatives (Alemán, 2007; Alemán et al., 2011; Valles & Miller, 2010). CRT challenged the notion that the principal preparation curriculum can be color-blind or race-neutral to identify how it may maintain racism in a self-ascribed equity-oriented leadership program. CWS and CART shaped the development of the self-study tool and the data analysis. Using CWS and CART, the self-study tool helped make visible the often invisible racism and Whiteness in a curriculum that results when faculty do not critically reflect on their epistemologies, knowledge, and beliefs. All critical race scholarship seeks to understand how White supremacy is created and maintained and use that understanding to change it (Crenshaw et al., 1995). I sought to do both; therefore, CRT is an appropriate theoretical approach for this case study. CRT tenets countering storytelling and interest convergence went unused for this study. Additionally, intersectionality also went unused in an intentional effort to center race as the primary focus of one's identity. However, this is not to minimize the importance of the other parts of individuals' identity and humanness, such as religion or creed, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, social class, and physical or mental ability.

Critical White Studies

Critical White studies is a conceptual tool of CRT that allows for a "deeply critical and radical nature of questioning" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 104). According to Leonardo (2009), "Whiteness" is an ideology or social creation, which is "nowhere since it is unmarked and

everywhere since it is the standard by which other groups are judged" (p. 262). Matias et al. (2014) conceptualized critical White studies as a "transdisciplinary approach to investigate the phenomenon of Whiteness, how it is manifested, exerted, defined, recycled, transmitted, and maintained, and how it ultimately impacts the state of race relations" (p. 34). Engaging in anti-racist work requires that one dismantles White supremacy; however, learning the foundations of race become important. As such, critical White studies is a "framework to deconstruct the material, physical, emotional, and political power of Whiteness" (Matias et al., 2014, p. 35). The CWS concept was utilized in this study to deconstruct the way Whiteness is unmarked, unnamed, normalized, and color-blind in the principal preparation curriculum.

Critical Anti-racist Theory

Critical anti-racist theory (CART) provides an analytical lens for normative curriculum development and instruction in principal preparation programs. CART adherents argue that one cannot read and understand race without being anti-racist (Dei, 2013, p. 1). Dei (2013) asserted that race and racism are alive and well; therefore, we cannot be too "objective/rational/unemotional" (p. 1). Dei (2013) suggested that a personal place should provide the approach point for CART. Therefore, the methodology, the self-study toolkit, and the first focus group interview questions required that faculty members begin their reflection from a personal place. CART challenges academics to consider how dominant theory may not speak to the colonized and oppressed bodies because the colonized experience is theory and knowledge itself. Dei (2013) re-theorized anti-racism by de-centering Whiteness by dislodging it from the "position of dominance and the standard marker and bearer of all that is good and pure" (Dei, 2013, p. 2). CART challenged Whiteness as being the norm and standard marker.

Dei (2013) suggested that the production and dissemination of colonial knowledge can be interrupted by reading race through the anti-colonial lens and counter-hegemonic readings. Understanding race must start with histories of colonialism, imperialism, and xenophobia because these moments imbue pain, loss, suffering, emotions, and feelings. This notion is reflected in developing the self-study toolkit criteria that showcases this anti-racist design principle. CART recognizes that the reality of race emerges from racism by identifying the problem. Therefore, anti-racist work does not create the problem of racism, it illuminates it. CART situates history and context by linking historical colonialism and European imperial expansion. CART acknowledges the intersectionality of oppression whereby race and gender, sexuality, class, disability, language, or religion oppresses the individual. These multi-faceted levels of oppression are within structures and yield unequal consequences and outcomes. The intersections of differences are sites of marginalization, resistance, and liberation (Dei, 2013).

CART recognizes the permanence of racially marked bodies and that oppression marked on particular bodies is often denied or dismissed, along with skin color's severity, saliency, and centrality. CART acknowledges the asymmetrical power relations that signify the othering in the dominant imagination. Unequal power relations have historically resulted in racism, making the Black body sub-human by attributing negative qualities to Black bodies, such as inferior intelligence, violence, and criminality. CART identifies change and transformation as a central purpose and goal that can be accomplished by centering questions about power and power sharing and then speaking back to the edifice of power within our systems. CART reasons that racism and social oppression produce "an emotional and visceral reaction," a re-theorization of anger as part of the racialized experience (Dei, 2013, p. 6). To address racism, one must speak to Whiteness; by not speaking about race, they are "Whitening out" racism (Dei, 2013, p. 6).

Making racism unspeakable is a privilege in itself. CART maintains that anti-racism goes beyond just speaking and requires action, advocacy, and bridging the theory-practice divide.

CART sees the value in voices, experiences, and knowledge of subjugated voices at the forefront. As such, this study anchors the voices and experiences of the participants. Lastly, CART acknowledges spirituality that recognizes the inner self concerning groups and communities to identify humanity and purpose that brings healing, recovery, and transforming the broken into being whole. CART includes all racialized bodies struggling against racism, including indigenous people, moving it beyond a Black-and-White binary structure. Ultimately, this theorization of CART makes the reality of race real. Race matters, and it impacts all systems, especially the educational system. Our humanity exists within the context of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. By allowing principal preparation coursework to be void of topics of racism, colonialism, and imperialism, the program is perpetuating race and social oppression. Faculty must examine their structures for teaching and learning to identify places of systemic, institutionalized, and racialized practices and policies. CART is helpful when analyzing the ways in which principal preparation programs, "continually prescribe heavy doses of Eurocentric knowledge pills to learners" therefore critical educational perspectives and actions are needed to challenge the academic "intellectual plantation mentality" that rewards individualism, meritocracy, competitiveness, and White supremacy as policy (Dei, 2013, p. 11).

Methodology Literature

Phillips (2013) suggested that the educational leadership faculty should conduct in-depth internal inquiries beyond program evaluation, ultimately leading to future and collective action strategies. Furthermore, Phillips proposed "capturing the dynamics of the change process, to illuminate differing philosophical stands among program faculty, to surface points of agreement

and conflict in different arenas, and to identify promising or troubling program strategies" (p. 143). The literature on principal preparation demonstrates the need to consider how principal preparation faculty engage in a reflective self-study using a tool informed by key features for exemplary programs, PSEL and NELP equity standards, and anti-racist tenets. Furthermore, this study builds on research that suggests self-study can encourage faculty to engage in an internal inquiry process and continuous improvement that will promote collective, sustainable, programmatic, and organizational change. Through self-assessment and reflection, faculty analyzed their curriculum to identify improvement areas to develop anti-racist leaders.

The case study utilized a self-study methodology (Samaras, 2002; Zeicher & Noffke, 2001) to examine and improve the existing curriculum in an educational program. Samaras (2002) and Zeicher and Noffke (2001) highlighted the value of self-study as a research methodology for personal and professional growth and for making meaningful contributions to educational research. The self-study methodology provided a structured reflection process, identifying improvement areas and developing an anti-racist and inclusive approach to teaching. The approach encouraged self-reflection, collaboration, and awareness of biases and beliefs among faculty members, which led to a collective vision for anti-racism within their curriculum and programming. Personal and professional growth materialized for the participants and highlighted the potential of self-study methodology for educational research.

Research Literature

Education within the United States has a history entrenched in racialization and racism. Building on work from other scholars, Kohli et al. (2017) asserted there is a "new racism" (p. 183) in K–12 schools that is more subtle and evasive than the overt 1877 Jim Crow laws that maintained the *separate but equal* (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896) doctrine (Bonilla-Silva, 2010;

Cross, 2005; Fiske, 1993). This new racism is more challenging to identify due to the normalization of inherent racism within institutional structures. In 1950, following *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, schools were required to integrate. Yet, many Black children in 2023 still attended separate and unequal schools. Black students continued to experience inequities in education perpetuated through zero-tolerance policies, student tracking, and disproportionate representation in special education classification. This structural racism reflected through policies and institutional practices reinforces and perpetuates racial inequities that systematically privilege White people over non-White people (Kohli et al., 2017).

Principal Impact

As the school's primary leader, principals significantly influence student outcomes (Grissom et al., 2021; Holland, 2015; Knapp et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010). However, many principals are ill-prepared to address racial disparities in student achievement. The quality of the leadership provided by school leaders is highly dependent upon the excellence of their leadership preparation experiences (Hernandez & Kose, 2012). The lack of programs that integrate anti-racism coherently into their curriculum has led to the development of principals who are inept at maximizing their influence to change the trajectory of inequitable student outcomes (Hernandez & Kose, 2012).

A review of the literature by Adams and Bell (2016) suggested that anti-racist leadership development can positively impact student outcomes, particularly for students of color. They found that anti-racist leadership development helped principals create school cultures that were more inclusive, responsive, and equitable, which in turn improved student engagement, achievement, and well-being. Similarly, McKenzie et al. (2006) found that anti-racist leadership was crucial for creating inclusive and equitable school environments. The authors suggested

that principals committed to anti-racist leadership could challenge existing power structures, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster collaboration among staff, parents, and community members. As leaders of their schools, principals play an essential role in shaping the experiences of students and staff and in addressing issues of racism and inequality that may exist in their schools. However, principals lacking this critical understanding may perpetuate systemic racism. Therefore, anti-racist principal leadership development is necessary to help leaders learn to create and maintain school cultures that promote equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Curriculum Deficiencies

Hess and Kelly (2007) explored the explicit curriculum detailing overtly- taught material in principal preparation programs. Hess and Kelly examined the curriculum content from a sample of 31 principal preparation programs across the U.S., finding that topics such as social justice, equity, multiculturalism, and race-based discrimination received minimal treatment. Furthermore, among 1,851 readings, 28 authors were commonly used in required readings. None of the commonly used authors were BIPOC individuals. Hess and Kelly presented a comprehensive teaching assessment in a national sample of 31 preparation programs; the stark consistency of Whiteness perpetuated in curriculum content raises the question of what knowledge is being maintained or valued and what knowledge is being suppressed or devalued in principal preparation programs.

Hoff et al. (2006) collected participant surveys and conducted in-depth interviews in an educational leadership program. Findings revealed that administrators had a limited understanding of diversity issues and needed to prepare to discuss and address those concerns. The limitation related to understanding diversity issues negatively impacts the principal's ability

to engage with diverse students and their families. Hawley and James (2010) studied 18 education leadership programs, finding that preparation programs must adequately train individuals as leaders who can support racially diverse schools and address racial inequity. Hawley and James also found that principal preparation programs typically integrate only one diversity course into their curriculum and avoid race-based curriculum content.

Hoff et al. (2006) and Hawley and James (2010) highlighted the gap in the principal preparation curriculum addressing diversity issues. Other scholars have also raised concerns about the need for more research connecting issues of diversity and race to leadership preparation curricula (Boske, 2012; Diem & Carpenter, 2013; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010). Programs lack a coherent teaching of diversity throughout the content of the curriculum. Despite raising a level of awareness about diversity issues, research (e.g., Boske, 2012; Diem & Carpenter, 2013; Hawley & James, 2010; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Hoff et al., 2006) does not provide insight into how faculty can reflect on their curriculum to increase the presence of social justice and anti-racist content for curricular improvement.

The topic of race has been marginalized as a theoretical footnote within the larger discourse of educational leadership (López, 2003). A curriculum that excludes or limits the topic of race and racism will likely lead to educational leaders who lack the skills to engage in conversations about race and their ability to disrupt the impact of racism evident through inequitable student outcomes. Faculty in principal preparation programs must critically examine their course content, reading, and activities to determine how their status, gender, race, privileged perspective, and orientation may influence the curriculum (Gosetti & Rusch, 1994). Examining the curriculum is one of many facets of the faculty's role in developing anti-racist leaders. Understanding the varying roles of faculty in developing anti-racist leaders is critical.

The Role of Faculty in Developing Anti-racist Educational Leaders

Faculty are vital in preparing anti-racist educational leaders—they must acknowledge that racism is endemic in institutions of primary, secondary, and higher education; confront their prejudices and beliefs; and identify how those beliefs impact their work (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Hayes & Colin, 1994; Scipio & Colin, 2010). When engaging in anti-racist work, faculty must commit to deconstructing race and the interlocking systems of oppression (Hassouneh, 2006). Scheurich and Young (1997) argued that the individual, institutional, societal, or civilizational level usually comprises racism's analysis level, a sufficient analysis is needed to consider racism on an epistemological level. Exploring how educational leader preparation faculty may promulgate epistemological racism consciously or unconsciously in ways that may be invisible to them through course content is vital in developing anti-racist educational leaders. Faculty should also consider how their predispositions influence and determine how principals prepare through decisions that translate into programmatic systems, structures, policies, curricula, and practices.

Diem and Carpenter (2013) examined the inclusion of race-related conversations in educational leadership preparation programs. They found that much of the students' silence in discussions linked to how the preparation program was structured. For example, participants noted that courses relegated to addressing topics like instructional leadership failed to incorporate discussions of race, racism, and race relations. The discontinuity of race-related discussions based on curriculum offerings negatively impacted students' ability to engage in race-related conversations. While Diem and Carpenter's professors recognized the need to incorporate social justice issues into their program coherently, little integration of anti-racism arose. The study also revealed that the professor teaching the course, the professor's previous

experiences, interests, or the way the professor identified influenced the variability of race, racism, or race relations addressed in the preparation program (Diem & Carpenter, 2013).

Zarate and Mendoza (2020) conducted a qualitative study in a doctoral-level educational leadership course. Similar to Diem and Carpenter's (2013) study, Zarate and Mendoza examined continuous dialogue between students. The conversation was written through a peer letter exchange over 12 weeks, reflecting on the readings related to professional practice. Zarate and Mendoza found that the student's ability to reflect on racial privilege ranged from dismissal to reflection and disengagement to engagement. The ways students reflected and engaged or dismissed and disengaged with critical perspectives, school experiences of marginalized groups, and methodological frameworks varied. One finding acknowledged that some participants actively engaged, questioned their role, and contested inequitable practices, while other participants ignored structural and historical implications and maintained deficit views of marginalized communities (Zarate & Mendoza, 2020). This finding is significant for preparation programs when considering how to scaffold race-related curricula for varying racialized standpoints. While Diem and Carpenter and Zarate and Mendoza illuminated the need for aspiring leaders to engage in race-related conversations, the scholars did not adequately highlight how faculty would rethink their courses to more effectively engage students to further their development to become anti-racist principals.

Phillip et al. (2019) provided key insights about how faculty incorporate anti-racist pedagogy in the college classroom. They identified three main personal and professional barriers that White anti-racist faculty face, including (a) a lack of consistent commitment from institutions toward anti-racism policies, practices, and pedagogy; (b) challenges to tenure and scholarship; and (c) internalized struggle with White identity. According to the authors, "there

is a high value placed on collegiality which often translates to conformity" (p. 10) due to faculty feeling pressured, isolated, or overlooked for promotion because anti-racism is considered political and non-academic. Recommendations included three specific ways to de-center race in the college classroom. First, faculty must educate themselves and commit to dismantling how teaching and learning transpire in their classrooms. Such education materializes through consciously and intentionally de-centering Whiteness in their curricular choices. Second, faculty can de-center Whiteness by embracing critical pedagogy, co-constructing knowledge with students, recognizing White privilege, resisting ally performance, and taking greater risks in the classroom. Third, faculty can recognize racism and become anti-racist in their pedagogy and research endeavors. The researchers suggested that faculty must be open to "challenging current pedagogical traditions to deconstruct current practices in the classroom that foster racism" (p. 21). However, faculty who engage in education as a practice of freedom by teaching anti-racist curricula are taking risks by embarking on what some may consider radical pedagogy.

According to hooks (2010), since education has not been a place of radical transformation, those who deliberately concentrate their efforts on anti-racist work may be attacked, diminished, or sanctioned by the dominant culture. Rewards received by the dominant educational hierarchy, like tenure, can diminish efforts to resist and transform education. Phillips (2013) suggested that the educational leadership faculty should conduct in-depth internal inquiries that move beyond program evaluation and ultimately lead to strategies for future and collective action. Therefore, research on how faculty engage in in-depth internal inquiry could provide insight into how they transgress the dominant education hierarchy and pressure through deconstructing their current curriculum and practices in the classroom that fosters racism.

Redirections in Principal Preparation

The university-based programs in the U.S. are falling short of producing effective educational leaders; overall program quality across universities is poor, inadequate, and appalling, even in some of the country's leading universities (Davis, 2016; Levine, 2005; Mendels, 2016). Principal preparation programs could be faster to improve their curriculum. Mendels (2016) found that the course of study for preparation programs continues to reflect a principal's job inadequately and that some university policies and practices hinder change. Developing a curriculum that balances theory and practice may be difficult (Levine, 2005; Mendels, 2016). While the curriculum needs to be relevant and experiential, many programs have outdated curricula that do not reflect the real-world skills needed by school principals, that are sites of educational inequities, zero-tolerance discipline policies, racial tensions, and discrimination (Hess & Kelly, 2007; Mendels, 2016).

As a result, the Wallace Foundation launched the University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI) in July 2016 (Wang et al., 2018). The 4-year initiative supported seven universities in redesign efforts according to evidence-based principles and practices with the goal of generating lessons that other university principal preparation programs could adopt or adapt as they embark on their own principal preparation system improvement efforts. The UPPI research used a self-study approach that incorporated the widely accepted crucial features of effective, exemplary, or innovative programs for program improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; Orr et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2018).

Levine (2005) identified that quality programs have an explicit purpose that reflects the current needs of the leader, school, and students. Likewise, Orr et al. (2006) noted that innovative programs also develop an explicit purpose during the reformation. The purpose and

overarching vision should integrate into student selection, curriculum and course content, pedagogical strategies, internships, and field experiences. The clearly defined vision should also articulate fundamental leadership practices based on professional standards. Orr et al. asserted that aligning the program's purpose, mission, and components leads to well-prepared leaders.

Furthermore, as an extension of Levine's (2005) key element, Orr et al. (2006) suggested that the innovative, new directions set forth by the purpose and vision will lead to powerful transformative learning experiences that develop socially just leadership capacities. However, both assertions rest on the assumption that the new purpose and vision are critically different from the previous purpose and vision. Unless faculty interrogates how their previous purpose and vision may reinforce White supremacist, patriarchal, heteronormative, and hegemonic ideologies, they may unconsciously continue to reproduce an ideologically unchanged purpose and vision. As a result, the program may have an espoused social justice purpose and vision incompatible with developing socially just leaders. While identifying an explicit purpose and vision is an essential programmatic component, neither Levine nor Orr et al. explicitly highlighted the importance of aligning the purpose and vision with anti-racist principles.

An effective, exemplary, and innovative program must have a comprehensive, coherent curriculum (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Orr et al., 2006). Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) stated that the curriculum should balance theory and practice. This balance of theory and practice ensures that coursework is equally important to working in schools with successful practitioners. While a cohesive, coherent curriculum is a vital feature of a quality program, Darling-Hammond et al. found that most programs needed a unified and articulate curriculum. The authors identified an *irrelevant curriculum* as an indicator of poor-quality programs. This

type of curriculum was described as a mix of a various courses that had little to do with the job of a principal. The lack of curriculum cohesiveness in principal preparation programs resulted in fragmented courses that did not adequately address race, racism, or equity.

A current skill set needed within the principal preparation curriculum is preparing educational leaders to combat racism through a race-conscious outlook with the commitment and skills to lead systemic action-oriented change (Dei, 1996; Welton, Diem, et al., 2018). Principals must prepare to face political complexity and uncertainty when engaging in racial equity work (Diem & Welton, 2020). However, many programs still must update curricula that reflect the current responsibilities of a principal and require improvement to reflect contemporary curriculum and leadership practices that reflect the skills needed by principals in 21st-century schools (Davis, 2016; Hess & Kelly, 2007).

Faculty members' lack of focus on practical and contemporary issues, reluctance to change, beliefs, and institutional aspects like structure and regulation have typically hindered program improvements (Davis, 2016). When considering improvement and innovation, principal preparation programs must re-envision a curriculum that develops racially conscious leaders prepared to disrupt and dismantle structures and policies that maintain the legacy of racism, oppression, and inequity. However, programs may remain misguided if programs choose to tightly align their curriculum to professional licensing standards, as Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) suggested.

Principal Standards

National and state professional standards have influenced program content and field experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Orr et al., 2006; Young & Laible, 2000). These standards have acted as guideposts for the profession that elevated the important and relevant

knowledge in educational leadership (Farley et al., 2019). Standards for educational leaders bifurcate into two categories: (a) educational leadership preparation standards for pre-service principals and (b) educational leadership standards for practicing leaders. In November 2015, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), formerly known as Interstate School Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, were adopted for the use of practicing school administrators (The National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2018). In May 2017, the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Standards, the pre-service principal standards, were finalized for institutions undergoing Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation and NELP program review. The pre-service and practicing leader standards noted the focus on equity and inclusion.

A new standard, *Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness*, was included that delves into the role of an educational leader in creating and maintaining equitable environments (NPBEA, 2018). The NELP standards, which principal preparation programs use for curriculum planning, reference inclusion or related words 72 times and name equity, equality, and inclusion with a decrease in the broad use of the term justice (Farley et al., 2019). Farley et al. (2019) found that even though the standards clearly articulated the need for equity and inclusion, the standards remained unclear as the concepts of equity and justice remained ill-defined for pre-service students in educational leadership programs (p. 15). Therefore, while these standards can serve as a guidepost, principal preparation programs must determine how their programs align the standards with their curriculum. While the NELP standards encompass concepts such as equity, inclusion, and diversity, neither set of standards addresses nor include race (Farley et al., 2019).

Scheurich and Young (1997) critiqued the absence of explicit language on race and equity in the principal standards and the lack of diverse scholars from varying races in the seminal principal preparation research as epistemological racism. (Their critique explained how the legitimacy and merit of scholarship emerged from White culture's historical domination in society.) Epistemological racism has yielded color-evasiveness in principal preparation research. The present study sought to disrupt both epistemological racism and color-evasiveness by using research from scholars of color and explicitly naming race when developing the self-study reflection tool for participants.

Color-Blindness and Color-Evasiveness

The term "post-racial" (Wooten, 1971, p. X) described the United States in 1971 after the civil rights movement. The term again enjoyed widespread use following the election of President Barack Obama. Post-racial described a country where race or racism no longer existed. Additionally, the term provided an alternate reality that minimized the implications of the "racialized social system" in America, "a society with economic, political, social, and ideological levels structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 37). As a result, post-racial champions argued that racially inflammatory incidents, discrimination, and inequitable outcomes disconnected themselves from racist motives. Dismissed is the minimization of the pain, legacy, and current reality of racism, resulting in "color-blind racism" or the "dominant racial ideology of the post-Civil Rights Era" (Bonilla-Silva, 2015, p. 1359).

This notion of color blindness extended to other disciplines, including law and education, characterizing how race and racism maintained a separate but unequal society; this allowed for a covert avoidance of race language reproducing racial privilege (Bonilla-Silva,

2001). Crenshaw et al.'s (1995) argument that the constitution supports White interests (and, as such, must be regarded as racist) started the conceptualization of color blindness in legal studies. However, in education, color-blindness is a collection of problematic ideologies defined as erasure strategies and Whiteness practices impacting education policies, practices, and outcomes (Alemán et al., 2011; Cochran-Smith, 1995; Rios et al., 2014; Solorzano, 1997; Su, 2007). Berry and Bonilla-Silva (2008) added that color blindness is the "new racism" that leads to the "pervasiveness of material, economic, legal, and political stratification along racial lines in the United States that disadvantages people of color" (p. 93). Color blindness is typically considered passive, unintended, or unconscious. However, color evasiveness allows educators to "willfully ignore the experiences of people of color" (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 10).

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, refusing to center and critically analyze issues of race and racism has hindered addressing its negative impact on education (Annamma et al., 2016). The frames of color-blindness provide the appearance of equity and equality yet inhibit addressing critical issues of race and racism (Guiner & Torres, 2002). Maintaining color blindness in education leadership preparation can negatively impact principals' leadership development and performance. Understanding the importance of naming race and racism when attempting to develop anti-racist leaders can help confront specific ways principal preparation programs' curricula and practices may need to be re-cultured.

Re-culturing

In a systematic synthesis of qualitative and quantitative studies on how principals affect students and schools, Grissom et al. (2021) built upon the foundational study, *How Leadership Influences Student Learning* (Leithwood et al., 2004), which found "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at

school" (p. 5). Grissom et al. discovered that principals have direct and indirect channels of positive impact on low-income students, historically marginalized student populations, and teachers of color. Grissom et al. also learned that principal turnover might reinforce existing inequities among schools serving larger proportions of low-income, low-achieving students. Grissom et al. suggested "renewed attention to strategies for cultivating, selecting, *preparing*, and supporting a high-quality principal workforce" (p. xvii). The imperative for principals to develop an equity lens to meet the needs of the growing number of marginalized students supports the impetus for faculty to re-culture their programs and reorient their curriculum to prepare principals to be equity-oriented adequately, anti-racist leaders.

By adopting an equity-oriented pre-service principal leadership program, school leaders can authentically examine how their leadership behaviors either restrain or advance equity and promote or hinder the development of an anti-racist school community. Wang et al. (2018) posed the question, "Can principal preparation programs evolve to meet the urgent need for quality school leaders by aligning with the current knowledge base of research and best practices?" (p. 7). The present study extended Wang's question to consider how faculty engaged in the necessary work to change their program curriculum to meet the urgent need to prepare equity-oriented and anti-racist leaders.

Murphy (2002) contended that faculty need to re-culture or rethink their traditional concepts of school administration to design, prepare, and develop school leaders. According to Murphy, the "academic infrastructure in school administration" has resulted in faculty developing "the bridge to nowhere" when academic knowledge taught in the program does not translate or "penetrate the world of schooling" in practical application (p. 180). Murphy's claim illuminated the need to reconceptualize educational leadership by investigating academic and

technical course content constructs. Literature on how faculty engage in conversations to determine if or how curriculum may need to be modified to address race and racism coherently remains limited. Finally, the absence of legitimatized knowledge from authors of color and the avoidance of direct racial terminology reflects the mechanisms of color blindness and color evasiveness that preparation programs must explore and address (Murphy, 2002). Seminal research (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; Orr et al., 2006) suggested that a coherent and cohesive curriculum is crucial in preparation programs. However, research has highlighted the need for a more comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes equity and that explicitly names race and racism (Dei, 1996; Diem & Welton, 2020; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Grissom et al., 2021; Welton, Diem, et al., 2018; Welton, Owens, et al., 2018; Young & Laible, 2000).

Educational Leadership for Social Justice and Anti-racism

Significant scholarship exists on the importance of developing socially just educational leaders (Furman, 2012; Lumby, 2012; Mansfield, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2006, 2008; Miller & Martin, 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2010; Santamaría, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009; Tillman & Scheurich, 2013). Socially just leadership is defined broadly as the process and structures that disrupt and transform institutionalized conditions that marginalize and exclude. This type of leadership promotes equity, equality, and fairness (Gewirtz, 1998; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Trujillo & Woulfin, 2013). Theoharis (2007) added that socially just leaders address issues of race and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions. With the varying degrees of understanding of social justice, a program may easily choose to conceptualize a broader definition of social justice that does not address Theoharis' inclusion of addressing race. In addition, Trujillo and Cooper (2014) found little clarity on how programs

anchor concepts when considering social justice in preparation programs. This ambiguity in how programs defined social justice and anchored the concept into their programs and highlighted the importance of a more in-depth examination.

Further research identified the need for educational leadership faculty to address social justice, especially in the curricular content, to help future leaders understand inequity and discrimination (Bertrand & Rodela, 2018; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Capper et al., 2006; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; McKenzie et al., 2008; Pounder et al., 2002). Educators must move beyond general notions of social justice or liberal multiculturalism toward an explicitly anti-racist stance and deliberate action (Dei, 1996; Welton, Diem, et al., 2018; Young & Laible, 2000). Such movement requires that faculty explicitly name race, racism, and Whiteness and take deliberate action to develop anti-racist leaders.

Gooden and Dantley (2012) noted that while social justice exists in preparation coursework, the emphasis on race is narrow. As a result, the authors argued that programs must consider a framework centered on race that includes a prophetic voice, self-reflection as the motivation for transformative action, a grounding in critical theoretical construction, a pragmatic edge that supports praxis, and inclusion of race language. Gooden and Dantley's four components create a greater specificity of a race-centered framework within the broader context of social justice. First, the prophetic voice allows faculty to problematize and interrogate their curriculum and revise include race and anti-racist tenets. Second, self-reflection facilitates self-critique and self-correct for transformative change. Third, the pragmatic edge is how the faculty's deliberate action of self-reflection will interrogate their curriculum and predispositions. Fourth, centering race within the curriculum will help faculty disrupt the traditional principal preparation narrative.

This specificity of race "holds all of the players in the educational process accountable for creating equitable spaces for children to learn," including faculty in principal preparation programs (Gooden & Dantley, 2012, p. 241). Race at the epicenter requires faculty to use critical theoretical positioning to challenge the traditional dominant ideology in traditionally grounded preparation programs. Shifting to a curriculum that centers on race will be instrumental in the development of leaders who can resolve dilemmas of inequity, racism, and discrimination. The authors also agreed that racial equity and social justice should integrate, and professors should become more reflective on race, diversity, and social justice issues in their practice. Anti-racist education begins with the individuals responsible for the learning process. Within the context of principal preparation programs, the individuals responsible for developing and facilitating the learning process are the program faculty. While a growing body of research has explored how preparation programs incorporated social justice curriculum, scarce research exists to detail descriptions of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments in leadership programs that enact an anti-racist framework (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Merchant & Garza, 2015; Trujillo & Cooper, 2014). Therefore, understanding how faculty reflect on race and racism to improve their curriculum in preparation programs is essential.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 provided a literature synthesis illuminating why preparation programs must develop leaders who understand how racism and racist ideas operate through practices, policies, and systems. The literature review focused on the new racism in education, the curriculum deficiencies in principal preparation programs, the faculty's role in developing anti-racist leaders, and the need for self-assessment as a tool for improvement. Chapter 3 contains a presentation of the study's methodology and design.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This case study explored how faculty in an educational leadership program self-examined and reflected on how their course content aligned with anti-racist leadership design. Additionally, this study sought to understand how faculty navigated the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflected an anti-racist leadership design. The current study addressed gaps in the literature by examining the processes faculty undergo when reimagining and revising their curriculum to integrate anti-racism coherently. The results provided a comprehensive perspective of the faculty experience using a case study using a self-study methodological approach. This chapter describes the methodological design, including a review of the research questions, participants and setting overview, procedures, analysis method, and ethical concerns.

Research Method and Design Appropriateness

Qualitative research is a way to study research problems through the meaning-making of individuals or groups ascribing to the social or human problem (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative approach allows the researcher to collect data in the natural setting of the people and places under inquiry and turn their world into a series of representations in the form of field notes, interviews, conversations, and memos to self to create a research story (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). There are three broad purposes of qualitative research; to: (a) understand, (b) interrogate, and (c) deconstruct (Lather, 1999). This study sought to understand faculty members' experiences when working to deconstruct and interrogate how their leadership curriculum content maintained Whiteness by explicitly prioritizing anti-racism leadership design. Interrogating and deconstructing how social structures, such as educational leadership

curricula and practices, may produce inequity and marginalization based on various social categories, such as race, is paramount.

A study is rigorous when there is an alignment between epistemology, theoretical framework, methodology, methods, data analysis, representation, and implications (Bhattacharya, 2017). As the researcher, I sought to maintain alignment between these elements while conducting this study. The study's theoretical framework, CRT, CWS, and CART, epistemologically centered on experiential knowledge of participants, storytelling, and narratives as rich data sources (Frankenberg, 1993; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CWS is a theoretical approach that seeks to deconstruct and challenge the idea of Whiteness as a natural or neutral category (Frankenberg, 1993). Frankenberg also emphasized the importance of understanding Whiteness's subjective and embodied experiences and how these experiences shape people's perceptions and interactions. The author argued that the CWS moves beyond the idea of Whiteness as a lack or absence of racial identity. Instead, it recognizes it as a complex and dynamic social and cultural category deeply intertwined with systems of power and privilege. CART requires that faculty consider both students and their individual biases and experiences.

Furthermore, CART challenges faculty to consider how dominant Western ways of thinking may not align with transforming education into sites of equity and access. The study aimed to understand faculty members' perceptions and experiences as they attempted to deconstruct Whiteness within their pedagogy and curriculum content. Therefore, a qualitative case study using a CRT, CWS, and CART framework was most appropriate and beneficial. CRT supported the analysis of the data and supported the use of storytelling and rich sources of data. CWS helped codify Whiteness's presence within the data, and CART provided the

epistemological frame for decentering Whiteness from its position of dominance. This approach allowed for an interpretation of the faculty's experiences and how they attribute meaning to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Samaras (2002) and Zeicher and Noffke (2001) contributed to the growing literature on self-study as a research methodology and highlighted its potential for personal and professional growth. The authors also valued self-study methodology to make meaningful contributions to educational research. The present study utilized a helpful self-study methodology as faculty reflected and examined their pre-existing curriculum. A self-study method provided a structured process for reflecting on one's teaching practice, identifying areas for improvement, developing an anti-racist and inclusive approach to teaching, and encouraging self-reflection and awareness, which helped faculty become more aware of their biases and beliefs. This self-awareness was a crucial first step in understanding and addressing issues related to racism and deconstructing Whiteness within their curriculum. Additionally, this method encouraged collaboration amongst participants, which led to a nuanced, dynamic, and robust exchange of ideas. Participants were empowered using a deliberate, systematic, and reflective inquiry into their curriculum and practices. Their exploration challenged their ideas, beliefs, assumptions, and practices, leading to cohesion amongst the team, a collective vision for anti-racism within their curriculum and programming, and personal and professional growth.

I received permission for this study to modify the EDC's Quality Measures tool (QM; King, 2018). QM is an evidence-based protocol grounded in seminal research by Darling-Hammond (2010) on exemplary principal preparation practices. The indicators and criteria describe effective practices from the literature and empirical research on adult transformational pedagogy and aligned with the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL; King,

2018). The QM toolkit is a "self-led, analytic, topic-specific resource for use in the critical self-examination, reflection, and peer review of principal preparation program effectiveness" (King, 2018, p. 5). Faculty used the evidence-based protocol to explore the following domains: (a) candidate admissions, (b) course content, (c) pedagogy-andragogy, (d) clinical practice, (e) performance assessment, and (f) graduate performance outcomes (King, 2018).

For the scope of this research study, *domain 2: course content* was deconstructed and modified using anti-racist principles. Study participants used the modified version, *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty,* to provoke self-reflection and self-examination between the first and second focus group interviews. Participants engaged in individual and collaborative reflection over 15 weeks between the two interviews. The initial research approach asked participants to share their notes, samples of student work, and any related artifacts that would promote reflection. In addition to these resources, the faculty team voluntarily recorded their collaborative reflection sessions as they used the tool to guide their discussion and shared the video recording with the researcher for analysis. While this was not required nor anticipated, this modification provided vital insight into the team's perspective and experience.

As participants engaged in deep discussion, they forgot they were recording their conversation. At times participants realized they had been speaking about a specific situation that may have needed more clarity or context. Periodically, participants stopped to speak directly to the researcher to provide greater specificity for a better understanding. This invitation to pause and share their synopsis with the researcher allowed other participants to further reflect on the topic creating an organic flow of conversations that encouraged deep contemplation and points of convergence and divergence of thoughts. This reflective tool supported the self-study

methodology. The self-study methodology was enhanced when working within a bounded group of individuals. Therefore, a case study design was a complementary approach taken in this study.

This study used a case study design, providing the researcher with a strategy to explore a "real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) contended that a case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiii.). Yin (2013) suggested that a case study helps answer *how* or *why* questions and addresses research on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. This case study aimed to provide an opportunity to gather detailed information and a descriptive account of the faculty's perception and experience when engaging in deconstructing Whiteness within their educational leadership program. The contemporary context for this case study was situated with the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustices at the national and local level from 2020–2022 that highlighted the need to disrupt racism, more specifically anti-Black racism, systemically. Thomas (2011) suggested that case studies are beneficial when studying the complexity of a situation. Engaging in race-related work is inherently complex. Therefore, based on the research problem, theoretical framework, and the complexity of the topic, a qualitative case study was ideal for this research study. These guiding principles shaped how the researcher conceptualized this study. Merriam and Tisdell's, (2016) admonitions influenced how the researcher developed the data collection procedures, and Yin's (2013) guidelines influenced how the researcher coherently developed the research plan.

A case study should contain a research design that includes a study's questions, propositions, the unit of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for the findings (Yin, 2013). Yin (2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) encouraged gathering data from multiple sources to capture the complexity and depth of the case. Gathering data such as archival records, interviews, participant observation, physical artifacts, and direct observations from various evidentiary sources is encouraged (Yin, 2013). As such, the participants provided a robust repository of archival records for analysis. Comprehensive and strategic techniques strengthened the data collection procedures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As I conducted interviews, these techniques helped develop questions yielding rich recordings and transcriptions. Following Merriam and Tisdell's suggestions, I attempted to observe carefully and know what questions to ask and how to probe deeper. I developed an interview guide that allowed me to develop rapport with and between the participants. For the first interview, I mapped each question to the research question and corresponding literature.

Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasized the iterative nature of case study research. The researcher continually revises and refines their research or interview questions and analytical framework based on new data and insights. When participants answered subsequent questions, the questions were eliminated from the interview guide and replaced with follow-up questions based on participants' responses when needed. This approach allowed me and the participants to engage in a richer and more nuanced understanding of the phenomena under study. Stake (2013) advised case study researchers to develop a set of two or three research questions that will "help structure the observation, interviews, and document review" (p. 20). Stake's influence guided the development of the research questions.

Research Questions

The following research questions drove the study:

RQ1) How do faculty in educational leadership programs self-examine and reflect on how their course content aligns with anti-racist leadership design?

RQ2) How do faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design?

Context, Site Selection, and Sample

This section reviews the site and participant selection to participate in the study, including a description of local and political contexts. This study occurred during the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and racism from 2020–2022. The profound social, political, and economic upheaval has highlighted societal inequalities in marginalized communities. People of color experienced disproportionate rates of infection, hospitalization, and death. Simultaneously, the United States and other countries continued to experience a reckoning with systemic racism and police brutality, sparked by the killing of George Floyd and many other people of color by police officers. Protests and demonstrations gained momentum through the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement calling for an end to police brutality and systemic racism. The dual pandemic further exposed the implications of racism in healthcare and education.

Many school leaders felt unprepared to lead within this tumultuous context. Additionally, instructions requested that faculty members respond quickly to the complex need to support and develop leaders within this tenuous context. They also had to live with the uncertainty of how these problems would resolve. Exposure has highlighted the urgent need for racial justice and anti-racist leadership development. Protests and calls for racial justice have

highlighted how racism persists and impacts all areas of society. This study provides a systematic way for faculty to make systemic changes.

Purposeful sampling and voluntary participation facilitated participant data collection (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Purposeful sampling is useful and widely leveraged in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This intentional sampling helped identify both the site and participants who would be best suited to provide detailed experiences about how faculty in educational leadership programs reimagine course content to align with anti-racist leadership design. By identifying and selecting a purposeful sample, a deeper understanding, and key insights emerge from individuals who "the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). Time and place-bound the study, as it occurred during the 2021–2022 academic year, and at sites restricted to educational leadership programs for K–12 administrators at a public historically White institution of higher education (IHE) in North Carolina. By examining the bounded case study, I endeavored to gain an in-depth, detailed, contextual understanding to provide an accurate and credible depiction of the program under study.

Participant Recruitment

The following procedures helped recruit a site and participants for this study (Appendix A). An email was sent to the program director for an ELP at an IHE in North Carolina. A public historically White university that self-identified and demonstrated an equity-focused leadership design approach was preferred and prioritized within the recruitment effort. Deliberately choosing a site that demonstrates the unique characteristic of equity-focused leadership design presented a rich opportunity and an exemplar for focused study (Saldaña, 2020). I sought out a program with an equity focus because the faculty team would potentially be more likely to have

the willingness, readiness, expertise, resources, and experience necessary to guide the research productively. Using equity as a specific criterion is referred to as criterion-based selection since the researcher identifies specific criteria that are essential for the study and identifies participants who meet these criteria (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The program has established a set of fundamental design principles that guide the development of these leadership development experiences. These principles are the foundation for their programmatic elements, such as their curriculum, and outline the key goals and objectives of the program and highlight the desired requirements for participation in this study.

ELP Key Programmatic Design Principles

ELP Design Principles overview allowed for program design principle extrapolation. Faculty developed the principles over time and continuously updated them. Design principle names were modified to protect the identity and confidentiality of the program. However, the essence of the design principle was maintained.

Intentional Connectedness

Intentional connectedness stresses the importance of in-time, relevant issues addressed through applied approaches and authentic and problem-based material. This design principle has implications for pedagogy, including simulations, case studies, role-playing, and field-based assignments/projects, as well as implications for program components, the most crucial of which is the yearlong, full-time internship.

Congruence of Theory and Practice

The congruence theory and practice principle anchors the dynamic relationship between experiential learning, knowledge acquisition, deep reflection, and action. This congruence between theory and practice requires both interpersonal and intrapersonal for critical reflection,

transformation, liberation, and social justice. This principle is a driving force for developing equity center leaders who understand systemic social justice issues and take strategic action to address them.

Grit and Growth Mindset

This principle promotes deepening conceptual understanding and skill development through perseverance. Challenging the status quo requires leaders to embrace and see challenges as growth opportunities. Therefore, a growth mindset is needed to handle complex educational issues.

Disruptor of Educational Dysfunction

A disruptor of educational dysfunction describes the program's self-identified challenge: preparing leaders to be tenacious and equity centered while avoiding termination by staying employed. For leaders to be effective change agents, they must first maintain employment—a tenuous balance for a social justice change agent.

Equity and Social Justice Centeredness

While implicit in the programs' concept of balancing theory and practice, this design principle emerged after realizing that equity needed to be more explicit. The program defines equity as building on the cultural assets of students and families and the appropriate allocation of resources to meet students' tailored needs, leading to increased support, access, and overall success. The program identifies social justice to replace inequitable and unjust practices with more equitable practices.

Design Principle Summary

Faculty members who work with equity will likely have a deep understanding of the historical and systemic roots of racism and the contemporary manifestations of racism in

education. However, while they may understand equity and racism, one cannot assume that the faculty team or their program is anti-racist. As such, these design principles illustrate the foundation for the program, curriculum, and areas of focus for the program, making this site a viable option for this study. Once I had secured the study site and the faculty team accepted the invitation to participate, the program directors identified, and selected faculty members engaged in the decision-making and development of the curriculum. Faculty who actively engaged in developing and implementing the educational leadership program were preferred and prioritized. Table 1 indicates the participants' demographics representing the minimum requirements described and highlights the faculty members' current roles and unique qualifications.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics and Pseudonyms

Name	Racial identity	Gender	Current role	Experience
Eleanor	White	Female	Director of the program and full-time professor	25 years as a teacher, principal, district leader, and faculty member
Leo	White	Male	Clinical faculty and a primary instructor	35 years as a teacher, administrator, assistant superintendent, and an educational consultant
Wilbur	White	Male	Curriculum coordinator	50 years as an educator
Adira	Black	Female	Program coordinator	9 years of experience as a research assistant

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Appalachian State University on 13 April 2021 after a review of the purpose, procedures, and anticipated outcomes. Ethical considerations included obtaining consent from the research site and participants (Appendix B). All information collected will be maintained for confidentiality and security. Participants' personal identities will remain confidential using pseudonyms. Participants were made aware of every effort to maintain the confidentiality of their personally identifiable information. All data security procedures arose from Appalachian State University-approved storage and file-sharing methods. All transcription notes, participant graphic representations, and data analysis notes remain de-identified, and data is secured and accessible only by the researcher. All data collected and analyzed will remain secured for a maximum of 3 years from the completion of the study in a secure location. Additional considerations included ensuring the research study caused minimal to no harm. The topic of racism can trigger an emotional response; therefore, the participants were in complete control of the discussions, thoughts, and stories they shared with the voluntariness to withdraw from the study at any time.

Instrumentation

I developed the *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty* for this study (Appendix C). This tool draws on seminal educational leadership research and builds on the widely accepted *Quality Measures principal preparation program self-study toolkit* (King, 2018). The *Quality Measures* are useful for faculty with or without a facilitator. Similarly, the *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate* faculty is operational with or without a facilitator. For this study, I designed this tool as a resource for faculty to engage in reflection without the support of

a facilitator. With this consideration in mind, I designed the tool with components that allow faculty to engage in reflection independently. Additionally, with written permission, I designed this tool to anchor anti-racism.

Conceptual Grounding

The domain was explicitly named inclusive and anti-racist coursework. Building on Gooden and Dantley (2012), this tool includes a prophetic voice by speaking truth to power, challenging oppressive structures and systems, and advocating for the rights and well-being of marginalized groups. The authors argued that leaders adopting a prophetic voice approach could bring attention to inequality and injustice while inspiring others to address these issues in an informed and ethical way. In their framework, they also proposed having a grounding in critical theoretical construction, referring to the idea that effective leaders should be familiar with critical theories and frameworks that allow them to analyze and understand social, political, and economic structures of power and oppression. As faculty members engage with this component, it can help them challenge dominant power structures and systems of oppression and to provide alternative perspectives and solutions that promote anti-racism.

The language grounding critical theoretical construction merges into the anti-racist journey in a continuum in the tool. This component emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and cultural contexts in which populations exist to identify and address issues of inequality and injustice. According to Gooden and Dantley (2012), leaders with this grounding are better equipped to engage in critical dialogue and analysis, challenge their own biases and assumptions, and work collaboratively with others to create positive change. The concept of grounding in critical theoretical construction highlights the importance of equipping leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to analyze and address systemic

inequality, injustice, and racism. Throughout the tool, the inclusion of race language occurs. Finally, the tool promotes self-reflection as the motivation for transformative action.

Key Indicators

The tool includes six key indicators that align to promote "curricular coherence, linking goals, learning activities, and assessments" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 42). Each indicator begins with criteria that articulate an overview of the key indicator. Next, the tool includes hyperlinked, related guiding resources. Guiding discussion prompts follow the collection of relevant resources. These discussion prompts encouraged meaningful, reflective dialogue between faculty members—a meaningful modification to the original *Quality Measures principal preparation program self-study toolkit* (King, 2018). This modification adds deeper learning and reflection resources to promote collective professional learning and exploration. By making research-based resources readily accessible to the faculty team alongside reflection and discussion prompts, faculty could confidently engage in the self-reflection process.

Beyond Program Evaluation

This tool moves beyond the typical program evaluation. Much research has explored the intersection of meritocracy and Whiteness in program evaluation. According to some scholars, meritocracy closely links to the dominant White culture, and the criteria and methods used to define and measure merit can reinforce racial biases and inequalities. Hubbard et al. (2004) argued that meritocracy is a concept used to justify racial and class-based inequalities in society and is rooted in the White dominant culture. Cultural and societal biases could profoundly influence how we measure and define merit. These biases can have significant implications for program evaluation.

The goal was not for faculty to prove or justify their performance which is typically associated with program evaluation. This tool encourages reflection and shifts from faculty, proving to improve. The toolkit describes the stages of an anti-racist journey continuum. Anti-racism is the destination; however, understanding where faculty members are individually and collectively can help a team determine how they might become an anti-racist organization with an anti-racist curriculum. This continuum seats anti-racist principles from various researchers, and uses directional language such as toward, forward, upward, inward, and onward. Directional language may be helpful for faculty to identify where they need to make necessary shifts. I hope this tool will help the faculty team resist the western way of teaching and learning or what I am describing as a westward way of thinking. This tool can benefit teams as faculty commit to a new frontier of curriculum development by resisting westernization and Whiteness within their curriculum and programming. Faculty can do this by resisting, refusing, and naming the racist and oppressive impact of Whiteness on the person and structure (Dei, 2013). Once faculty are ready to become anti-racist, they need to explore, understand, and include the underpinning of racism and its current manifestation into their curriculum so they are better prepared to address racism within their programming (Gordon et al., 2016).

Toward, Forward, Upward, Inward, and Onward

The directional language describes the initial step faculty may take for each indicator. Toward is considered the initial step on the anti-racist journey. Faculty should not stop there. Forward and upward describes how faculty may take steps forward on their transformative journey to transcend hegemonic practices and structures. Forward describes the interrogation, intentionality, specificity, scaffolding, and deep analysis faculty must engage in when reflecting

on their curriculum. Upward describes the process of ascension when faculty members break free from the shackles of oppression and racism (Dei, 2013).

Collectively, forward and upward describe the initial steps in the anti-racist journey. By taking steps forward to transcend hegemonic practices is an important step. Inward describes the transformative soul journey that requires an awakening of the conscious, reflection, healing, truth, and the connection of the heart, mind, and soul (Dei, 2013). Inward extends research claiming that faculty and academic leaders should reflect inwardly to explore prejudices and unconscious biases when considering the curriculum (Thurman et al., 2019). Onward described the ongoing process of substantive change through disrupting the status quo and dismantling systems of oppression (Dei, 2013). At the end of each indicator is a place for the faculty to take notes and link in artifacts such as student work or syllabi used during their analysis. This tool is founded on a seminal researcher in educational leadership and provides research-based resources, discussion prompts, and research-based anti-racist principles for curriculum design.

Pilot Study

During the fall 2020 semester, I conducted a pilot study with faculty in an educational leadership program who identified collectively as White. I received feedback on both the process and the interview questions. Conducting the pilot study helped "refine the data collection plan concerning both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed" (Yin, 2013, p. 79). The pilot study used a focus group interview protocol and data collection for the research. Feedback regarding the clarity of interview questions, the potential need for new questions, or modifying or deleting existing questions arose. Participants offered their perception of the flow and coherence of the focus group interview. Additionally, participants provided feedback on the length of the interview. Including an additional focus group interview

allowing for more discussion, and an optional, individual follow-up interview materialized as modifications to the research design.

During the pilot study, individual interview content provided feedback on the research design, the interview process, and the toolkit. An individual interview occurred after a participant requested to clarify and expand their response outside the group setting. Participants expressed that an individual interview would allow them to share suppressed thoughts that deviated from the group consensus. Additionally, the design of the self-study toolkit was modified to include discussion questions that would promote group discussions. Additionally, resources helped the team have a common language, knowledge, and understanding of anti-racism, allowing for a thorough analysis and reflection. By adding discussion questions and resources, participants in the pilot study hoped the new research design would allow future participants to engage in meaningful conversation.

Finally, the original research plan included observing a class session. However, based on feedback from the pilot participants, the classroom observation felt more performative and made the participant feel like this project was evaluative. Participants felt they benefited more from sharing previous teaching and learning experiences, highlighting the challenges of teaching race-related topics. Faculty frequently engage in peer observations. However, these peer observations often feel performative and may not lead to substantive change in teaching practices. Therefore, observing classroom teaching and learning was removed from the study's design. (This is not to say that observing classroom instruction for reflection is not valuable; however, for the scope and feasibility of this study, the participants felt the observation would be redundant.) The participant input and feedback from the pilot study informed the final study design.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Researchers conducting case study research are the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, mainly when they collect data through interviewing (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2013). Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that humans possess critical characteristics that make them instruments of choice for qualitative research. The concept of the human being as a research instrument emphasizes the researcher's role in constructing and bringing meaning through their responsiveness to the world around them. This human ability to understand and make meaning can promote "critical awareness, emancipation, and movement toward deconstruction or decolonization" (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013, p. 1). However, the human researcher as an instrument has been scrutinized and debated due to potential bias. Denzin (1989) suggested that "interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher" (p. 12). Researchers must be aware of their subjectivity, personal identity, and biases to recognize how their humanness may benefit and limit their research. Additionally, the researcher must identify strategies to mitigate how their humanness may limit their research (Denzin, 1989).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined data analysis as "the process of making sense of the data. Moreover, making sense of the data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of meaning-making" (p. 178). Simultaneous data collection and analysis occurs and becomes "more intensive as the study progresses, and all the data are in" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 155). This is an iterative and ongoing process. Focus group interview transcription occurred within 72 hours of the interview. Field notes and expanded short-hand abbreviations taken during the

interview within 48 hours of the interview are maintained. These actions allowed the researcher to begin the "simultaneous data collection and analysis" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 155).

Credibility

Yin (2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) encouraged credibility or construct validity through the triangulation of multiple sources of data and member checking. Member checks lead to "revision and improved interpretation of the reporting," improving the study's credibility (Stake, 2013, p. 37). Furthermore, Yin asserted that maintaining a chain of evidence also improves construct validity. A study also has construct validity when the inferences relate to the conceptual framework (Amerson, 2011). Therefore, I developed credibility using data triangulation, maintaining a thorough chain of evidence, conducting member checking, and considering when inferences related to the theoretical framework. This alignment between the theory, research questions, data collection, analysis, and results can lead to plausible and trustworthy research.

Transferability

Transferability aims to help the reader understand how the study may relate or apply to another. One technique I used to ensure transferability was rich, thick descriptions (Denzin, 1989). A rich, thick description highlighted the in-depth nature of the phenomenon by telling the story of what was going on and what was most significantly meaningful in the case in question (Stake, 2013). This required "going beyond the level of surface appearances to illuminate the characteristics and particularities of the case in question" (Mills et al., 2010, p. 789). Thick description creates a tapestry of the spoken words, interactions, intricate details, and essence of the moments during the experience. By writing thick descriptions, I could examine this case's distinctive attributes, including the history, context, and setting (Mills et al., 2010). I

kept a detailed account of the study through field notes in my research journal to create an audit trail to help develop this thick description (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These field notes included concrete sensory details, direct quotations, indirect quotations, paraphrased talk, elaborate reflections on specific events or experiences, and a mental review of the whole focus group experience (Emerson et al., 2011).

Dependability

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) offered two techniques to ensure dependability: (a) explaining the researcher's position regarding the study and (b) maintaining the use of an audit trail. Yin (2013) suggested a thorough case study protocol that "make[s] as many steps operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone were looking over [the researcher's] shoulder (p. 38). This protocol maintains documentation and details so the study can be repeated or audited. My research notebook included audit trails and memos documenting the research and data analysis steps. A thorough case study protocol was also maintained.

Confirmability and Validity

Saldaña (2020) emphasized that confirmability is an essential criterion for evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research and argues that it is particularly relevant for a case study using a self-study methodology. According to Saldaña, using multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents, provides a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study, increasing the confirmability of the findings by allowing the researcher to cross-check and validate the data. I looked for evidence in the following materials provided by the program director: (a) program description; (b) conceptual framework; (c) design principles; (d) best practices, (e) programming overview and course sequencing; and (f) course descriptions, syllabi, and signature assignments. Through triangulation of interviews,

documents, and salient research, I increased the rigor and trustworthiness of this study. Additionally, I maintained an audit trail of the research process, which included modifications to the research design plan, coding notes, and decisions made during the analysis. Finally, I involved participants in member checking by allowing them to provide feedback on the findings. Participants validated or refuted my interpretations by sharing their feedback.

Reliability

Saldaña (2020) described reliability as an important criterion for evaluating the trustworthiness of a study. Reliability speaks to the consistency and stability of the findings over time, across researchers, or in different contexts. As such, I provided clear descriptions of the research setting, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures to enable others to replicate the study. By being consistent in my approach to collecting data and engaging in analysis, I provided explicit details allowing for study replication.

Reflexivity

Study rigor increased through transparency and reflexivity by "making visible both the knowledge discovered and how it was discovered" to control for potential biases and subjectivities of the researcher that may influence the study (Mills et al., 2010, p. 789). I used my reflective journal, which includes the understandings, misunderstandings, and lingering questions throughout the study, to document reflexivity. A commitment to awareness and sensitivity to race and other intersections of identity emerged through reflexivity and bracketing.

Data Collection

Data collection began in January 2022 and concluded in May 2022. In alignment with effective data collection in a case study context, multiple forms of data were collected

(Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2013). For this study, I collected conducted two semi-structured focus group interviews, analyzed the private reflection session voluntarily shared by participants, and reviewed a robust repository of archival data. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interviews are optimal for gathering information in qualitative studies because they provide comprehensive and accurate data. Semi-structured interviews allowed for more flexibility in question phrasing and posing follow-up or probing questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The primary objective of conducting semi-structured interviews was to address research questions (Table 2; Appendix D).

Interviews occurred in a group setting using Zoom in response to the COVID-19 restrictions and safety precautions. Utilizing a semi-structured interview protocol provided a means of addressing specific questions while allowing participants to guide the conversation in an open-ended manner. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to attend to emerging topics and perspectives using the concept of "progressive focusing," as proposed by Stake (2013). This concept suggests that researchers may modify the interview design if the questions could be more effective, or novel issues arise. Directly following each interview, I took notes in my reflective journal to capture initial thoughts, interpretations, and questions. Table 2 summarizes the research questions and relevant data sources.

The focus group interview allowed participants to discuss their reflections on the curriculum and share their experiences. Each interview was semi-structured, with open-ended questions to elicit rich and detailed participant responses. Two focus group interviews transpired, with each lasting approximately 2 hours. Zoom facilitated both focus group interviews. In between the focus group sessions, the participants engaged in private collaborative reflection sessions using the self-study toolkit to collect their thoughts and

document their reflections on their curriculum. Two private reflection sessions occurred over 15 weeks. The recordings of the private sessions were voluntarily provided to the researcher for analysis by the program director after each session.

Table 2

Research Questions and Corresponding Data Sources

Research question	Data sources
How do faculty in educational leadership programs self-assess and reflect on course content alignment with anti-racist leadership design?	Focus group interview with faculty self-study team Recorded reflective sessions and participants' notes ELP Program Description ELP Conceptual Framework ELP Design Principles ELP Best Practices Programming Overview and Course Sequence Course Descriptions, Syllabi & Signature Assignments
How do faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design?	Focus group interview with faculty self-study team Completed Self-Study Toolkit from Participants Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015) N.C. State Standards for School Executives (2006 and 2011–Revised 2013)

Zoom facilitated all interviews and private reflections in response to COVID-19 safety precautions. Zoom was a reliable and effective tool for conducting in-depth interviews because

it allowed me to gain real-time communication with the added benefit of observing nonverbal cues from all participants (Huang et al., 2021). Additionally, Zoom proved an effective communication method because it reduced logistical barriers making participation in the study accessible and feasible (Archibald et al., 2019).

Data Analysis

Scholars (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2013) argued that a document must possess "information or insights that are pertinent to the research questions and can be obtained in a practical yet systematic manner" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 153). With this in mind, I diligently gathered a comprehensive collection of pertinent and appropriate documents to enhance my comprehension of the topic and corroborate my findings. The program director shared the program description, conceptual framework, design principles, best practices, programming overview and course sequence, course descriptions, key assignments, and course syllabi. Collectively, this repository of documents totaled 375 pages. In addition to the repository of archival data, I analyzed the transcripts of the interviews, field notes, and my reflective journal. Once I gathered the documents and engaged in the document analysis, I refined the material to "produce something that is both practically manageable as well as analytically rich" (Rapley & Rees, 2018, p. 431). The document analysis was a valuable part of data triangulation (Bowen, 2021).

According to Stake (2013), data analysis is the process of "understand[ing] behavior, issues, and contexts concerning our particular case" (p. 78). I utilized a process that Miles and Huberman (1994) described as qualitative data reduction to make sense of the data. First, I organized the data collected from the interviews and documents. After each interview or reflection, I transcribed the interviews. As Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggested, I familiarized

myself with the data by reading the transcript multiple times while "circling, highlighting, bolding, underlining, or coloring rich or significant participant quotes or passages" (Saldaña, 2020, p. 899). Data analysis processes included reviewing archival data related to the curriculum, such as syllabi and course materials, to provide additional context and insight into the curriculum.

Transcribed data were initially open-coded using an inductive approach, involving reading the data to identify key concepts and themes and assigning initial codes to relevant text segments. Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggested that once data management is complete, the next step is to display the data in a way that promotes analysis. Initial codes were organized and managed using a spreadsheet program, allowing easy tracking and manipulation of the data. Using the spreadsheet, I analyzed the codes and identified commonalities and connections. Next, I used these connections to create larger categories and subcategories based on the relationships between the codes and the data. I used selective coding to identify the most salient themes and patterns discovered while analyzing the data. Finally, I created a codebook to document the categories and subcategories, including definitions and examples of each code.

After analyzing the coded data, I created charts and diagrams to help interpret the findings and consider broader implications for practice and policy. Throughout the data coding and categorization process, I was mindful of my biases and assumptions and took steps to minimize their influence on my interpretation of the data. I conducted member checking with participants to verify the accuracy of my coding and categorization. I sought feedback from peers in the field to enhance the credibility and transferability of my findings.

Summary

This qualitative case study explored how faculty in a master's level educational leadership program in a 4-year historically White public institution (HWPI) located in North Carolina self-examine and reflect on how their course content aligns with anti-racist leadership design. Additionally, this study sought to understand how faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program to reflect anti-racist leadership design. This chapter contained an outline of the research design and rationale, procedures for recruitment and participation, the data collection plan, and the data analysis process. The chapter concluded by discussing how I ensured my study was rigorous and trustworthy. In the Chapter 4, the results from this study arise by describing the themes and implications for faculty members, educational leaders, and policymakers.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

This qualitative case study explored how faculty in an educational leadership program (ELP) in North Carolina self-examined and reflected on how their course content aligned with anti-racism. This study explored how faculty engage in a curriculum audit anchored in ongoing, collaborative reflection using a self-study methodology. The study also sought to understand how faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design. This chapter contains the results of the study conducted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1) How do faculty in educational leadership programs self-assess and reflect on course content alignment with anti-racist leadership design?

RQ2) How do faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design?

This chapter includes vignettes from the participants' experiences to support and convey critical themes. Finally, the findings help understand how faculty members engage in collaborative reflection for programmatic improvement in anti-racist curriculum design. The findings could be helpful for other faculty teams interested in engaging in a reflective, continuous improvement process that promotes anti-racist curriculum development and programmatic design.

Setting

This university-based ELP is a 42-credit Master of School Administration (MSA) program, resulting in initial principal licensure. The program prepares leaders to serve as licensed administrative professionals in an elementary, middle, high school, or central office setting. Located in one of its region's largest public state universities, the historically White

institution has a significant economic impact on its community. According to the program overview, the ELP addresses the persistent problem of recruiting, preparing, placing, and retaining excellent principals for high-needs schools, particularly in rural North Carolina. The ELP is concerned about the need for more qualified educators to serve as effective school leaders; this is a common issue in education, as there is often a shortage of individuals with the necessary skills and experience to take on school leadership roles. Preparation adversely impacts the quality of education that students receive, as effective school leaders play a crucial role in shaping the culture and direction of a school, and the ELP focuses on developing and supporting anti-racist educators who have the potential to become effective school leaders to address this issue.

The ELP commits to a hands-on and practical approach to developing anti-racist leaders. Faculty demonstrate a solid commitment to their students' skills development by aligning course content with practical and authentic field components, infusing practitioner expertise, and transforming equity and social justice into content and instruction. All courses are aligned to state and national standards, have a field component involving a school-based project, and incorporate practitioner expertise and perspective. While instruction, content, and requisite skills around equity and social justice coherently integrate throughout the program, the faculty team endeavors to shift their course content to include anti-racism. The program is structured as a 2-year, grant-supported program and includes a series of courses that gradually increase in complexity and depth of learning. The program also includes a full-time, year-long administrative internship in a K–12 school within one of the program's partnership districts. During this internship, students take on authentic and substantive leadership roles, applying the knowledge and skills they have learned throughout the program to impact their internship

school positively. The ELP demonstrated accomplishment in preparing school leaders for these challenging environments and is committed to recruiting and selecting a diverse cohort of students committed to equity and social justice. Faculty provides intentional and sequenced leadership development experiences to prepare students to become innovative leaders.

Sample Profile

Program faculty have extensive preparation in the field as former or current school leaders and scholar-practitioners. Current faculty and all adjunct instructors for the ELP each held terminal degrees in educational leadership. Additionally, as disseminated through multiple publications and presentations, the faculty's individual and collective contributions to ongoing educational leadership research supported their commitment to high-quality and innovative school leadership preparation. Four faculty members who worked closely with curriculum development participated in the study. None of the participants were adjunct professors. Participant profiles provide a brief overview of each participant by their pseudonyms.

Eleanor

Eleanor was a White female who served as a full-time professor and as the director of the ELP. In this role, she secured funding for the program, lead the strategic visioning of the program, engaged district partners and stakeholders, evaluated program personnel, and taught courses within the program. She has served over 25 years as a teacher, principal, district leader, and faculty member. Her research interests include social justice, equity, and innovative leadership. Eleanor has extensive publications and has presented at local, state, national, and international professional conferences.

Leo

Leo was a White male serving clinical faculty and primary instructor. As a clinical supervisor, he also supported students when completing their fieldwork. He has served over 35 years as a teacher, administrator, assistant superintendent, and educational consultant at the state level. Leo also serves as an executive coach for school leaders seeking employment equity and equitable student outcomes.

Wilbur

Wilbur was a White male who served as the ELP curriculum coordinator. He organized experiential and enrichment activities, directed curricular work, co-designed program elements, and taught courses, serving over 50 years as an educator. Wilbur was particularly interested in preparing leaders who advocate for social justice and equity. Finally, he is a well-published author with significant scholarly contributions to educational leadership.

Adira

Adira was a Black female who served as the program coordinator. She was responsible for all day-to-day activities, such as recruitment, event coordination, purchasing, and record-keeping. She was a member of the ELP leadership team as a thought partner and co-designer of the program.

Results

This study focused on understanding faculty members' challenges and barriers when designing an anti-racist leadership curriculum and how they navigate those challenges and barriers. The main findings of the study were that faculty members faced complex challenges and barriers when designing an anti-racist leadership curriculum and that they also grappled with concerns related to committing to anti-racist work. These challenges and barriers were

multifaceted, nuanced, and complex, as indicated by the four overarching themes that emerged from the data: (a) exploring complex challenges and barriers, (b) answering the call while grappling with the concerns, (c) wrestling and working to resolve contradictions, and (d) leveraging the power of collaborative critical reflection as a tool for change. Research questions with corresponding themes facilitated results presentation. Specific examples illuminated the most commonly reported challenges and concerns that faculty members encountered when designing an anti-racist leadership curriculum to help to illustrate the complexities of engaging in anti-racist work.

The first research question sought how faculty self-assess and reflect on course content alignment with anti-racist leadership design. The inquiry revealed that faculty members encounter complex challenges and barriers when designing an anti-racist leadership curriculum. Additionally, the inquiry revealed how faculty simultaneously answer the call to engage in anti-racist work while grappling with concerns that arise when committing to anti-racist work. The second research question explored how faculty navigated the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflected anti-racist leadership design. These findings have important implications for how faculty wrestle and work to resolve contradictions and leverage the power of collaborative critical reflection as a tool for change.

Research Question 1: How Faculty Reflect on Anti-racist Leadership Design

It is important for faculty in educational leadership programs to self-assess. It reflects on aligning their course content with anti-racist leadership design to ensure their curriculum is inclusive and promotes anti-racism. However, faculty members may encounter complex challenges and barriers when engaging in anti-racist leadership development.

Theme 1: Exploring Complex Challenges and Barriers

Participants defined challenges as difficulties to circumvent or overcome when designing an anti-racist curriculum. When defining challenges, faculty felt they had the power to shift or impact the identified challenges. These challenges included defining anti-racist leadership, knowledge gaps and misinformation, pedagogical challenges, and confronting conformity and compliance. The distinction between a challenge and a barrier became a nuanced dimension because these terms had vastly different implications when engaging in anti-racist work. Participants conversely defined barriers as hindrances that thwart and derail the development of an anti-racist curriculum. Barriers led to anti-racist work halting. When defining barriers, faculty felt disempowered to shift or impact the identified barriers. The barriers included refusal of support, submission by silence, and the power of and fear of negative external review data (Table 3).

Table 3

Challenges Versus Barriers as Defined by Participants

Challenges	Barriers
Defining Anti-Racist Leadership	Refusal to Support
Knowledge Gaps and Misinformation	Silenced into Submission
Confronting Conformity and Compliance	The Power and Fear of Negative External Review Data
Pedagogical Challenges	???

Note. Participants defined challenges as difficulties to circumvent or overcome when designing an anti-racist curriculum. When defining challenges, faculty felt they had the power to shift or impact the identified challenges. Conversely, participants defined barriers as hindrances that

thwart and derail the development of an anti-racist curriculum leading to the work halting. When defining barriers, faculty felt disempowered to shift or impact the identified barriers.

Defining Anti-Racist Leadership. The faculty team identified a primary challenge in designing an anti-racist curriculum. The team grappled with how to define anti-racist leadership. When striving to delineate between terms like diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-racism, the team shared their frustration with the need for more clarity, consistency, and coherence on how these terms systematically translate into action in the field of education. Furthermore, the team expressed frustration with how these terms are systemically defined and utilized by professionals in K–12 education, higher education, and policy work. Eleanor shared, "I feel like equity, and social justice is words we use all the time. But when you go, and you try to pin them down what we mean by them, that gets a lot trickier."

Through their previous intensive programmatic redesign, the team defined equity as "allocating resources to meet student needs, honoring and leveraging assets, and providing culturally sustaining pedagogy." Additionally, they defined social justice as "advancing equity by upholding the rights of students, addressing power and oppression, and interrogating and disrupting -isms while including diverse voices." The faculty team embarked on a journey to utilize articles, books, and their team professional development sessions to define anti-racist leadership collectively. Eleanor shared the collective definition of anti-racism as:

> A leader's ability to explicitly identify, engage with and disrupt racism in the many ways it plays out in our schools. Anti-racist leaders must acknowledge that there are no neutral spaces and must actively disrupt racism and challenge others who are intentionally or unintentionally reproducing racism. Anti-racist leaders should address and advocate for other-isms by identifying ways to support all students. Anti-racist

leaders should also positively impact and inform teachers and communities about the impact of racism on student outcomes.

While the faculty team collectively committed to becoming an anti-racist leadership program, they admittedly agreed that their program tended to be more equity-oriented based on its programming and curriculum. Collaboratively defining anti-racist leadership was a galvanizing, foundational step within their reflective process. Collaboratively codifying anti-racist leadership distilled and re-oriented the program's vision and commitment to anti-racist leadership development. Throughout the experience, the team repeatedly returned to their definition as a navigation tool for their curricular design choices, discussions, and reflections. With their renewed vision, commitment, and goals for developing an anti-racist leadership curriculum at the forefront, the team readily acknowledged the challenges that they have faced. As they reflected on their current curriculum and began reimagining what their new anti-racist leadership curriculum could entail, the team also shared challenges they anticipated based on prior experiences.

Knowledge Gaps and Misinformation. Faculty reflected on their knowledge gap to unpack their notions of anti-racism personally and programmatically. When reflecting on their knowledge and experiences with anti-racism, faculty members had varying experiences. Wilbur shared that they were an "easy sell" on equity. They felt compelled to recognize and address "inequities, unfairness, and injustices" as they recognized that "discrimination occurred and that something should be done about it." However, when thinking about committing to anti-racist work, their knowledge and experience were limited by their "privileged position." While they understood sociologically that racism has impacted large groups of people, they felt "not as well versed" on how racism truly impacts individuals personally and emotionally. Wilbur asserted

that they did the "intellectual things like reading books and going to professional development" but realizes there is still much more to learn. Wilbur continued with:

> Anti-racism requires us to dig much more deeply into not only our institutional actions and the actions of the institutions we lead but also our personal actions. So being anti-racist and teaching anti-racism is, for me, still a matter of discovery, and I suspect it will be for a very long time.

Conversely, Leo shared their upbringing's lessons—colorblindness was the moral thing to do. They shared that "it was a journey to recognize the fallacy of color blindness." As a result, Leo recognized that students entered the instructional space with similar beliefs about colorblindness and suggested that faculty members develop leaders to move beyond colorblindness to "explicitly identify, engage with and disrupt racism in the many ways it plays out in schools and their school communities."

Adira added that anti-racism has often felt performative. "Anti-racist leadership has typically looked like throwing a couple of Black people on a brochure or webpage, placing a Black person in a leadership position." According to Adira, rarely has anti-racist work felt like a substantial commitment to change. Adira continued, "Anti-racism lately has looked like administrators releasing a half-hearted statement of commitment that does not translate to action." Collectively the team lamented, "while equity has remained the dominant discourse in leadership preparation, we must do more. We must be anti-racist."

The team asserted that striving to help their candidates understand anti-racism was important. However, faculty must be aware of their knowledge gaps, public misinformation, and ignorance. By working diligently to become more knowledgeable about anti-racist leadership, faculty members can lead by example and help to promote a culture of learning and growth

within their institution. It is also important for faculty members to be aware of public misinformation and ignorance about anti-racist leadership, as this can create challenges and barriers to effective curriculum development.

It is not uncommon for faculty members to encounter students with knowledge gaps or misunderstandings about issues related to race and racism. These situations can be challenging for instructors, who may need to learn how to respond effectively. The team reflected on the knowledge gaps of others in their learning community. When thinking about students' knowledge gaps, the team shared a story about when a student made a disparaging comment during a race-based conversation in class. The instructors were shocked that the student commented and did not know how to respond in the moment's spontaneity.

Additionally, this comment came at the end of a class session, so there was little time to resolve the issue. The instructor was at a loss for how to resolve this issue. As faculty reflected on this occurrence, Eleanor recognized that their students would be at a "different place on their anti-racist journey." As such, they noted how they might be better prepared to address students' learning gaps during class in the future. Additionally, they reflected on specific instructional strategies that could help enhance the learning experience for students with opportunities for continuous learning and reflection if a similar incident occurs.

It is also not uncommon for faculty members to encounter colleagues or other stakeholders who have limited knowledge or understanding about issues related to race and inequality, particularly in the context of anti-racist leadership—engaging those with limited knowledge challenges faculty members trying to promote this leadership within their institution or community. The team reflected on the limited knowledge of colleagues, district partners, school board members, and superintendents. When serving smaller, rural districts that tend to be

more conservative, the team has learned that many people have a limited understanding of anti-racism. Wilbur shared, “Most of our partnering districts do not know or understand this anti-racism or the critical race theory (CRT) misinformation campaign. All they know is that they should be against CRT.” They continued, “in a recent meeting, the critics knew very little about CRT and could only share what they knew from media propaganda.” This misinformation directly impacts the ELP.

Promoting anti-racist leadership in a political climate marked by division and divisiveness can be challenging for faculty members. In these situations, it may be necessary for faculty members to spend a significant amount of time preparing to defend their stance and educate others about the importance of this work. Adira said, “Some are misinformed, and some are willfully ignorant. The current political climate is leading to “division and divisiveness.” Therefore, when the teams prepare to share their thoughts on developing an anti-racist curriculum, they must spend significant time preparing to defend their stance while also committing to educate those who are “misinformed, undereducated, and willfully ignorant.”

Divisive beliefs and denial within a community or organization can make engaging in anti-racist work more challenging. These attitudes can make it difficult to have open and honest conversations about the racial issues impacting students, parents, and school communities and to develop strategies to address these issues. Adira shared, “We are a country divided. There are those who can see and acknowledge that there is a problem, and then there is the other half who refuse to acknowledge it and are practicing avoidance and denial.” Knowledge gaps and misinformation can create challenges in developing an anti-racist curriculum. However, the team reconciled that when dealing with these issues establishing strong relationships, creating a sense of shared purpose and commitment to anti-racism, and involving district partners in the

development of an anti-racist curriculum could be practical, proactive approaches to gain support and buy-in.

Confronting Conformity and Compliance. Faculty members face challenges when promoting anti-racist leadership and curriculum development in conservative, predominantly White school districts, mainly if there is resistance or opposition from school boards or other stakeholders. This resistance can create an environment that stifles innovation and anti-racist work, leading to conformity and stagnation within the leadership program and the district. Participants describe the challenge of balancing their professional obligations and ethical responsibilities with the need to address racism and promote social justice while recognizing this work's potential risks and negative political ramifications. It may be necessary for faculty members to be strategic and proactive in their efforts to promote change and to seek out allies and support from within and outside the organization.

When expounding on the potential for negative political ramifications, the group explained they felt there could be staunch resistance to training their graduates to be anti-racist leaders. This resistance could have widespread implications, including disavowing graduates by denying employment within the district and discontinuing their partnership. The incongruence between district culture and beliefs has negatively impacted their students. The self-study team shared, "students have communicated that they cannot talk about or be as candid about race-related issues within their district, which are vastly different to their experience in our program."

The group expressed consternation about some students' cognitive dissonance. Faculty members were aware of the potential for cognitive dissonance among their students. They strove to support and guide students as they navigated conflicting views, beliefs, and attitudes

about addressing race-related issues, practices, and policies. When balancing student learning and expectations of the program with the reality of dissimilar practices enforced in the districts they serve, Eleanor expressed concerns about how they train leaders who can withstand the pressure to conform; They shared:

> This is where we worry. Despite our best efforts, what kind of impact do their districts have on them once they get into leadership positions and no longer have our program as a safe space to reflect, learn, and grow? Who supports them when they return to the field to serve as an anti-racist leader?

The group continued to share their concerns:

> With the current political climate in our nation, it makes us concerned that it is going to be harder for our graduates to be equity-centered, socially just, or anti-racist leaders in the schools they are trained to lead and transform.

While their program course content includes projects and assignments that require their students to demonstrate this type of leadership, they questioned if their current offerings were enough. Leo shared a brief story about a conservative White male student who admittedly started the program with limited and conservative views on race. Through a year-long project, the faculty team witnessed this student move beyond their fears to advocate for the needs of Hispanic families resulting in significant changes. Leo candidly expressed:

> In the beginning, [they were] scared like hell of this, but [they] have done an admirable job of amplifying the voices and needs of the Hispanic families in [their] school. [They] have normalized having things translated, having translators at school events, and designing events to meet targeted needs to support Hispanic families.

This student's commitment resulted in them demonstrating distributive leadership, empowering others, and cultivating an inclusive culture. While these student success stories motivated the faculty team, they also recognized the volatility of engaging in anti-racist work. Their equity-centered and anti-racist impact is not as widespread as desired due to school board and parent resistance. Resistance could also result in the district seeking to discontinue its partnership. They continued:

> We know from experience that if we push the school board beyond their comfort zone too quickly, they will not take it. This will result in them not partnering with us anymore, which is counterproductive and problematic because the goal is to saturate the district with our graduates trained to uphold the beliefs, commitments, and practices of anti-racist leadership.

When working with innovative superintendents committed to anti-racist work, Eleanor reflected on how these leaders engaged in and navigated anti-racist work to avoid conflict with their school board members. They added, "The superintendent [in one of the partnering districts] is committed to doing this good and much-needed work just far enough under the radar." As leaders provoke constructive organizational change, the group questioned if the modest and less explicit approach to recognizing and disrupting racism apparent in beliefs, practices, and policies is appropriate.

In deep contemplation, Eleanor questioned if a leader is genuinely being anti-racist if they are choosing to disguise their anti-racist efforts. They continued:

> On the one hand, if that [strategy] works and it makes it possible for us [as faculty] to do the [anti-racist] work we want, then great! But part of me feels we must confront that problematic behavior more explicitly because isn't that the heart of anti-racism?

The group agreed and further admitted that they, too, needed to consider how they may be complicit in maintaining ideological hegemony by not explicitly naming their own anti-racist beliefs, commitments, and practices. Finally, the group shared,

> We need to co-design and co-create an anti-racist vision with our partnering districts. We must come together to explicitly develop an anti-racist approach that will disrupt the current systems and practices that maintain Whiteness both within their institution and their partnering districts. By doing so, revolutionary and substantive changes can occur for students and their school communities.

When challenging conformity within smaller, conservative school districts, faculty realized that forward momentum through collaboration was essential. However, this critical change management may require a more deliberate, strategic approach. As faculty make a case for an anti-racist leadership curriculum in educational leadership programs, the participants expressed the need for interest convergence for everyone involved. Seeking this level of change amongst significant resistance is necessary but requires leaders to consider the range of possible personal, professional, and political ramifications. When promoting anti-racist leadership and curriculum development, it is crucial to ensure that syllabi and learning standards are aligned and reflect anti-racism. However, faculty members may encounter challenges when updating or revising antiquated syllabi and learning standards, Whitewashing, and addressing race-related issues.

The North Carolina School Executive Standards provide guidelines for what students should know and be able to do as effective leaders. These standards should also inform the program's expectations and content development. Partnership districts use these standards to support, monitor, and evaluate their school administrators. Additionally, the districts utilize

these standards when developing professional development, coaching, and mentoring programs. In addition to using the required state executive standards, faculty also use the National Professional Standard for Educational Leaders (PSEL), designed to achieve more equitable outcomes to articulate their course content and learning goals further. Both standards are foundational as faculty define the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to prepare their students.

Participants noted that incorporating these leadership standards can help students understand and demonstrate how to cultivate and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture. Likewise, national standards help students understand broader social and political concerns about equity and inequality using educational resources, procedures, and opportunities. However, faculty asserted that the state standards are limited and negatively impact their ability to teach about equity and anti-racism. The absence of equity and anti-racism within the state standards can indicate that these topics may be unimportant to discuss or even off limits. The state standards do not include these topics; however, the national PSEL standards include an equity standard. Therefore, the faculty align their work and statement of commitment to the equity-centered PSEL standard. Their conceptual framework is equity-focused, and their program's required readings, syllabi, and course content intentionally embed concepts of equity.

Faculty members may experience challenges when striving to change course content when there are limitations or constraints, such as state standards or other regulations. These limitations may make it difficult for faculty members to be as innovative or flexible in their teaching and curriculum development as they may constrain their ability to address issues of race and inequality in the way that they believe is most effective. Participant concerns surfaced

concerning state standard limitations and their negative impact on their ability to change their course content. Wilbur shared:

> Our executive standards are so antiquated. From 2006? Standards need to be updated to be responsive to the current needs of school leaders. In 2006 if you had said anti-racism, nobody would have known what you were talking about. But it is 2022, and racism is undoing the progress made in school and our society. The standards need to be more fluid and responsive to the current needs of our school community to better inform our students' preparation.

They asked candidly, "What purpose do state standards really serve? Why aren't they updated? What additional challenges does this create for other faculty members at other universities?" These questions prompted the self-study team to continue interrogating their leadership standards to consider how they may impact their ability to teach about equity and anti-racism.

Their collective interrogation encouraged faculty to seek opportunities to teach beyond the traditional leadership standards to address topics related to race, racism, and anti-racism. More importantly, faculty shared the need to consciously transcend traditional professional standards to ensure their graduates can cultivate an inclusive, anti-racist learning environment for their school communities. Wilbur continued, "These standards are the conceptual floor, not the ceiling. We use the standards as a baseline, but we choose to go beyond these standards, but there is still more we can do." The team decided that their next step would be to be more explicit in introducing standards within each class setting to set an aligned and precise focus for instruction for their students. They hoped this could help students understand the alignment between the program's conceptual framework and state and national standards. By making this

alignment visible to students, they hoped they might also model how to advocate for anti-racism by demonstrating how they, as faculty, transcend policies and practices to address race-related issues. As the faculty reflected on *Indicator 2: Anti-racist and equity-centered learning goals*, they discussed how their learning goals framed their curriculum approach. Participants described Whitewashed learning goals as objectives that do not consider or address issues of race and racism. Whitewashing leads to non-inclusive curriculums and fails to adequately prepare students to be effective leaders in diverse and complex environments.

Faculty want intentionally to add anti-racist content that aligns with anti-racist learning goals and outcomes. However, not every course has embedded learning goals that reflect explicit equity and anti-racism. Participants wanted to redesign their learning goals to reflect explicit action-oriented strategies for institutional, systemic changes that address racism and other interlocking systems of oppression. Leo shared, "The transformational change project requires students to use school data to identify an inequity and then work with a solution team to address that inequity with specificity on supporting a particularly marginalized group." Eleanor interjected, "this project specifically requires they utilize data that illuminates an underserved or marginalized group. So, it is interesting to me that while we require them to do that in class, when I look at the learning goal is Whitewashed." They continued, "No language explicitly states race, ethnicity, privileges, institutional discrimination. That learning goal is Whitewashed, right? Fascinating. I do not know why it has not clicked in my head until we were doing this."

The team collectively agreed. "This is true," said Leo. As they reflected on how their learning goals framed their curriculum approach, they realized that, in many ways, they are embedding anti-racism into the curriculum. However, they still need to codify their learning

goals collectively and explicitly. They called this a "backward approach." Wilbur extended their thinking, saying:

> We're doing the work, but again, that is not framed by our learning goals." Eleanor continued, "theoretically, our learning goals should be used to create our assessments, and then those should drive our instruction, but we write our learning goals and then just go beyond them.

Eleanor added to Wilbur's comment about standards, espousing that "again, it is like what Wilbur was saying both the standards and the learning goals are the floor and are not the period at the end of the sentence." Through reflection, the team noticed a trend of not explicitly naming their anti-racist content and practices. They juxtaposed their explicit commitment to engaging in anti-racist work with the inconsistency of their implicit anti-racist practices. The troubling inconsistency raised their curiosity about the alignment between their anti-racist intentions, commitments, and actions.

While the team may have implemented anti-racist and equity-centered practices over the past 4 years, they had not yet revised the written syllabi and learning goals to reflect these practices. The conversation revealed that the official university course revision and approval process created challenges to making drastic revisions to the curriculum. A revision in the curriculum would require a layered and micropolitical approval process that takes a substantial amount of time. The approval process is not solely an administrative process. A successful approval outcome encompassing anti-racist pedagogy would require substantial support from varying bureaucratic levels. With the urgency to teach these topics to prepare leaders for the current educational context, the faculty resolved to adopt their backward approach of teaching anti-racist content. Faculty also committed to revising the curriculum through official university

processes and procedures within the next two years. However, the competing priorities and university policies negatively affected their ability to rapidly redesign their course content and learning goals.

Wilbur shared, “It feels like the accreditation and bureaucratic processes are intended to slow down the evolution of the curriculum and do just that.” They continued, “In a quality program, program faculty need to have the freedom necessary to do the things that we have learned are better practiced through this deep reflection and learning process.” With exasperation, Wilbur expressed, “there is a constant tension about that. The accreditation process has been just an unconscious means of program evaluation that does not lead to programmatic changes. It is comatose.” The group explained that their university did not have a timely and regular curriculum review process:

> You know, every 3 years, the syllabi of one-third of the courses are inspected. Universities teams may review them, but are faculty really compelled to revise the syllabi through this process? There are syllabi that have been around for 30 years or more.”

Eleanor found this fact to be “disturbing and problematic.” Wilbur consoled Eleanor by saying, “Well, it is disturbing. But it might well be that the instructor is issuing an outdated syllabus because [they are] required to, yet teaches what really needs to be taught, much as we do.”

Faculty considering changing course names, content, and learning goals can be challenging due to the tedious and time-consuming university curriculum review process. Curricular changes must occur through curriculum review at the department, at the college of education level, and at the university level. In addition to all three levels of review, the faculty

team must get the entire department's cooperation since other departments teach some of their courses. Eleanor shared, "because certain courses are not just taught in our program, we would have to get the whole department on board with that." Eleanor concluded, "This is a big hairy policy thing that negatively impacts our ability to rapidly and continuously improve." These findings are consistent with Mendels (2016), who found that faculty described university policies as stifling because they promote an apathetic lack of urgency for change and the accreditation process constrained revisions to course content.

The accreditation process promotes excellence in educator preparation by advancing equity through an evidenced-based process. Contrary to the stated mission of the accreditation process, participants felt like the accreditation standards should have promoted or supported their work on equity and anti-racism. Wilbur explained, "We do not feel like the accreditation standards are harmful, but they do not necessarily help promote anti-racism." Furthermore, the team agreed that the focus of the accreditation process might only sometimes align with the areas deemed essential for faculty. For example, Eleanor shared that their most recent accreditation cycle required the team to consider their use of technology outside the area of need for their program. Wilbur extended Eleanor's sentiment by stating, "accreditation and award applications have their place, rarely do those processes lead to faculty engaging in deep focused reflection on areas of need within their program." Additionally, these accountability processes typically encourage faculty teams to prove their work instead of improving it.

The group's consensus was that many evaluative and accreditation processes promoted compliance, not deep reflection that led to change. Eleanor echoed this sentiment by adding, "any impetus for self-reflective work has purely been generated internally with our team." These findings revealed the need for intentionally designed reflective processes for faculty that

moves beyond compliance, promoting opportunities for substantive programmatic improvement in areas like anti-racist curriculum content. The team acknowledged that many evaluative and accreditation processes have competing focus areas. They strongly felt that having a self-reflective process with a particular focus area would be more advantageous. This finding is consistent with Luft and Ward (2009), who argued for the strategic usage of single-issue approaches in specific contexts like anti-racism. Faculty shared that before participating in this study, they had not had opportunities to engage in a singularly focused self-reflective process on anti-racist leadership development. Leo shared, "this process allowed us to engage in scholarly dialogue about how we create learning experiences that promote the depth of learning necessary to develop anti-racist leaders." Eleanor added that a focused reflective process "helped shift the nature of the team's discourse that allowed us to go deeper in our reflection."

The team emphasized, "This level of reflection is not required of us through any other accountability or accreditation process." According to Leo, the power of a singularly focused reflection also "allowed faculty to deeply reflect on their standpoint and how it impacts their work." Participants recommended that accrediting bodies or professional organizations adopt an approach, like the *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty*, to promote faculty reflection and curricular improvements. According to Leo, "this process helped us hit the topic in depth, analyze [the curriculum] carefully, and face some truths that were needed to help us identify our areas of opportunity for anti-racist curricular improvements." Thus, the use of race and racism as the primary lens for analysis and self-reflection could serve to be helpful for faculty members as they embark on revising their curriculum to include anti-racist pedagogy.

Anti-racist Pedagogical Challenges. The faculty team reconciled that anti-racist pedagogy was not simply incorporating racial content into courses and curricula. Participants described anti-racist pedagogy as teaching practices and strategies that actively challenge and dismantle racism in the classroom and beyond; this is a challenging task, as it often requires faculty to confront their biases and address sensitive topics with their students. Participants became aware of their social position, which led to a deep analysis of their teaching, their students' learning development, and their capacity and propensity to create change utilizing their new knowledge. Faculty detailed specific pedagogical challenges that may arise when engaging in anti-racist leadership development. These pedagogical challenges included (a) faculty reflexivity, (b) appropriate sequencing and pacing instruction, (c) assessing the student developmental readiness, (d) disrupting White supremacy, (e) hegemonic practices, and (f) the cost of curriculum improvements.

Faculty may feel uncomfortable or uncertain about how to address issues of race and racism in their classrooms, which can make it challenging to implement anti-racist pedagogy effectively. Faculty must know their social positionality and work to balance power within the classroom; this can involve actively listening to and valuing the perspectives and experiences of all students rather than imposing a single perspective or dominant narrative. This finding is consistent with Kishimoto (2018), who argued that faculty must be aware and self-reflexive of their social position. By doing so, faculty can facilitate complex and emotional discussions while validating the students' various experiences to help them to deepen their understanding and analysis of race-related topics.

As a result of the faculty's examination of their current curriculum's scope and sequence, the team realized that topics like anti-racism require intentional decisions with many

considerations. This finding is important for developing appropriately sequenced and well-paced anti-racist scope and sequence. These results are consistent with Wagner (2005), who asserted that faculty must focus on the process of learning by first starting with where their students are and then strategically designing a path forward. When considering the topic of anti-racism, sequencing, and pacing of lessons are paramount and proved to be one of the most significant challenges for the faculty team.

The team described the challenges of scaffolding instruction that moves students towards being anti-racist as a tenuous tug of war. As faculty applied an anti-racist analysis to the course content, pedagogy, and activities, they shared recent instructional challenges they had faced. One instructional challenge they shared was a scenario-based writing assignment where students created a memo to address parental outcry about teaching CRT in their local school community. Additionally, students identified and prepared educational resources to clarify and counter the misinformation and weaponize political rhetoric. Faculty shared that while there were additional assignments, this assignment seemed to irritate and challenge their students the most. Students felt the assignment was "unrealistic and took much longer than the other [assignments]." The student's perspective and hesitancy to address the assignment laid bare the incongruence of the equity-based curriculum and the student's ability to demonstrate equity-based professional knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it demonstrated that students lacked the tangible skills and capacity to think critically and apply anti-racist thinking.

Within a national context, educational leaders are grappling with this relevant, realistic, and complex issue. Students' blind spots, hesitancy to complete the assignment, and lack of awareness accentuate the need for faculty to consider the students' developmental readiness when developing their scope and sequence. It is clear from the students' dissonance that courses

should raise students' consciousness of the daily and institutional realities of race-related issues. Faculty must ensure that content prepares students to address the persistent and systemic ways that race and racism impact schools and society. These findings support that a structured, developmental progression of learning with a focus on anti-racist leadership could be beneficial to the student's leadership development and preparation.

Similarly, a field trip to the International Civil Rights Center and Museum illuminated that many of their students were unaware and ignorant about American history and White supremacy. This experience created discomfort for many White students who felt the Civil Rights Center and Museum "only showed the worst parts of history," according to Eleanor. While the students debriefed with faculty after visiting the museum, Adira noted that a group of students of color expressed increased pride in their ancestors' perseverance and ability to withstand the racist vitriol of the Civil Rights era. To extend their classmate's thoughts, a White student shared that they were "proud to be White too." Their comment was the closing thought of the debrief, leaving many students speechless and in disbelief. Additionally, their comment made the students of color feel insulted as they perceived the student's comment to be tone-deaf, insensitive, and privileged.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, faculty members needed to end the class session and did not address the White student's comment. The faculty were shocked and at a loss for how to respond. The faculty concluded the field trip and later reflected together. Students of color immediately expressed discontent to Elanor (the lead instructor) with their perceived insensitivity to the White student's comment. The instructor grappled with the best ways to address the students' concerns while ensuring it was a learning opportunity for the White

student. Later, the lead instructor talked with the White student one-on-one to help them understand how their comment impacted other students.

Furthermore, the instructor attempted to express how similar behavior would not be appropriate as a principal. This practical application allowed this mistake to become a learning opportunity for the White student. After the conversation, they better understood how minoritized populations might perceive their comment, particularly the families they may serve in the future as an educational leader. This opportunity also helped develop the student's situational awareness, preparing them to be more intentional with their language choice. Having this one-on-one with a White faculty member proved beneficial because the faculty simultaneously modeled how to advocate anti-racism, allowing the student to see that anti-racism is a journey. Leo interjected:

> Part of the anti-racist leadership preparation comes through our modeling. And I think that it is important for students to see and hear not only in the interactions we have with them but also in how we teach what schools should and should not be doing. We must continue to model appropriate practices relative to diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism.

Eleanor, the lead instructor, reflected on this experience with the team during this study. They wished they could have handled the situation differently during the class session. In hindsight, Elanor would have liked to have addressed the comment immediately. In doing so, they would have modeled how to handle race-related conflict and discussions, a necessary skill for anti-racist leaders. While they felt like they had missed a prime opportunity to raise the collective class's consciousness, this moment catalyzed deeper learning and reflection, leading the team to brainstorm programmatic instructional strategies in case a comparable situation

arises. The team committed to extending the class time when needed, addressing situations as soon as they happen when possible, and creating pre-established norms with students that communicate an understanding that faculty will explicitly model anti-racist pedagogical strategies.

The team expressed that while courses scaffold by design to build upon previous content, the information, concepts, and vocabulary are loosely related to anti-racism. In addition, faculty felt more emphasis on meeting the students' development readiness with a balanced approach is needed. Eleanor explained, "I think part of the reason that I am hesitant, and I need to work through some of this myself, is I feel like there is this balance between pushing, introducing, and nudging our students." They continued:

> For many students, a lot of the stuff is new, and it feels uncomfortable. Most districts are not anchoring or prioritizing this [anti-racist] work in their day-to-day operations. They just are not there yet. So, we must be mindful as we push forward to make sure we are not going too fast or doing too much too soon. If so, we risk being rejected or dismissed.

Eleanor's sentiment extended the notion that considering the readiness of both the student and the district partners is essential in engaging others in anti-racist work. These findings support that there are opportunities for incorporating an anti-racist lens in program design to include the examination of historically and socially constructed concepts of race, racism, and oppression. There are also opportunities to design experiences that raise students' consciousness by engaging students in critical dialogue and self-reflection with real-world applications. Participants agreed that the program's course sequence must have a structured progression where anti-racist pedagogy exists. However, faculty still grappled with assessing students' background knowledge of race, racism, and anti-racism.

Students may not openly share their true beliefs and vulnerabilities in the classroom, particularly when they may not want to acquire a racist label. Therefore, faculty may not be addressing the actual developmental readiness of a student if the student masks their true beliefs about race and racism, mainly if they were raised, lived, or worked in a conservative community. As the team concluded their thoughts on the challenging learning experiences, faculty recognized the need to leverage self-reflection to consider developing a developmentally appropriate and well-sequenced learning path that prepares students to be anti-racist. Team members also realized they could address their pedagogical challenges by exploring appropriate anti-racist strategies.

When reflecting on the debrief after the field trip, the team pondered pedagogical strategies to leverage in the future. They always agreed to seek to humanize their students. They agreed that opportunities present for students to explain their thinking and be open to having their ideas questioned. Using unpacking comments seemed fruitful for the group when engaging in tense conversations. A faculty member who can lead a student by unpacking their thoughts, feelings, and comments could help others better understand and engage in productive dialogue. Leo asked, “do you think [they] would have gained allies in the room if [they] felt called out and became defensive?” Adira argued, “[their] allies would be there whether they said anything or not.” Eleanor concluded, “very true.” They asked,

> So, was this an injustice to the people of color in the session?” After a long pause, Eleanor recounted, “I was afraid to invite the student to expound on [their] comment because I did not want [them] to feel like I called [them] out and create counterproductive effects. There goes White fragility rearing its ugly head.

Wilbur highlighted that this type of situation pointed out a pedagogical challenge about how faculty raised and addressed White fragility and Whiteness issues for both students and faculty. Wilbur shared, "We all have stuff we carry around. Upon entry into the program, we need to inform the student that they will be asked to confront both personal and professional stuff." All participants agreed. Leo added, "leaders must know themselves before they can do any of this anti-racist work we are talking about." Wilbur added that faculty also need to be capable of handling the spontaneity and the accompanying discomfort of not knowing how these conversations may end.

These findings suggested that faculty should relinquish power and control, anticipate resistance, and prepare to hold space for confronting White supremacy and hegemonic practices that maintain the dominant cultural values and norms. Important implications emerged suggesting that faculty may benefit from anti-racist pedagogical strategies to (a) enable them to facilitate productive conversations about race-related issues and topics, (b) assess students' readiness, and (c) develop content that gradually builds the students' capacity to serve as anti-racist leaders. When faculty reflected on *Indicator 6: Continuous curricular improvement* in the *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty*, participants noted that anti-racist efforts require an investment in time, energy, and money. More explicitly, faculty felt anti-racist continuous improvement efforts cost them their time and energy. Faculty distinguished that anti-racist continuous improvement may also require the program or university to make a financial investment which may demand administrative approval.

As the team envisioned an ideal future-oriented design for their curriculum, Wilbur said, "Well, you would have to figure out what it will cost you." They continued, "Anti-racism is a

big word that encompasses other-isms that we need to work on with the human condition. We have to try to help students understand how all these social forces interact to impact and impede children in America." More importantly, they asserted, "a part of that becomes convincing adults [policymakers, university administrators, school boards, educational leaders] that anti-racism is worth the investment." Understanding, addressing, and resolving underlying assumptions that lead to disparate outcomes for minoritized populations can take considerable (a) time, (b) energy, and (b) money; each of these is discussed below.

Time. Inspired by their participation in this study, the faculty felt compelled to accelerate their progress toward a genuinely anti-racist curriculum. They committed to applying lessons learned through their self-reflective journey to revise and map out the readings, learning experiences, assignments, and projects. The team hoped to engage in the work during the summer but quickly asserted that more time would be needed to complete this time-intensive task. The team conceded, "This is something we have wanted to do. While we had hoped we could do it this summer, we are not sure it will happen. We will certainly try, though."

These results reflect those of Wang et al. (2018), who revealed that it takes time to achieve change. Wang noted that as principal preparation programs strive to effect change, faculty must exhibit patience and commitment to a process that may sometimes seem painfully slow. While time was a challenge for participants in this study, Wang et al. also suggested that time is the currency for strategic improvement. When faculty deliberately chooses to slow down to build a shared understanding of goals, processes, and roles in the early stages of revisioning, it makes the time a necessary investment in the continuous improvement process.

Energy. Faculty expressed that anti-racist work costs them emotional and physical energy. Wilbur shared, "It is damn hard, you know? It is just hard. It is hard to have those

conversations." They continued, "It is hard to have deep, soulful conversations, but then you have to fit them in with time constraints. The right time and context are needed, but it is really difficult in the organizations where we work." Addressing racism in education can be a challenging and emotionally taxing process. Faculty reflected on their emotional stamina while working towards anti-racism. Balancing the need for urgent action with the emotional stamina necessary to address racism thoughtfully and effectively in education can be challenging. Leo shared, "these students need this content now. They will be the leaders of tomorrow, quite literally!" The topic of race and racism evokes many emotions depending upon one's positionality, a consideration illuminated as Wilbur expressed, "Well, there is a wear and tear on one's soul." After many years of engaging in equity work, they continued, stating:

> Doing equity work and anti-racist work is just hard. Not many people will celebrate when you tell them you know you are treating kids differently based on their race. While you may get a standing ovation at a conference, you may get ousted by your local school district."

All participants nodded in agreement. Adira added, "it is hard to keep from feeling defeated. So, you must keep coming back, one day at a time, one step at a time. You do what you can." Leo echoed, "That is why combining the fact that this is the right thing to do with the reality that it has to be done is our driving force." Wilbur summarized the group's sentiments by sharing, "this work is the work we cannot do. We must balance the incremental progress that we make with the titanic push-back that we may get." They acknowledged, "Yes, it is hard. It takes a lot of courage. But we have to model this for our students to help them become aware of the emotional and physical energy it takes to be an anti-racist leader."

Money. Faculty identified budgetary shortfalls as a challenge to engaging in anti-racist curriculum redesign, meaning faculty felt they could still engage in anti-racist curriculum planning with limited funding. These results corroborated the ideas of Mendels (2016), who suggested that many principal preparation programs reported insufficient funding for programmatic change. However, while Mendels found the lack of funding and financial constraints was the number one barrier in redesign or improvement efforts, the results from this study did not support budget limitations as the preeminent challenge in engaging in anti-racist redesign work. According to participants, funding could help advance improvement efforts through supporting paid sabbaticals for faculty to work on revisioning curriculum or offering summer employment for 9-month faculty to update the curriculum. This study differentiated that funding is a challenge rather than a barrier because faculty felt they had the power to still make considerable revisions to advance anti-racist curriculum revisions despite not having a budget to do so. Implementing anti-racist pedagogy requires a strong commitment and a willingness to learn and adapt continuously. It can be a challenging process, but it is also an important one for developing an anti-racist curriculum to develop anti-racist.

Barriers to Designing an Anti-racist Curriculum. When discussing barriers, participants defined three barriers that derail the development of an anti-racist curriculum leading to the work halting. Faculty shared that they felt disempowered to engage in anti-racist work when districts refused support by withdrawing funding which left faculty feeling silenced into submission. Participants also shared that as a grant-funded program, the fear of harmful external evaluation data presented a significant barrier to designing and implementing an anti-racist curriculum.

Refusal to Support and Silenced Into Submission. Eleanor recalled when "the school board in one of their partnering districts said they would not fund anything with the word equity in it." To the faculty's dismay, the board returned a substantial amount of money to a foundation as a sign of their refusal to support equity work. The school board's actions powerfully conveyed that the district did not welcome equity work. As such, the faculty needed to cautiously consider how they would continue their partnership with the district.

As a result of the district's decree not to fund equity work, the faculty felt silenced into submission. Eleanor shared, "We went from making notable progress to being completely silenced by the school board." They continued, "I really struggle because I do not want to give into White fragility; however, we have seen that when the approach is too swift or considered too radical, we take three to four steps backward." They asked, "how do we respond to that?" After a brief pause, they emphatically stated, "It is a balancing act, a tension, a pull, and push that I still do not have resolved in my head. But my vision is that we will get there. We will figure out how to get there."

The Power and Fear of Negative External Review Data. Faculty shared their sensitivity to external review data. As a grant-funded principal preparation program, external review data directly impacted the program's sustainability model. The team shared an anecdotal experience from a colleague at a neighboring institution, Northern University. Northern University is explicitly committed to equity and social justice and served a conservative region within the state. The participants valued and celebrated their colleagues' work. Eleanor shared that "Northern University does great work in terms of equity and social justice leadership; however, their external review data provided perceptual data that they were doing too much with equity and social justice. Students within Northern's program complained that the equity-

oriented content was off-putting and uncomfortable. This negative review data reflected poorly on the program and impacted the program in negative ways. While Northern University maintained funding, the faculty felt pressured to reconsider their commitment to equity in response to the perceptual data. Participants noted that both universities serve conservative, predominantly White districts that are not progressive in areas like equity and anti-racism. As such, the participants worried that advancing their mission to develop anti-racist leaders might adversely impact their external review data.

Participants pondered the purpose of the external review data; they acknowledged the data's importance and considered the unintended consequences. The publicly available perceptual data provides a comparative analysis of all state grant-funded programs. According to participants, programs want to demonstrate their strengths but only want to be ranked high compared to neighboring universities. However, the faculty felt they would be willing to receive lower perceptual data if the outcome was the development of anti-racist leaders. The contradiction is that if the program repeatedly receives negative external review data, its mission to prepare anti-racist leaders would be in jeopardy as it may lose funding.

Faculty agreed that students need to be able to share their perceptual data. However, faculty wondered how to balance feedback with the need to train leaders on topics that may make them uncomfortable. Eleanor shared, "So now, we must be intentional about how we engage with and move this work forward because the pressure is real. If we want to stay in the game, they make you feel you have to play by their rules." Adira added with a coy smile, "Or, we just need to figure out what rules we can break without getting ejected from the game."

These findings demonstrated the complexity of faculty's challenges and barriers when developing anti-racist curricula and leaders. The findings also illuminated how faculty

conceptualized challenges and barriers in nuanced ways. Neither challenges nor barriers defined by participants deterred them from committing to developing anti-racist leaders. However, acknowledging how these challenges and barriers could impact their anti-racist work proved helpful in their efforts to develop a plan to navigate and transcend the identified challenges and barriers.

Theme 2: Answering the Call While Grappling With the Concerns

The team identified their motivation for infusing anti-racist leadership design into their curricular choices. Eleanor was motivated to engage in anti-racist work because they felt "explicitly focusing on anti-racist leadership is necessary because racism is baked into the fabric of our country." They felt, "we cannot pretend that it does not exist and has negative repercussions for communities of color." They continued, "therefore, we must prepare leaders to disrupt the status quo in the schools. This work speaks deeply to the core of who I am, and I feel it is part of my bigger purpose in life."

Similarly, Wilbur shared, "As an older White man who benefited from the system that has existed forever, I have always recognized where inequities, unfairness, and injustices were. I must use my social position to influence and change that." They added, "anti-racism requires us to dig much more deeply into our institutional actions and actions. This is why I do the work." Leo had a differing yet complementary perspective. Leo stated:

> So, for me, it was a journey to recognize the fallacies of racism while coming into harmony and justice with the anti-racist mindset. This [reflective] process has been a journey for me. However, I now have a better understanding of anti-racism, and I feel like that is part of the work we have to do with our students.

In contrast with Eleanor, Wilbur, and Leo's motivation, Adira felt their motivation was "less altruistic and more selfish." As a woman of color, they shared, "this topic impacts my community and me directly. So, I cannot afford to be held back by racist beliefs because those beliefs impact me every day whether I am fighting to be anti-racist or not." In the same way, Adira shared, "I refuse to be held back by the views of other people that I cannot control. I am going to do everything in my power to make sure that people of color have a shot." Collectively, the self-study team came to a consensus that there is no question about if anti-racist work should be done. Adira concluded, "It must be done. If we are going to become a truly united country, it must be done, and the time is now." This was a defining moment in the study for the participants as it unified their anti-racist commitments into one collective programmatic commitment to developing anti-racist leaders.

This finding highlights that faculty members may have varying motivating factors for engaging in anti-racist work. However, their collective motivation galvanized the team and affirmed their anti-racist commitment. As a result, the team shifted from deep reflection and learning to action. This finding aligns with Dantley (2005), who stated, "Self-critique is powerful in itself, but self-correction is a courageous step often initiated through a spiritual motivation that celebrates the human dynamics of individuality and community at the same time" (p. 665). The faculty's ability to take steps towards correcting and revising their curriculum was motivated by both their individual and communal commitment to anti-racism. While motivated to answer the anti-racist clarion call, the participants still needed to reconcile their motivation with the reality of their concerns and fears of engaging in anti-racist curriculum redesign.

Grappling with Concerns and Fears. When describing their concerns and fears, the faculty did not clearly distinguish between concern and fear. Moreover, the participants experienced and described concerns and fears as being interrelated. Faculty highlighted their individual and collective concerns and fears about infusing anti-racist leadership design into their curricular choices that conflicted with their commitment to anti-racism. Faculty feared academic and professional lynching, messing it up or misstepping as a White person, regression of progress in their efforts, and physical death when committing to anti-racist work.

Faculty named potential and significant penalties for engaging in anti-racist work. Participants described a tenure promotion process discouraging engagement in controversial, overly progressive, or micropolitical topics. When describing how White supremacy impacts tenure and promotion, Callahan et al. (2021) asserted that controversial topics such as anti-Black scholarship, language, and methods are often discouraged, assessed, and viewed more harshly. Differentially, the authors further purported that self-interested research that advances the researcher's identity and privilege and reflects the dominant culture is often celebrated and rewarded.

Thomas and Ashburn-Nardo (2020) corroborated the findings. The authors stated that when White male scholars take advantage of their unearned privilege by freely pursuing research on CEOs, their research codifies as leadership scholarship instead of scholarship that maintains the hegemony of Whiteness. Similarly, Lea and Sims (2008) averred that White men continue to hold power and privilege in dominant institutions in the U.S. through socially constructed and unequal economic, political, and educational structures and culture, like the tenure and promotion process. Hegemony also renders invisible the process by which consent from the people for the existing system emerges (Femia, 1987). For example, tenured faculty

must approve and accept candidates in the tenure and promotion process. The tenure and promotion process does not consider the tenured faculty's beliefs, privileges, identity, or biases that may impact their decision to approve or deny tenure to a faculty member. Indeed, hegemony works through the promotion and tenure process by lulling faculty into seeing the process as benign and neutral. Yet the process can harshly penalize problematic faculty members when they seek to disrupt or dismantle White supremacy within and through their curriculum content.

Faculty Publications is an Important Part of the Tenure Promotion Process. The finding from this study also illuminated how faculty may grapple with producing anti-racist publications related to their anti-racist continuous improvement work. King et al. (2018) investigated subtle biases in the scholarship process and found that subtle biases in the publication process have career- and, thus, life-changing implications. The participants described these career and life-changing implications as professional and academic lynching. Adira described professional and academic lynching as "the ramifications for instructors who chose to make diversity and inclusion work their hill to die on." However, when faculty make these topics their "hill to die on," they continued, they also must consider "whether they will get tenure, if they will be employable, or whether their work will tarnish their reputation at their institutions or other institutions." Additionally, they shared that faculty must be concerned with "whether they will have faculty support or whether they will have administrative support when their scholarship challenges students' opinions." Finally, they asked the group, "Will these factors impact their ability to be hired or stay employed?" They answered their question without pausing:

> I think that is my biggest fear because I am not doing all of this for anything. I do not want my fight for an equitable education system to wind up with me not having a space to participate in the conversation. While I am willing to risk it, I do not want to have the outcome result in me being unemployed with a tarnished reputation.

Relevant to promotion and tenure, Lorde (2007) reminded us:

> We have built into all of us old blueprints of expectation and response, old structures of oppression, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are a result of those structures. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. (p. 123, citing 1980 speech in King et al., 2018)

The promotion and tenure process results created significant fears and concerns for the participants, supporting Lorde's (2007, as cited in King et al., 2018) assertion. Therefore, this finding provides significant implications for future practices in the educational leadership field.

Faculty also shared their fear of messing up or misstepping as White faculty members. Eleanor, Wilbur, and Leo agreed that even with the best intentions, faculty might demonstrate actions or behaviors that negatively impact communities of color. As participants reflected on tense race-related teaching and learning scenarios, they candidly described those learning moments with remorse as "painful and discomforting." While these moments resulted in learning opportunities for students and faculty, faculty recognize the magnitude of anti-racist work and desire not to harm when engaging in this work. As such, Leo shared that the weight of "getting it right" created notable concerns and fears.

Faculty also shared the potential for the regression of progress as a concern and fear. When describing the fear of regression, the faculty described how they watched students change due to going through their program. They described a student's evolutionary leadership journey

because of their content. Leo recalled, "[their] world was White before coming into our program. Before engaging with our content, they did not think about issues related to equity and race." They continued, "now, [their] leadership lens has changed, and they have demonstrated the ability to analyze educational problems with an equity lens." Faculty shared how another student demonstrated their evolution through their writing and reflective journaling by conveying their progression of understanding disparate and disproportionate outcomes for minoritized populations. This student "was awakened to the experiences of varying populations, which compelled them to advocate for change in their internship site," said Eleanor. While the faculty celebrated the evolutionary leadership journey of many of their student's experiences, they are concerned with how their graduates will apply their new knowledge and skills within their conservative school communities. They fear their graduates will succumb to the pressure to acquiesce to the district's conservative and, at times, racist culture to maintain employment.

As a result, faculty fear the graduate's previous progression stalls, halts, or reverses as they encounter resistance within and from their conservative school communities. Leo shared that "despite their intentional preparation, graduates may find themselves compliant as they slip into a conformity that does not allow their anti-racist work to move forward." Eleanor continued, "districts are excited to get new graduates so they can mold them into the leaders they need them to be." Eleanor posed the rhetorical question, "what gets undone as a function of that molding, whether intentionally or unintentionally?" The question captured why the participants were concerned about the regression of progress in their students' ability to demonstrate anti-racist leadership. When districts create an environment that requires graduates to forego anti-racist practices, graduates are more likely to become compliant and conform to the hegemonic practices. This finding highlighted a notable skill for faculty to develop anti-

racist leaders effectively. Faculty should help students become aware of and actively challenge hegemonic practices to disrupt dominant ideology productively.

Finally, Adira shared a unique concern and fear related to their identity and social positioning. As a person of color, Adira shared that they had a palpable fear of physical harm and death because of their commitment to and engagement in anti-racist work. Juxtaposing their present reality rooted in the vitriol against people of color with their recollection of individuals who lost their lives in their struggle for freedom in the Civil Rights Movement, Adira highlighted, "violence and death are a real concern for people of color engaging in anti-racist work." They continued, "recently, we have watched people of color peacefully protest; however, these demonstrations have been met with non-acceptance, judgment, injuries, and death." Adira recalled that both bystanders and protestors were injured or killed by counter-protesters, police, and organized extremist groups. They stated, "even now, with all our rights, we [people of color] are still in danger when exercising our right to protest for issues related to race and racism peacefully."

An article by Forbes magazine titled *14 Days Of Protests, 19 Dead* supports Adira's assertion. The article summarized the death toll from 2 weeks of demonstrations over the death of George Floyd in 2020. Out of 19 people killed during this peaceful demonstration, 14 were Black. The Southern Poverty Law Center's chronological review of Civil Rights Martyrs further supports Adira's insight into the danger of injury and death. Their review included 38 activists targeted for death because of their civil rights work to halt the movement. Adira's perspective illustrated a unique concern and fear for people of color engaging in anti-racist work.

These findings provided context for the specific concerns and fear the participants faced when committing to anti-racist work. While the faculty self-study team shared concerns and

fears about academic and professional lynching, messing it up or misstepping as a White person, regression of progress in their efforts, and physical death, they continued to galvanize around their conviction and mission to develop anti-racist leaders. Adira notably stated, "our fears and concerns may grip us, but our conviction and mission give us the will to fight another day because this [anti-racist] work matters." All participants agreed. Furthermore, faculty should acknowledge and address their concerns and fears as an important and necessary part of engaging deeply in anti-racist curriculum development.

Together these results highlighted the importance of acknowledging and addressing the fears and concerns that educators may have when committing to anti-racist work. Fear of professional or academic consequences, fear of making mistakes, and fear of physical harm can be intimidating and may make it difficult for faculty to engage in the anti-racist work fully. However, as the faculty self-study team found, it is crucial to recognize that these fears and concerns are a normal and necessary part of the process. By acknowledging and addressing these fears, educators can build the resilience and commitment needed to continue the work. It is also essential to recognize that while this work can be challenging, it is also vitally important. By developing an anti-racist curriculum, faculty can make a positive impact within their learning communities to help develop anti-racist leaders.

Research Question 2: Navigating the Challenges and Barriers

When considering how faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design, two broad themes emerged from the analysis: (a) wrestling and working to resolve contradictions and (b) leveraging the power of collaborative critical reflection as a tool for change. *Wrestling and working to resolve contradictions* involves acknowledging and addressing the inherent tensions and contradictions

that can arise when working to develop anti-racist educational leaders. Such processes involve acknowledging and challenging one's biases and privileges and working to interrupt systems of oppression within the classroom and beyond. *Leveraging the power of collaborative critical reflection as a tool for change* involves engaging in regular, structured opportunities for group reflection and dialogue around issues of race and anti-racism. These processes involve holding regular professional development sessions, creating space for open and honest dialogue about complex topics, and seeking out and valuing diverse perspectives and voices. Faculty members can work towards creating anti-racist course content, learning goals, and an inclusive course design with strategic sequencing. Finally, faculty highlight that when leveraging collaborative reflection, it is important to remember that anti-racist work is ongoing and requires continuous learning, self-reflection, and action.

Theme 3: Wrestling and Working to Resolve Contradictions

Higher education's accountability, accreditation, and evaluation systems frequently operate within a binary system. Often, these systems motivate faculty to prove their performance instead of creating an impetus for faculty to improve their work authentically. As participants attempted to reflect deeply, they were gripped by the instinctive impulse to justify their performance and curriculum by checking boxes within the toolkit. Participants described wrestling to resolve contradictions as both an internal and external struggle. They described systems and structures within their institution that does not support substantial change, so wrestling with how to make change within an institution that needs the change but may resist the needed improvements can prove to be a contradictory conundrum for faculty.

Wrestling to Resolve Contradictions. As participants reflected on *Indicator 4: Course content* in the *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and*

compassionate faculty guide, they spent significant time striving to come to a consensus on when they could check a box. The checking of a box indicated that the faculty felt they successfully demonstrated the listed criteria. When considering how their content reflects anti-racist design, faculty felt consumed and pressured to be discrete in measuring their performance. Leo shared, "anti-racist learning goals are reflected in a course or some courses but not all of our courses." They continued by raising the question, "is that a half-checkmark?" Eleanor continued, "this [indicator] asks us to do our learning goals specify how instruction will lead to the development of critical analytical skills needed to deconstruct how racism may be invisible yet prevalent in educational systems." They paused and stated, "No, we have not done that yet. Okay, so that is another thing we need to work on. Okay, so that is a no, no checkmark."

Faculty resisted the urge to maintain a binary way of thinking about their anti-racist work. Initially, the team encountered frustration when wondering if they could check the boxes within the toolkit. Participants felt compelled to assess this complex work in discrete and easily measured ways. When describing how the team wrestled with moving from a compliance mindset, Eleanor shared, "there were times when we wrestled with how to best use the tool. We tended to look at the criteria as performance levels." They elaborated:

> We really analyzed the criteria to try to distinguish how to get the best rating or prove ourselves. I admit sometimes I get into the minutiae. On the one hand, I would love to know how the criteria are structured. Are they weighted? Progressively built on each other? But on the other hand, does it even matter? The real question is, are we engaging authentically? Are we self-assessing to identify where we have strengths and still have more work to do? This type of work revealed to me that we still have more work to do, and there will always be more work to do.

After Eleanor posed these questions, the group relinquished the desire to check boxes. Instead, it shifted their focus to what they were learning about their program and themselves throughout the reflective process. The group agreed that one of the most important outcomes of this process was that it helped them define where they were and gave them direction about the following stages and elements of the work they needed to do. When describing the group's propensity to check boxes, Adira echoed Leo and Eleanor, saying, "when you are part of a program, you have great pride, so it can be difficult to pick it apart and admit that there may be some oversights and shortcomings." They explained:

> Perhaps that is why we gave ourselves half a point because our standard of excellence is that we want five stars across the board. But you can't really do that if you are being honest. We must admit when we do not deserve a point because we are not doing something. Instead of seeing it as a shortcoming, it highlights what we can become.

Jokingly, Eleanor interjected, "Yeah, a thousand half-checks later, we figured that out. A big revelation for us." Wilbur extended the conversation by saying, "while you framed this as a self-assessment for us, it was hard for us to get out of accreditation or standards mindset at first." The participants' explanation of their initial challenges to move beyond a compliance mindset illuminates the contradiction between this study's reflective process and other compliance-based protocols. Wilbur stated, "to start with, I cannot imagine an accreditor asking some of the questions this tool posed for us to consider." Eleanor emphatically asked, "but shouldn't they be focused on this kind of stuff?" Wilbur continued, "yeah, but that is a part of the balancing act. Accreditation is trying to make the institution look as good as it can and can become an exercise in compliance." Eleanor interposed, "but I do not know that I can tell you that I learned anything from those processes either."

Eleanor then posed the question:

> If we are saying that most of our systems and protocols are compliance-based and not about this much-needed, deep reflection we just experienced, where does the impetus for that type of deep reflection come from? Especially if it is not internal?

Wilbur suggested, “It could come from professional associations.” Eleanor synthesized the group consensus, “We tried to really engage authentically in this self-assessment. We do think that these kinds of self-assessments are incredibly important, and they are also very time-consuming.” Eleanor continued to share, “There is no external nudge to do this work. It’s all internal.” Wilbur echoed, “You would think an accreditor or a professional organization would promote this type of work. Yet, none of them require it.” Eleanor alluded that while they were internally motivated to do an anti-racist leadership development, “sometimes having that external push and accountability is helpful.” They appealed to the group saying, “I’m just saying, if we had not been asked to participate in this study, would we have had the tools to do this? This has been incredibly valuable.” Wilbur responded:

> We toiled over some of these questions, disagreed, and had to make up half a checkmark. With accreditation, our conversations, did we do this? Check! Well, we do not do this, but how can we demonstrate we are compliant? Check! The instrument [*Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty*] asked us to do a different kind of thinking which was much more interesting and beneficial for the student we serve and the students in the K–12 classroom. But some of the items would defy our current compliance systems.

Wilbur advocated that collaboratively reflecting helped the team and that they “found [themselves] thinking deeply together.” They continued, “by unwrapping specific student

activities and thinking more expansively about how we as faculty are doing at creating those experiences and delivering that instruction has helped us unearth areas of celebration and improvement for our program." This recurrent theme illuminates how faculty may wrestle with moving from a compliance mindset to a continuous improvement and growth mindset when there is little to no external motivation for engaging in anti-racist work.

Working to Resolve Contradictions. Faculty worked to resolve contradictions by considering how they could improve promising practices that have yielded past programmatic success. They identified promising practices: (a) engaging in collaborative, (b) organic curriculum review, (c) meeting with district personnel, (d) hosting book clubs, and (e) learning with others as critical friends. Faculty engage in periodic, collaborative, and organic curriculum reviews. However, curriculum reviews have only sometimes focused on a singular topic like anti-racism. Additionally, the faculty's recommendations still needed improvement because the university curriculum revisioning process needed to allow for swift, substantive curriculum changes.

As a result, participants felt they could survey a problem but needed more autonomy to solve it. Adira shared, "the system isn't designed to be anti-racist, so how do we complete processes and procedures that are required of us while working to be truly anti-racist?" Eleanor described a past collaborative curriculum review process with faculty, district personnel, and executive coaches that analyzed student feedback and aligned leadership standards and class objectives. First, the faculty tried to identify if they addressed all their conceptual framework's leadership standards and elements. Their previous curriculum review was "more broadly defined and not specific to equity, social justice, and anti-racism," according to Eleanor. Eleanor

shared, “While I am proud of our curriculum review, it felt too quick. We scratched the surface, and it did not feel like we focused deeply enough on those topics.”

Faculty members actively worked to identify gaps in knowledge or skills among the students and provided in-time training to address these gaps. Training is crucial to ensuring that students have the support and resources they need to succeed in the program. While participants valued the use of data to inform what is going well, what needs to change, and how they can do things better, they noted that assessments tend to measure the broadly defined curriculum. Suppose faculty members need to collect data on students’ race-related learning needs. In that case, they may need to understand the unique challenges and needs that different students may face. As such, their broad data limits their ability to “prepare the next generation of excellent anti-racist leaders who advance equity and social justice as leaders in high-need schools,” according to Eleanor:

> This is a concern, as educational programs must prepare students to be effective leaders who can address issues of race and anti-racism in their work. Faculty members are interested in developing learning assessments that measure students’ ability to understand, address, and disrupt racism—educational programs need to prepare students to recognize and challenge systems of oppression in their work.

Participants worked to navigate their challenges by meeting with district personnel monthly. Faculty use this collaborative structure to co-design and improve programmatic elements. However, faculty shared, “rarely do they discuss topics related to equity, social justice, or anti-racism.” The faculty and district personnel have redesigned signature projects with an equity and social justice focus. The signature projects develop leaders who can identify “bridges to student success” that may not be strong enough for marginalized students. They

encourage these leaders to take steps then to address these gaps during their residency experience—this is important for educational leadership programs to ensure that all their graduates have the capacity and skillset to "build stronger bridges by learning how to listen to and respond to the needs of marginalized, underrepresented, or underserved families," according to Eleanor. The collaborative meeting protocol has helped the program make these types of changes. However, the collaborative meeting protocol could benefit from having an explicit anti-racist focus.

Faculty members have implemented a monthly reading club to engage in collective learning around equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism issues, a valuable strategy to provide an opportunity for faculty members to remain current on current best practices and professional development. Faculty read new research articles, educational policies, literature reviews, and books. Faculty engaging in ongoing learning and professional development can significantly impact curriculum design and program revisions. By staying informed about current research and best practices, faculty members can ensure that their curriculum aligns with current research and is responsive to their student's needs and interests. Participants shared how these protocols impact their curriculum design and program revisions. Adira shared:

> All the strategies work together to push us in the right direction. Both faculty and students know what is going on. All our shareholders and partners have a say or some input in the program, and we try to make changes from there.

Participants felt these strategies might assist in developing anti-racist leadership curricula. While faculty felt that few protocols leveraged an anti-racist curriculum design, they realized they would need to adopt or develop new practices. Eleanor stated, "You sparked something in my head. We need to co-create an equity and anti-racist statement with our district

partners that push the boundaries of what any of them or any of us may be comfortable with". They continued, "While Texas State University has a basic diversity and inclusion statement for the university, their School of Education created an anti-racist statement that included commitments to lifting up Black voices and centering the experiences of Black people." Wilbur echoed this view, stating that "What Eleanor just said exemplifies how universities should be working with schools to make the kinds of changes that are foundational to everything that we have talked about theoretically." The participants agreed that establishing a unifying anti-racist statement could be the foundational element of their anti-racist work.

Faculty desire to create a curriculum crosswalk that links every syllabus, learning goal, and assessment to both the state and national standards. Eleanor emphasized, "specifically, the national standards because they explicitly address equity and go beyond what our state standards require." They continued, "we can be more explicit and consistent when connecting those standards into each class as Leo does. I need to be more explicit about the standard's direct connection to the content." Leo agreed, "right, we have to be more explicit."

Participants pose that they desired to co-develop explicit and aligned anti-racist learning goals with their stakeholders. Using these learning goals as anchors, faculty would like to co-develop an anti-racist curriculum that coherently integrates issues of race across the scope and sequence. Eleanor expressed, "I have long wanted to develop a scope and sequence for the entire program that is specific to elements of equity, social justice, and anti-racism." They continued, "We would map it out, identify the terms, and key concepts, identify when our topics are being introduced, and how they are built upon." Wilbur added, "when looking at our curriculum map, our scope and sequence are clear. But we need to be more explicit about topics

related to race, racism, and anti-racism. We tend to teach it explicitly to our students but do not explicitly state these topics in our course objectives."

Participants shared that they sought to hire a diverse pool of faculty members. They took a proactive approach to onboard newly hired adjunct professors, allowing them to have a voice and contribute to the course curriculum. Allowing adjunct instructors to suggest new literature for the course can help to increase their autonomy and ownership of the course, which can be an important factor in their overall satisfaction and engagement. Seeking to hire a diverse pool of adjunct faculty members is also an essential step in promoting inclusivity within their program. Diverse perspectives and experiences can enrich students' learning experiences and help create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. It is important to remember that anti-racism is about more than just representation; it is important to actively work to create a culture of respect and inclusion for all faculty members.

Collaborative Critical Reflection as a Tool for Change. A common view amongst participants was that collaborative critical reflection was a valuable tool for change. Wilbur shared:

> In the day-to-day grind, we get into the weeds and may not feel like we have the time to look up. It is always good to step away and think about what you are doing conceptionally, what you are doing around your visions, and how that feels.

Wilbur felt the self-study posed illuminating questions and required the team to think deeply. They continued, "We need to be much more thoughtful about what we do, why we do it, and then that leads to us considering how we do it. This has been a good opportunity to take a step back." Eleanor extended Wilbur's sentiment; they stated:

> I think sometimes we are so busy trying to do the work that we do not, to Wilbur's point, stop, stand back, and talk about work. So, this experience produced profound conversations that gave us the opportunity to engage and think deeply together.

Eleanor described collaborative critical reflection as a process that provoked deep thinking and change. The team considered how they could improve current promising practices and began identifying what new practices they needed to adopt. Additionally, the team agreed on practices they needed to eliminate, such as pedagogical strategies that maintain White supremacy in their learning spaces. Adira recalled, "After we reflected on the tense learning moment, we realized that we needed to establish norms and clear expectations about calling in and calling up." They continued, "we realized either we are maintaining Whiteness or disrupting it. The choice is ours. When we choose not to address these issues, we also become the keepers of Whiteness."

The team recognized the importance of allowing time for conversations around issues of race and anti-racism and committed to using facilitation tools to manage any tension that may arise, an approach allowing faculty members to facilitate open and honest discussions about these critical issues. By using facilitation tools such as setting norms and ground rules for constructive and inclusive communication and setting aside dedicated time to ensure the inclusion of all voices, faculty can create a learning environment that fosters the development of anti-racist leaders.

Faculty members also recognized the importance of advocating for anti-racism and educating others about racial justice issues. Advocating helps create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students and advances the cause of racial justice more broadly. A key takeaway for the team was advocating for anti-racism and educating others

within their sphere of influence. Advocating for anti-racism and educating others about racial justice issues can be critical in the programmatic improvement and curriculum development. Faculty must use their unique skills, experiences, and positions of influence to promote anti-racism, involving (a) speaking out against injustice, (b) supporting and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, and (c) working to create more inclusive and anti-racist policies and practices within their organizations and partnering districts.

While participants engaged in a reflective process around curriculum development, their reflection led to ideas for changes to other programming elements. This reflective process allowed faculty members to take a holistic view of their program and consider how different elements may be interconnected and how changes in one area may impact others. This type of reflective tool allowed faculty to consider the broader implications of their work. Eleanor expressed that while the reflective process was on curriculum development, they produced ideas to change other programming elements. For example, they shared that the team feels a greater desire to educate and collaborate with district partners and critical friends who serve as faculty at other universities; Eleanor commented:

> As a service to the field, we need to help our district partners as they seek to understand CRT. Since CRT is a concept in higher education, we could identify and share high-quality resources to address the myths and misinformation.

Leo added that after Eleanor's contribution, "and after experiencing the power of deep thinking and reflection, I think we need to set aside time to do this type of reflective work with our partner districts and advisory board." They continued, "we need time to think, learn, create, and do together. But it starts with the conversations." Leo expressed that gaining a collective understanding and common language could be beneficial as they seek to sustain their anti-racist

work. Leo explained that "collaboration, co-creating, critical reflection is essential." They added, "it is unrealistic for faculty to create a statement and then expect district partners to uphold a statement that they did not have a say in." The team celebrated a past unifying experience when they co-created their mission and vision statement with district partners. They hope to extend the practice of leveraging productive conversations to promote co-creation and collaboration toward anti-racist programmatic improvements.

Faculty revealed the need for connected and coherent courses focusing on race, racism, and anti-racism across the curriculum, which is essential for educational programs to address these issues intentionally and comprehensively. Adira expressed that the self-study process brought to light a primary course centered on race, racism, and anti-racism within the curriculum. However, this course spans two semesters during the student's full-time residency in a K–12 school. They celebrated the intentional design of the course. The team dissected the course by looking at the assigned readings, learning goals, and performance assessments throughout this process. Wilbur emphasized, "the internship is theory to practice, so our students are putting the curriculum into action." Leo asserted, "You know we get pushback from the mentor principals when we ask students to conduct equity audits. They ask us how this equity audit assists them in their work?" Leo shared that some mentor principals may not have the skillset or capacity to develop equity-centered, anti-racist leaders. They shared that mentor principals often tout that they need to spend more time discussing how their schools can reach more kids and make more students proficient. They added, "sometimes the mentor principals do not even make the connection between race, racism, equity, and disparate student outcomes." They continued:

> I think we have district partners who don't think very deeply about this sort of thing and maintain the status quo. They serve the majority, and the others just kind of have to fit into the system. While we will never see it written in the policy, we can see it in practice by the way they operate. We can look at who is being served, who is not being served, and who is being minoritized and marginalized. There is not a great deal of conversation around that, but there is always this question whenever results come out about why we do not have better scores. Sometimes we espouse one thing, but we practice something entirely different, and we don't even recognize that we do that. I say that we collectively because that might be the institution, it might be the schools, it might be the very folks whom we work with.

Wilbur agreed and stated, "We find that sometimes the mentor principal is really learning things with and from our interns. This makes our curriculum even more important. In some cases, our students become the teacher." It is not uncommon for individuals to learn from one another when engaging in anti-racist work, especially when mentors and interns work together, as they may have varying knowledge and experience levels. This finding highlighted the benefit of having a structured curriculum to create a shared foundation of knowledge and understanding, guide learning, and provide a framework for discussing and learning about complex and sensitive topics like race and racism. The participants shared that learning is a two-way process and everyone has something to contribute. They believe they are responsible for developing a structured curriculum and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment where all voices are valued and respected. The team hopes to work with others to effectively promote anti-racism and create positive change by fostering a culture of mutual learning and respect.

Participants shared that the self-assessment process was a helpful and meaningful experience. Leo described the self-assessment protocol as "a powerful tool for personal and professional growth because it allows individuals to reflect on their beliefs, behaviors, and actions and consider how they align with their [program's] values and goals." By engaging in this process, participants gained a deeper understanding of themselves and their biases and identified areas where they may need to make changes or improvements. They feel that they can better understand their motivation and goals by connecting with themselves and their values. As a result, they can make more informed decisions about their actions, behaviors, and programmatic improvements. Leo added, "I don't know that other assessments, accreditation rubrics, and professional evaluation tools have caused me to think quite as deeply about myself as this process did." They continued, "that is a good thing because I have got to know myself before I can lead others. This has been different from other processes we have engaged in or that I have ever engaged in during my career."

Wilbur believes the *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty* can be useful in helping faculty examine and assess important issues in the curriculum beyond just the traditional metrics often used in accreditation processes. They suggests that professional associations could use this tool to encourage universities to consider a broader range of factors when evaluating their programs. Wilbur shared:

> This tool is more focused, and it would be a good vehicle for professional associations to say here, universities, this is a way that you can look at what you're teaching using an anti-racist lens. That would be a really nice contribution to the field.

By using a structured tool focused on specific areas of concern, anti-racism, programs can more effectively evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas for growth. By engaging in

regular self-assessment and reflection, educational programs can continue to grow and improve and can better meet the needs of their students and the field.

Eleanor shared that the lessons they learned through this self-study process were transferable when resolving an issue at their child's school. Eleanor described that the parent community at their child's school revolted when the staff decided they wanted to address a racial incident by watching a video discussing racism. The staff wanted to watch a video and host a discussion with the students. However, to Eleanor's dismay, the outraged parents derailed the staff's plan because they did not want their kids to learn about racism.

Eleanor felt compelled to meet with the school leaders to provide support as a faculty member in educational leadership. They shared that they had a productive and meaningful conversation with the administrators about issues of racial justice and the importance of being an ally. The conversation was challenging for some community members, and White fragility was present. Eleanor described the White fragility as the emotional discomfort and defensiveness the White parents displayed when challenged concerning their ideas or assumptions about race. They expressed frustration because this experience reinforced the challenges that educational leaders faced when trying to address issues of race and racism. They wanted to learn from the administrators' experience to consider how they, as faculty, can develop leaders who can engage the community in meaningful dialogue and progress on racial justice issues.

Eleanor explained that it is essential to remember that engaging in discussions about race and racism can be difficult and uncomfortable. It is also important to approach these conversations with openness, curiosity, and a willingness to listen and learn. They shared:

> I did not go in as another [angry] parent. I went in to ask how I could be an ally and how I could help move this work forward. While it ended up being a productive conversation, we were both shocked that there is White fragility in that parent community than I think any of us wanted to admit. I was shocked.

By being proactive and seeking out opportunities for dialogue and learning, faculty can work towards becoming better allies. The team found the self-assessment process to be valuable and thorough, even though it can be time-consuming and may only sometimes be externally required or incentivized. Participants shared the importance of approaching self-assessment with honesty and a willingness to examine all aspects of programming to identify areas for improvement and growth. While external accountability and incentives can help encourage self-assessment, it is up to individuals and organizations to take the initiative to engage in this work. Faculty must be willing to engage in deep and sometimes difficult conversations and to be open to different viewpoints and perspectives.

By approaching self-assessment with a commitment to continuous learning and improvement, faculty and organizations can work towards creating more effective and impactful programs. Remembering self-assessment is an ongoing process and setting aside sufficient time and resources to engage in this work effectively is important. Leo shared:

> I think the most challenging thing is the time it takes to engage in these deep conversations. We had several sessions together, and we really debated, tried to turn over the rocks about each one of those assessment items, and really debated at times across the domains. We approached it from a very honest standpoint and really dug deep to consider what we were doing and what we were not doing, looking for where there was evidence and where there was not. Looking for where there is room for

> improvement and other ways of getting to work. I think it was a huge time commitment that not one of us was really expecting it to be, and yet that became the benefit of the work, the time we spent together. We hit this hard, and we tried to analyze carefully and face some truths about ourselves and about our program relative to overall areas for improvement.

The team agreed that it is important to approach this work with perseverance and determination, recognizing that while progress may be slow, it can positively impact and create lasting change. It is also important to remember that this work is essential for the human condition and for shaping a more just and anti-racist society. While team members feel they have made considerable progress, they also recognized that there is still much more work ahead—a common experience for those engaging in anti-racist work, as dismantling systems of oppression is a long-term and ongoing process. Wilbur offered:

> Here is what it comes down to. I think that while we are doing a hell of a job, this instrument showed us how much more there is to do. It is daunting, but it is also exhilarating because these are damned important issues for the human condition. You know, we must keep pushing.

By continuing to push for change and engaging in ongoing learning and self-reflection, individuals and organizations can work towards creating more inclusive and anti-racist communities. Engaging in this work can be both daunting and exhilarating, but it is essential for developing anti-racist educational leaders. These findings highlighted that anti-racist work is ongoing and requires continuous learning, self-reflection, and action. It may also require courage and a willingness to take risks and challenge the status quo to affect real change. By working together and supporting one another, teams can be powerful agents of change in the

fight against racism and other forms of oppression. As the participants concluded, “We are always on the journey. We must be careful because we can never pretend we have arrived. We feel like this is a journey, and we will always be on that journey.”

Summary

Chapter 4 described a case study analysis of how a faculty team self-examined and reflected on how their course content aligns with anti-racist leadership design. Additionally, this chapter described how faculty navigated the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining an anti-racist leadership program. Four themes emerged and highlighted the participants’ overwhelming sentiment that anti-racist work is both hard work, heart work, and soul work. The faculty members recognized that their current program offerings might not be enough to promote anti-racist leadership. While they have witnessed student success stories, they acknowledged the resistance they face from their students, their partnering districts, school boards, and school communities. The group discussed the need to confront problematic behavior more explicitly and co-create an anti-racist vision with their partnering districts. However, they also recognized the need for a deliberate and strategic approach to challenging conformity and promoting anti-racist leadership, as it may have personal, professional, and political ramifications.

The faculty team discovered that anti-racist pedagogy goes beyond incorporating racial content into courses and curricula; it involves challenging and dismantling racism actively. Faculty members must reflect on their social positionality, balance power within the classroom, and listen to and value the perspectives and experiences of all students. The team also identified specific pedagogical challenges, including faculty reflexivity, sequencing, and pacing instruction, student developmental readiness, disrupting White supremacy and hegemonic

practices, and the cost of curriculum improvements. Appropriate sequencing and pacing of anti-racist instruction are critical, and faculty should focus on the process of learning by starting where their students are and strategically designing a path forward. Most importantly, the faculty team acknowledged the power of self-reflection as a meaningful tool for improvement and change. Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation, implications for policy and practice, suggestions for future research, and a call to action.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

This qualitative case study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the faculty experience when self-examining and reflecting on their curriculum. By exploring a self-study toolkit, the study aimed to understand how faculty incorporate anti-racist leadership into their teaching and curriculum design while illuminating the challenges and barriers they face in this process. Two research questions guided this study:

RQ1) How do faculty in educational leadership programs self-assess and reflect on course content alignment with anti-racist leadership design?

RQ2) How do faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design?

This qualitative case study explored one self-identified equity-centered educational leadership program for K–12 administrators at a public IHE in North Carolina. The case study approach allowed a deep exploration of the faculty's experiences as they reflected on their course content and program design. The reflective, self-study process provided valuable insights into the ways faculty engaged with the concepts of anti-racist leadership development.

Findings from this research may provide valuable insights for educational leadership programs and the broader field of educator preparation and contribute to the limited literature and empirical research on how faculty use reflection to make Whiteness visible within their curriculum. These findings may help inform future efforts to promote anti-racism and address how Whiteness remains invisible, unnamed, and often unchecked in educational leadership preparation programs. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the limited literature on how faculty navigate the challenges of developing and preparing anti-racist educational leaders, particularly in North Carolina.

Additionally, by examining the challenges and barriers that faculty face in promoting anti-racist leadership, the results from this study might contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of anti-racist leadership development and the role of faculty in this process. This chapter provides a summary of findings from the study and a discussion of findings with connections to salient research. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for policy and practice, future research, and final considerations.

Discussion of Findings

This case study examined faculty members' challenges and barriers in designing an anti-racist leadership curriculum and their strategies to overcome these obstacles. Findings emerged through focus group interviews and an analysis of private group reflections and documents. A self-study methodology was beneficial for faculty as the process promoted self-reflection, collaboration, empowerment, and strategies for improvement and change. This section discusses the main findings of the study. Through the analysis of qualitative data, four overarching themes arose: (a) exploring complex challenges and barriers, (b) answering the call while grappling with concerns, (c) wrestling and resolving contradictions, and (d) leveraging the power of collaborative critical reflection as a tool for change.

The first research question aimed to understand how faculty self-assess and reflect on their course content alignment with anti-racist leadership design. Results indicated that faculty members faced nuanced challenges and barriers in designing an anti-racist curriculum. These challenges included (a) ignorance and misinformation about anti-racism; (b) pedagogical challenges; and (c) people, practices, and policies that maintain Whiteness. Barriers to an anti-racist leadership curriculum included refusal of support from conservative school districts, submission through silence, and the impact and fear of negative external review data. Despite

these challenges and barriers, faculty described their motivation for developing an anti-racist leadership curriculum as a moral imperative. Faculty also struggled with their concerns when committing to anti-racist work. The participants in the study expressed fear of academic and professional lynching, making mistakes as a White person engaging in anti-racist work, regression in their efforts, and physical harm or death. Faculty members also described potential and substantial risks for participating in anti-racism efforts. Participants reported that merit-based systems in higher education, such as the tenure promotion process, often discourage the engagement of topics deemed controversial, progressive, or politically charged.

The second research question explored how faculty navigated these challenges and barriers to create or maintain a program aligned with anti-racist leadership design. The findings from this study have crucial implications for faculty members and their efforts to design an anti-racist leadership curriculum. These findings emphasized the importance of understanding the complexities involved in anti-racist work and the need for faculty members to find effective strategies to overcome their challenges and barriers. Findings highlighted that wrestling and working to resolve contradictions is a critical aspect of engaging in anti-racist curriculum assessment. During anti-racism work, participants emphasized acknowledging and addressing inherent tensions and contradictions. Such attention involved recognizing and challenging one's biases and privileges and working to interrupt systems of oppression within the classroom and beyond. The findings supported the idea that collaborative critical reflection is a strategic and significant tool for change and continuous improvement.

Research Question 1: How do Faculty in Educational Leadership Programs Self-assess and Reflect on Course Content Alignment With Anti-racist Leadership Design?

The results of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insight into important aspects of how faculty may both reflect on and self-assess the curriculum used to develop anti-racist educational leaders. The findings of this study may have significant implications for the development of anti-racist curriculum development in educational leadership preparation programs as they suggest that collaborative critical reflection can be a productive tool for faculty to leverage as they endeavor to become anti-racist.

Results demonstrated that using a singularly focused, race-based, reflective process can effectively drive programmatic changes, which is consistent with Luft and Ward (2009), who argued for the strategic usage of single-issue approaches in specific contexts like anti-racism. As Phillip et al. (2019) noted, faculty can benefit from engaging in an in-depth internal inquiry beyond program evaluation. Faculty members could take a holistic view of their program through self-reflection and an in-depth internal review, leading to ideas for broader programmatic changes. This finding is also consistent with Gooden and Dantley's (2012) suggestion that self-reflection emphasizing race can be a productive way for faculty to interrogate their curriculum and predispositions as a motivation for transformative action.

From Motivation to Meaningful Change: Knowing Your Why

Faculty participants identified their individual and collective motivation for engaging in anti-racist work. By identifying their motivation, faculty can clearly define their why. Sinek (2011) suggested that individuals must know their *why*, arguing that an individual's *why* is the driving force behind what they do as it rests on their purpose, cause, or belief system. Additionally, Sinek posited that every organization operates at three levels: (a) what they do, (b)

how they do it, and (c) why they do it. Starting with why means individuals must examine their core beliefs and values that drive their actions and behaviors. In the context of anti-racism work, this means exploring why someone may believe anti-racism is important, what they hope to achieve by becoming more anti-racist, and what values and principles guide their anti-racism efforts. Once the motivation is clarified, the individuals and the organization can move on to consider the how and the what of anti-racist work. Starting with the individual and collective motivation for why faculty engage in anti-racist work can help foster trust and alignment, help re-ignite passion, redefine the organization's purpose, and create a sense of unity amongst faculty teams. This finding raises the possibility that identifying the individual and collective motivation can help initiate and guide what faculty do and how they do it.

The What. Hawley and James (2010) suggested that the leadership curriculum typically only integrates one diversity course and avoids a race-based curriculum. Consistent with the literature, this research found that not every course has embedded learning goals that explicitly reflect equity, race, and anti-racism. Furthermore, participants noted that in most courses, no language explicitly states race, ethnicity, privileges, or institutional discrimination. As participants processed their newfound revelation, they affirmed that the collaborative, reflective process was a beneficial tool to help them critique and self-correct their curriculum. While research has long suggested the need for a more comprehensive curriculum that explicitly names race and racism, this reflective process provides a model for how to leverage self-examination as a tool to move from being performative to transformative and anti-racist (Dei, 1996, 2013; Diem & Welton, 2020; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Grissom et al., 2021; Welton, Diem, et al., 2018; Welton, Owens, et al., 2018; Young & Laible, 2000).

When self-assessing and reflecting, the findings imply that faculty members may encounter several complex challenges and barriers when engaging in anti-racist leadership development. These challenges and barriers may include lacking information or confronting misinformation about anti-racist leadership. Faculty members may also lack a deep understanding of the principles and practices of anti-racist leadership, which can make it difficult for them to design and teach courses on this topic. Additionally, faculty members may lack the complementary pedagogical strategies necessary to address students' discomfort and tension that may arise when discussing issues of race and racism. These knowledge gaps may be individual, collective, programmatic, or communal. Ignorance and misinformation required that faculty gain both a theoretical and an intellectual understanding of anti-racism.

The How. The results of this study highlight the importance of collaborative faculty engagement in the curriculum development process. When faculty members can self-reflect and take ownership of the curriculum development process, they are more likely to be collectively invested in the program's success. This level of investment can lead to sustainable programmatic changes that are more reflective of anti-racist tenets. This finding is consistent with that of Ladson-Billings (2009), who argued that for an anti-racist curriculum to be successful, it must develop from those impacted. In keeping with this finding, participants realized through reflection, reimagining, and co-creating the needed anti-racist curriculum. Faculty suggested that an anti-racist vision and mission statement should be co-created with their partner districts as a first step in reimagining their curriculum.

This study provided a curriculum review and development approach that can lead to a more coherent, comprehensive, and effective principal preparation program. The results corroborate seminal research findings suggesting that a coherent and cohesive curriculum is

essential in preparation programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; Orr et al., 2006). Additionally, this study aligned with research that suggested a lack of coherently integrating issues of race in the curriculum (Boske, 2012; Diem & Carpenter, 2013; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010). By describing how faculty might thoughtfully deconstruct and reimagine their curriculum, this study extended the historical notion of coherence and cohesiveness by emphasizing the need to integrate topics of race and racism into the curriculum thoroughly.

The Why. The results may also have important implications for the need for faculty to acknowledge and address their relative challenges and barriers to designing an anti-racist curriculum within their specific context. Designing an anti-racist curriculum is not a one-size-fits-all solution and requires a deep understanding of the curriculum implementation context. Faculty members must know the specific challenges and barriers within their institution and their partnering districts. Understanding the cultural, historical, ideological, and societal factors that contribute to systemic racism within their specific context allows faculty to personalize their curriculum to meet the needs of their students, their communities, district partners, and state agencies. As faculty gain a deeper understanding of their challenges and barriers, they can proactively seek resources, form collaborative partnerships with anti-racist experts and organizations, and engage in ongoing professional development to stay abreast of breakthrough anti-racist practices. These steps can increase the capacity of faculty members, partnering district leaders, and students within the leadership program.

Similarly, results indicated that psychological safety is paramount when engaging in anti-racist work. Edmondson (2019) explained that psychological safety is essential for organizations to innovate, change, and thrive. A psychologically safe environment promotes risk-taking, admitting mistakes, vulnerability, and honest feedback. Anti-racism is a complex

and an often-sensitive topic that can bring up a range of emotions and experiences for individuals, including fear, discomfort, and personal trauma. If faculty members feel that they are not able to discuss their concerns and fears related to anti-racism openly, it may limit their ability to fully engage in the work of creating an anti-racist curriculum or program.

However, if faculty members feel safe to discuss their concerns and fears openly, they may be more likely to be actively engaged, thereby creating a more inclusive, effective, and impactful anti-racist curriculum. Fostering open and honest communication by allowing individuals to share their experiences, perspectives, and concerns can lead to greater vulnerability, risk-taking, and an environment where collective creativity can flourish. In this type of learning and work environment, empathy and understanding can lead to a greater sense of community and allow colleagues to understand each other's perspectives and experiences better. When faculty feel seen, heard, and acknowledged, their overall well-being improves, the institutional culture may be improved, and they may be more likely to leverage their collective creativity to problem-solve. These factors may also improve their stress, anxiety, and ability to perform their job duties effectively. Once faculty are clear on their way, they can move on to the how and the what of anti-racist work.

Exploring Complex Challenges and Barriers

The findings from this study are consistent with Phillip et al. (2019), who described three barriers that White anti-racist faculty face, including (a) a lack of consistent commitment from institutions toward anti-racism policies, practices, and pedagogy; (b) challenges to tenure and scholarship; and (c) internalized struggle with White identity. However, the findings from this study extend beyond the barriers to include a delineation between challenges and barriers from the participant's perspective. Similarly, Phillip et al.'s, participants described

inconsistencies with the commitment to anti-racism policies, practices, and pedagogy. They included additional challenges such as (a) knowledge gaps and misinformation for both them and others in their learning community; (b) the pressure to conform through compliance; (c) outdated learning standards, goals, and syllabi; (d) appropriate sequencing and pacing of instruction; and (e) significant investment of time, energy, and money, and divisive beliefs and denial. Furthermore, the participants detailed barriers that thwarted anti-racism efforts as (a) refusal to support resulting in the withdrawal of funding; (b) faculty being silenced into submission by district partners, and (c) the power and fear of negative external review data that could jeopardize their funding. The finding on complex challenges and barriers highlighted the nuanced and contextual nature of faculty's issues when striving to develop an anti-racist curriculum.

The Invisibility of Whiteness

Tate and Bagguley (2017) argued that the failure of anti-racism efforts is due to the invisibility of Whiteness. They proposed that faculty should decolonize knowledge, curriculum, and programming to address this issue. The findings from this study describe how faculty might decolonize their curriculum and programming using a self-study toolkit. Matias et al. (2014) argued that critical White studies provide a valuable framework for deconstructing Whiteness's material, physical, emotional, and political power. They contend that this framework helps expose how Whiteness operates in society and perpetuates through institutions and individuals. The results from this study draw on this framework and support Matias et al.'s (2014) assertion as faculty explore the role of Whiteness in leadership preparation programs.

The findings provide a rich description of how faculty deconstruct and name the ways that Whiteness may be unnamed and normalized. Findings also describe the participant's

perspectives and reflections on how anti-racism integrates into their leadership preparation curricula. Through in-depth analysis, faculty members identified several ways Whiteness operates in leadership preparation programs. The results name how faculty, students, and stakeholders may serve as "keepers of Whiteness" or guards of Whiteness (Adira, personal communication). I define guards of Whiteness as the people who maintain Whiteness and hinder anti-racist leadership development either intentionally or unintentionally. Participants also described how practices and policies hinder anti-racist curriculum and leadership development. I have conceptualized these policies and practices as guardrails because they intentionally or unintentionally maintain Whiteness. Understanding how guards and guardrails interplay is important for faculty. The findings explicitly name ways outdated professional standards, syllabi, and Whitewashed learning goals continue to serve as guardrails that stifle anti-racist curriculum development when they lack explicit language about race.

Knowledge Gaps, Misinformation, and Awareness

As described in Chapter 4, participants noted that knowledge gaps and misinformation could be a significant challenges when designing an anti-racist curriculum. Aligned with Hoff et al. (2006), participants shared that many of their students had a limited understanding of issues related to diversity and racism. Parallel to Diem and Carpenter (2013) and Zarate and Mendoza (2020), this study found that discontinuing race-related content and discussions negatively impacts the student's ability to engage in race-related conversations. Similarly to Zarate and Mendoza (2020), participants found that their students' engagement with topics of race and racism ranged from dismissal to deeply reflective and from disengagement or denial to engaged and empowered. This finding highlighted the need for faculty to integrate the topic throughout the program coherently, and also highlighted the need for faculty to be aware of their student's

developmental readiness and be prepared with pedagogical strategies to engage students at every stage of their development. Participants also described similar pressure to conform and comply; however, they described their district partners' external pressure and resistance as an added challenge. Resistance has the potential to impact the employability of their graduates negatively.

Confronting Conformity and Compliance

Farley et al. (2019) argued that principal preparation programs must incorporate anti-racist and culturally responsive standards to develop effective educational leaders promoting school equity and justice. They argued that traditional principal standards, which focus on managerial and technical skills, are inadequate for addressing the systemic and structural issues of racism and bias that persist in education. Anti-racist and culturally responsive standards should integrate into principal preparation standards, and should develop with diverse stakeholders' input, including students, families, and community members. They also recommend that principal preparation programs should provide ongoing opportunities for professional learning and development around issues of equity and anti-racism. Farley et al. argued that principal preparation programs have a critical role in developing educational leaders equipped to address the challenges of systemic racism and promote equity and justice in schools. Participant Wilbur affirmed this sentiment: "These standards are the conceptual floor, not the ceiling. We use the standards as a baseline, but we choose to go beyond these standards, but there is still more we can do." Faculty must decide if they will allow the professional standards to serve as a guidepost or guardrail. The reflective process helps faculty uncover if or how they have been keepers of Whiteness, intentionally or unintentionally, when using professional standards to guide and align instruction.

Scheurich and Young (1997) argued that racism must be analyzed at the epistemological level because it is a fundamental belief system constructed and maintained through knowledge production and dissemination. They argued that the dominant Eurocentric epistemology perpetuates a hegemonic culture that privileges Whiteness and marginalizes people of color. Further, they espoused that such epistemological underpinnings find deep rooting in the educational system and surface in the curricula, textbooks, and teaching practices. Scheurich and Young called for a critical epistemological analysis of education to understand how knowledge is constructed and disseminated and how it can reform to challenge racism and promote social justice. Faculty conducting a self-study on developing an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum may need to examine the underlying assumptions, beliefs, values, and knowledge systems that perpetuate racism in the current curriculum to analyze racism at the epistemological level. They may need to ask critical questions like whose knowledge and perspectives are centered and privileged in the curriculum and whose are excluded or marginalized?

Faculty must also consider the epistemological assumptions underlying the current curriculum and how those assumptions perpetuate racist ideologies and practices. Research by Scheurich and Young (1997) also supports the findings from this study, as faculty members must consider how they might disrupt the dominant epistemologies that maintain the status quo and create space for marginalized epistemologies. This type of reflective processing allows faculty to think deeply about the knowledge and skills principals need to lead anti-racist efforts and how they can integrate them into the curriculum. By leveraging continuous and ongoing self-reflection and self-critique, faculty can ensure that their curriculum continually evolves and improves in its anti-racist efforts.

Faculty can identify ways to transform the curriculum into a more inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist by engaging in critical self-reflection and analysis. They can also model for future principals the importance of critically examining the underlying assumptions and ideologies that inform their leadership practices. Faculty members must examine the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and values that inform their understanding of race and racism to analyze racism at the epistemological level in a self-study on developing an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum. They would need to reflect on how their personal experiences and socialization have shaped their perspectives on race and racism and consider how those perspectives may influence their teaching and interactions with students.

Faculty members may also need to critically examine the dominant cultural narratives and discourses that shape educational policy and practice and consider how these narratives may reinforce racist beliefs and practices. Such an examination could involve exploring the historical roots of racism in education and how power and privilege disperse within educational institutions. Additionally, faculty members should critically dialogue with students and colleagues to better understand marginalized groups' experiences and perspectives and identify how to form an inclusive and anti-racist curriculum and pedagogy. Critical dialogue may involve creating opportunities for students to share their own experiences with racism and exploring ways the curriculum can adapt to better reflect the diversity of student experiences and identities. Analyzing racism at the epistemological level when developing an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum requires critical self-reflection, a willingness to engage in difficult conversations, and recognizing the need to challenge and disrupt dominant cultural narratives and practices perpetuating racism in educational institutions.

The Reflective Continuum

When considering how faculty reflected on their curriculum, the data analysis revealed a reflective continuum that participants experienced as they engaged in the curriculum review process. A reflective process allowed the participants to theorize, intellectualize, rationalize, empathize, internalize, synergize, conceptualize, operationalize, and galvanize their understanding of anti-racism and its impact on their program. Faculty internalized their understanding of anti-racism as they thought deeply about their power, privilege, and biases. Through open and honest conversations, they synergized and realized that this reflective process required each faculty member to fully engage by bringing their experiences, expertise, and innovative ideas. The team conceptualized changes to their program and curriculum and operationalized their ideas by defining clear programmatic goals and next steps. This process not only helped the faculty team to envision an anti-racist curriculum but also served to unify and galvanize the team as they reflected on their collective purpose and commitment to anti-racist leadership development.

With this moral imperative at the fore, participants theorized and intellectualized about anti-racism. Faculty members may lack a deep understanding of the principles and practices of anti-racist leadership, which can make it difficult for them to design and teach courses. Additionally, faculty members may lack the complementary pedagogical strategies necessary to address students' discomfort and tension that may arise when discussing issues of race and racism. These knowledge gaps may be individual, collective, programmatic, or communal. Ignorance and misinformation required that faculty gain both a theoretical and an intellectual understanding of anti-racism. The faculty team explored theories that have previously anchored their work, like Theoharis' (2007) theory of social justice leadership and Furman's (2012)

conceptual framework for social justice leadership as Praxis, to consider the theoretical underpinnings of their program.

Next, the team intellectualized, engaging in collective book studies to learn more about equity, diversity, and anti-racism topics. Faculty rationalized their need to develop an anti-racist curriculum by reflecting on North Carolina's changing demographics and the persistent racial issues plaguing their communities and partnership districts. As participants reflected on tense race-related learning experiences within their program, they could empathize with both the students in the course and the faculty member that provided the instruction. They also empathized with the K–12 students, who they felt deserved a well-prepared anti-racist school leader.

Through reflection, the faculty team began internalizing their understanding of anti-racism and thinking deeply about their power, privilege, and biases. After sharing their perspectives, participants began to internalize their collective learning as a team. They turned inward to think deeply about how they may consciously or unconsciously maintain Whiteness in their program and within their curriculum. As the team synergized, they conceptualized how their program might be different. Participants considered what practices they needed to keep in the program, what they needed to abandon, and what promising practices they needed to extend as they envisioned an improved curriculum and program. They realized that changes would need to happen at the macro and granular levels. Once they conceptualized ways to improve their curriculum and program, the participants operationalized their ideas by defining how these ideas may come to fruition by establishing clear programmatic goals and the next steps to accomplish their goals. After the reflective process, the team established clear programmatic goals. Following the study, participants overwhelmingly shared that they felt like they got to

know their colleagues much deeper. This experience unified and galvanized the faculty team as they reflected on their overall experience.

Answering the Call While Grappling With the Concerns

Faculty members may experience resistance from colleagues or stakeholders when developing an anti-racist curriculum. Resistance could arise from a lack of understanding or awareness of this work's importance or a desire to maintain the status quo. There may be institutional or systemic barriers in place that make it difficult for faculty members to engage in anti-racist leadership development, such as policies, procedures, or practices that are not supportive of this work. Faculty members must be aware of these challenges and barriers while simultaneously developing strategies for overcoming them to engage in anti-racist leadership development effectively.

Eleanor described their strategic approach as a "backward approach." Meyerson and Scully (1995) saw this type of activism as tempered radicalism. Tempered radicals are "individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations and also to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organization" (p. 586); "they rock the boat and stay in the boat" (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. xi). These faculty members are radical in their ideals but tempered in how they skillfully navigate the landmine of race and racism.

As Meyerson and Scully (1995) stated, tempered radicals reflect important aspects of leadership that are absent in the more traditional portraits. Advocacy, teaching, and leadership type is more local, diffuse, opportunistic, and humbler than the activity attributed to the modern-day hero. This version of teaching and advocacy depends on patience, self-knowledge, humility, vulnerability, vigilance, risk-taking, compassion, and courage. Faculty cannot be lone

heroes; they must be quick to acknowledge that they cannot do it alone. (Meyerson & Scully, 1995). Faculty members may need to be tempered radicals when developing an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum because they may encounter resistance or pushback from various stakeholders. Being a tempered radical means challenging the status quo and advocating for change while maintaining positive relationships with those who may not share the same views. It involves navigating complex power dynamics and finding ways to promote equity and justice within existing systems. Therefore, being a tempered radical can help faculty members to develop and implement an anti-racist curriculum that challenges dominant norms and promotes more inclusive and equitable practices.

A faculty member who seeks to develop an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum must embody the role of a tempered radical. As coined by Meyerson and Scully (1995), a *tempered radical* is an individual who challenges the status quo while also working within the established structures to promote change. Developing an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum requires dismantling institutional racism, achievable by challenging the dominant culture's epistemological foundations that perpetuate systemic racism. Faculty members must challenge their own assumptions and biases, which requires them to be reflective practitioners who examine how they uphold and maintain the current power structure. A tempered radical approach recognizes that change occurs incrementally and involves the creation of counter-narratives and alternative ways of knowing that challenge the dominant culture. Thus, faculty members must be willing to take risks, be persistent in their efforts, and work collaboratively with other stakeholders to create lasting change.

Furthermore, developing an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum requires a deep understanding of the complex intersections of race, power, and leadership. Faculty members

must examine how race and racism operate in educational institutions and how they intersect with other forms of oppression. The introspective examination requires a critical analysis of the policies, practices, and structures that uphold systemic racism and the development of alternative approaches to leadership that center on equity, justice, and anti-racism. As tempered radicals, faculty members must navigate the tensions that arise when working within and against existing structures and intentionally create spaces for dialogue and collaboration with others who share the goal of dismantling institutional racism. By adopting a tempered radical approach, faculty members can contribute to creating an anti-racist principal leadership curriculum that challenges the dominant culture and supports the development of leaders committed to social justice and equity.

According to the findings, a crucial step in challenging hegemonic practices is helping students and faculty members think critically about how dominant ideologies shape their understanding of the world. Faculty members must commit to becoming aware of and actively challenge hegemonic practices to develop anti-racist leaders effectively. They must also train their students to do the same in their positions. Commitment involves teaching students about how dominant ideologies and narratives uphold and reinforce racism and other forms of oppression and helping them to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to challenge these ideologies and work towards anti-racism within the K–12 setting.

Dominant ideology and narratives face challenges when students and faculty engage with diverse perspectives and voices. As faculty facilitate discussions, norms should surface to encourage respectful and thoughtful conversations when discussing controversial or divisive issues. Faculty must recognize that they are always modeling for students through their actions, decisions, and instruction. When leading difficult classroom conversations, faculty are

responsible for modeling best practices. By modeling these necessary communication and facilitation skills, students can learn how to actively challenge hegemonic practices, promote anti-racism, and lead similar conversations within their school community.

Based on the findings, the process of self-assessing and reflecting involves a considerable time commitment. Self-assessment is an ongoing process, and it is important to set aside sufficient time and resources to engage in this work effectively. Faculty should regularly set aside dedicated time for collaborative reflection and contemplation on curricular issues and improvements related to anti-racist leadership development. Faculty should also seek opportunities to work in small groups with colleagues to observe and reflect on classroom instruction and effective pedagogical strategies.

Research Question 2: How do Faculty Navigate the Challenges and Barriers to Creating or Sustaining a Program That Reflects Anti-Racist Leadership Design?

Study findings provided insight into how faculty might navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program that reflects anti-racist leadership design. These findings could be useful for other faculty teams interested in engaging in a reflective, continuous improvement process that promotes anti-racist curriculum development and programmatic design. Faculty members can take many different approaches to engage in collaborative reflection and continuous improvement around equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. Findings suggested that faculty may benefit from engaging in ongoing dialogue with colleagues about race-related issues as an opportunity to learn in the community with others. This type of learning allows faculty to continuously reflect on their biases, prejudices, privileges, and practices. Study findings also indicated that engaging in self-reflection and examining biases and privileges is a difficult but necessary step in becoming an ally and

working towards anti-racism. These experiences may motivate, prepare, and position faculty to challenge and dismantle systemic racism in education. Effectively using tools or techniques like a self-study toolkit with a singular focus on race may help faculty actively engage in reflective practice to consider the broader implications of their work.

Wrestling and Resolving Contradictions

In higher education, accountability, accreditation, and evaluation systems often use a binary approach that motivates faculty to prove their performance rather than authentically improving their work. Participants in this system struggle to reflect deeply as they feel compelled to justify their performance and curriculum by fulfilling the requirements of the evaluation toolkit. They face an internal and external struggle to reconcile contradictions within the system and often encounter institutional structures that do not support significant change. Faculty members inherit the paradoxical challenge of creating change within an institution that needs improvement but may resist the necessary changes.

Faculty members identified promising practices such as collaborative curriculum review, meeting with district personnel, hosting book clubs, and learning with others as critical friends to address contradictions. While periodic curriculum reviews exist, these have not always focused on anti-racism. Moreover, the university's curriculum revisioning process limits faculty recommendations, disallowing swift and substantial changes. As a result, participants felt they could identify problems but needed more autonomy to address them. One participant noted that the system held no inherent anti-racist qualities, and therefore, faculty members must navigate the required processes and procedures while working towards this goal. An example provided by the participants highlighted the successful collaborative curriculum review process, which involved analyzing student feedback, aligning leadership standards, and aligning class

objectives. These practices, while helpful, need to be maintained in an ongoing, continuous improvement model that welcomes collaborative reflection and change.

Participant Wilbur argued that collaborative reflection benefited the team, as they could think deeply together. By analyzing specific student activities and expanding their thinking about their teaching practices, they identified both areas of success and areas for improvement in their program. This recurring theme highlighted how faculty members may struggle to shift from a compliance-focused mindset to one focused on continuous growth and improvement, especially when there is a little external incentive to engage in anti-racist work.

Collaborative reflection is a process where individuals work together to identify areas of strength and improvement in their teaching practices, allowing educators to think deeply about their teaching, reflect on their practices, and learn from their experiences. Researchers have shown that collaborative reflection can improve teaching effectiveness, increase teacher satisfaction, and enhance student learning outcomes (e.g., Borko & Putnam, 1996; Grossman et al., 2001; Yoon et al., 2007). In addition, a growth mindset has been found to promote academic achievement and improve learning outcomes, particularly for students from marginalized backgrounds (Yeager & Walton, 2011). This study's findings build and extend previous research by affirming that collaborative reflection and a growth mindset can support improvements in teaching and learning. This study highlighted a process to help faculty engage in the reflective growth process—it focused on race, providing a growing and learning edge for educational leadership research.

Participants from the study described ways they actively identified gaps in student's knowledge or skills and provided timely training to address them. However, while participants valued using data to inform program improvements, they noted that assessments tended to

measure the broadly defined curriculum and did not capture students' race-related learning needs. This broad data limited the program's ability to prepare the next generation of anti-racist leaders who can advance equity and social justice in high-need schools. Faculty members were interested in developing learning assessments that measure students' ability to recognize and challenge systems of oppression in their work.

Faculty members met with district personnel monthly to co-design and improve programmatic elements to navigate their challenges. However, they rarely discussed equity, social justice, or anti-racism topics; they have redesigned signature projects with an equity and social justice focus on addressing this. These projects developed leaders who could identify and address gaps in marginalized students' educational experiences. Such development is important for educational leadership programs to ensure that all their graduates have the capacity and skillset to listen to and respond to the needs of marginalized, underrepresented, or underserved families. The collaborative meeting protocol has helped the program make these changes but could benefit from an explicit anti-racist focus.

Another strategy the participants implemented is a monthly reading club to learn about equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism issues. They read research articles, policies, literature reviews, and books to ensure their curriculum is up-to-date and responsive to students' needs. Participants believed that these strategies could help develop anti-racist leadership curricula. They suggested creating an equity and anti-racist statement with district partners to push the boundaries and establish a unifying anti-racist statement as the foundation of their work. The faculty members also aim to develop an explicit and aligned anti-racist curriculum that integrates issues of race throughout the program. Participants wanted to co-create learning

goals with stakeholders to ensure their curriculum is coherent and aligned with national standards that explicitly address equity.

Participants suggested that they participate in ongoing professional development, workshops, or conferences to continue to expand their knowledge of the history and impacts of racism and how it manifests in schools and classrooms. Based on this knowledge, the faculty can develop strategies for promoting and teaching equity and anti-racism in education. The team dedicated themselves to fostering collective learning opportunities, which included reading and engaging in discussions of works authored by prominent anti-racism educators and activists alongside their colleagues. Additionally, faculty sought out resources from organizations and community groups specifically designed to help people learn about and work towards anti-racism to educate themselves, their students, and the communities they serve. Engaging in conversations with others about racism and anti-racism helped to deepen the participant's understanding of different perspectives and experiences. Also, it helped to build a sense of community and support.

A participant articulated their commitment to leading by example, stating that they actively engage in anti-racism activism by taking tangible actions to challenge systemic racism in their personal and professional lives. One of the central insights from this study underscores the crucial role of faculty as advocates for anti-racism and educators within their spheres of influence. Leveraging their unique skillsets, experiences, and positions of power, faculty can actively confront injustice, bolster the voices of marginalized communities, and promote more inclusive and anti-racist policies and practices in their organizations and partner districts.

According to the participants, self-assessment can prove to be a rigorous and time-intensive process, but one that ultimately yields rich rewards by facilitating reflection on current

practices and identifying areas for improvement at the individual and organizational levels. Faculty must be willing to engage in deep and sometimes difficult conversations and to be open to different viewpoints and perspectives. It is important to remember that by approaching self-assessment with a commitment to continuous learning and improvement, individuals and organizations can work towards creating more effective and impactful programs.

Leveraging the Power of Collaborative Critical Reflection as a Tool for Change

According to the participants, a collaborative critical reflection is a valuable tool for change. It allows individuals to step back, think deeply about their work, and engage in profound conversations. During this process, the team considered how to improve current practices, what new practices to adopt, and what practices to eliminate. The team recognized the need to allow time for conversations around issues of race and anti-racism and to use facilitation tools to manage any tension that may arise during these discussions. By using facilitation tools such as setting norms and ground rules and dedicating time to ensure the inclusion of all voices, faculty can create a learning environment that fosters the development of anti-racist leaders.

Using a structured tool like *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty* can be particularly helpful in guiding this process and providing a framework for self-assessment and reflection. It can also help identify improvement areas and set personal and professional growth goals. Faculty must be open and honest with themselves and each other to make real progress. It is also important to be mindful of one's limitations and to seek support and guidance as needed. Individuals can continue to grow and develop personally and professionally through regular self-assessment and reflection. These personal and professional improvements may also lead to overall programmatic improvements.

Faculty members acknowledged the importance of advocating for anti-racism and educating others about racial justice issues to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment and advance the cause of racial justice. They recognized the need to use their unique skills, experiences, and positions of influence to promote anti-racism, involving speaking out against injustice, supporting, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, and working to create more inclusive and anti-racist policies and practices. Participants engaged in a reflective process around curriculum development, which led to ideas for changes to other programming elements, allowing them to take a holistic view of their program and consider how different elements may be interconnected. They hoped to extend the practice of leveraging productive conversations to promote co-creation and collaboration toward anti-racist programmatic improvements. The faculty members revealed the need for connected and coherent courses focusing on race, racism, and anti-racism across the curriculum, essential for educational programs to address these issues intentionally and comprehensively.

Faculty members are vital in promoting anti-racism and developing anti-racist educational leaders. Anti-racist work is ongoing and requires a commitment to continuous learning, self-reflection, and action. It is important to remember that self-assessment is a continuous process and that it is normal to encounter challenges and setbacks along the way. Self-assessment can be a powerful tool for personal and professional development, allowing individuals to take a step back and critically examine their actions and behaviors. This study builds on research that found that teachers who engage in ongoing critical self-reflection are likelier to have positive attitudes toward diversity and a greater sense of self-efficacy in teaching diverse students.

Similarly, a literature review on anti-racist education found that effective anti-racist education requires ongoing self-reflection and a willingness to challenge one's beliefs and assumptions (Gillborn, 2006, 2016). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that anti-racist work is a long-term and ongoing process that requires commitment, perseverance, and ongoing learning (Miller & Harris, 2018). Remembering self-assessment is just one consideration and should be used with other feedback and evaluation forms. It is also important to approach self-assessment with an open mind and a willingness to learn and grow. By using self-assessment as an opportunity for self-reflection and continuous improvement, faculty members can become more effective and impactful.

Approaching self-assessment with a commitment to continuous learning and improvement can lead to more effective and impactful programs. However, this requires a significant time commitment, a willingness to engage in deep conversations, and honest reflection about what is working and what is not. The team in this study recognized the importance of perseverance and determination in this work, as progress may be slow but can lead to lasting change. Such work is essential for creating a more just and anti-racist society but is an ongoing and long-term process. Teams can be powerful agents of change in the fight against racism and other forms of oppression by working together and supporting each other. It is important to remember that this work is a journey, and there will always be room for improvement and growth.

Research Boundaries

Several limitations to this study exist. First, faculty members in a single leadership preparation program comprised the sample, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Choosing to focus on one program does not represent the more than 700 principal preparation

programs in the United States; however, I focused on a university within North Carolina that had an espoused equity vision, mission, and values with an interest or commitment to anti-racism.

The findings from this case study may not apply to other settings or populations due to the sample size and the unique identities of study participants. However, the purpose of the study is not to generalize findings but to provide a rich description of how faculty might transgress hegemonic practices that maintain Whiteness in the curriculum using collaborative reflection. The study focused solely on the perspectives of faculty members, and future research should seek to include the perspectives of students and other stakeholders. Additionally, this study did not seek to conduct a program evaluation nor determine the curriculum's quality or effectiveness as measured by a graduate's performance.

Self-study methodology relies on self-reported data. As such, there is a risk of subjectivity and bias in the data collection. Participants may also have challenges recalling historical events and experiences, seeking to provide socially desirable responses, and other participants' responses may also influence them. Ground rules helped participants to share a response to each question to mitigate limitations. Rules stated that there were no right or wrong answers, only differing perspectives. Participants were encouraged to invite their colleagues into the conversation to challenge, affirm, or clarify their thinking. Participants offered responses in a one-on-one interview to share any additional thoughts they did not get to share within the larger group. However, participants felt they could openly share their thoughts during the focus group interview and their private reflection time.

Conducting a case study using a self-study methodology can be resource and time intensive. When designing the study, proper care ensured that participants were carefully

recruited, introduced to the research purpose, and walked through the norms and expectations for the process. Limitations were mediated by collecting and reviewing program documents, reviewing articles written by faculty, and analyzing publicly available resources on the program's website.

During the research period, group interviews occurred with the faculty teams. At each meeting, all faculty members were present. Utilizing Zoom allowed for greater accessibility for all faculty members to participate from the privacy of their own homes, promoting a sense of safety when considering sensitive questions. Immediately following the interview, I offered a summary of their responses to seek confirmation, correction, or clarification within 72 hours of the interview's field notes and transcription finalized in a question-by-question format. Through memoing, insights and ideas emerged as additional data suitable for analysis. During coding, a master list was developed and consistently refined throughout the analysis process. Finally, participants reviewed the transcripts and completed Chapters 4 and 5 for their review and feedback. These steps mitigated the limitations.

While these factors represent limitations, this is among the first studies to address how faculty reflect collaboratively to deconstruct their existing curriculum using an anti-racist toolkit and lens. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the literature on how faculty can use collaborative reflection to deconstruct and name how Whiteness persists within their educational leadership curriculum. The study's findings and recommendations offer a model for curriculum development that can be applied more broadly in the field of educator preparation. Future research could further refine this model and explore its application in various settings. The following section includes a framework and recommendations that provide a

straightforward approach and process for achieving anti-racist goals with tangible actions to promote curricular and programmatic changes.

Recommendations to Leaders, Practitioners, and Policymakers

I developed the RIZE to the CALL framework through the work of this study to provide stakeholders with a practical and systematic process for reflection and action. When engaging in data analysis, I created a diagram to help with my analysis of the process that the participants underwent throughout their reflective journey. Using a linear timeline, I codified what the participants were doing and saying at each part of the process to understand better how they experienced the journey. I noticed when the group transitioned, celebrated, and acknowledged their growth. These subtleties were noted and bracketed. The bracketed moments in time were then analyzed and summarized. After looking at their journey, I noticed that many words I used to describe their progress ended in -ize. After placing this notice in the corner, I wondered why I chose words that ended in -ize. After reflecting on the meaning of the suffix-ize, I had a sudden insight. This critical juncture helped me realize the connection and deeper symbolism. This suffix often describes processes but also indicates action, a core anti-racism principle (Dei, 2013). It was at that moment that words from John Lewis reverberated in my mind, “The only way to combat racism is the rise above it and actively work towards creating a more just and equitable world.” Then I was reminded of the 2016 National Convention speech by Former First Lady Michelle Obama, who encouraged people to respond to hatred and hostility by “going high when they go low.” Andra Day commanded the stage at that same National Convention, singing their song *Rise Up.* Their song was a reminder to persevere, stand up, and take the next step. *Rise Up* was later used as an anthem for protest and empowerment during the Black Lives Matters movement and race in the U.S.

I reflected on the words Maya Angelou wrote in their poem "Still I Rise." Finally, I was grounded and centered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words, "let us be those creative dissenters who will call our beloved nation to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humanness." Each of these words was spoken or written when people of color faced adversity, discrimination, hatred, and racism. In the solitude of personal reflection, as I wrote in my researcher notebook, I wrote each of those words down, and the word rise became the ancestorial wisdom and guidance. Standing on the shoulders of these giants, I realized that by combining the suffix-ize with the deep wisdom to rise when facing the vitriol and hatred of racism, RIZE combines the past wisdom with my present revelation. RIZE resonated in my heart and moved my soul. This was the moment that my research changed me. At my core, I felt an undeniable gravity of responsibility. I recognized that through reflection, I, too, have engaged in the "soul work" as Wilbur described. This timeless and deep call to rise echoes from history and yet calls us forward into our future.

This framework can potentially promote sustained, transformative change for the individual and the institution. With intentionality, this framework emphasizes both the individual and the institution. Both are critical because systemic changes require addressing individual attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and institutional policies, practices, and power structures that maintain racism. The RIZE to the CALL framework is important because a core foundational tenet is that anti-racist work is ongoing and requires ongoing learning, reflection, and action. By engaging faculty in reflection and continuous improvement, the RIZE to the CALL framework can help transform individuals and institutions as they endeavor to become anti-racist.

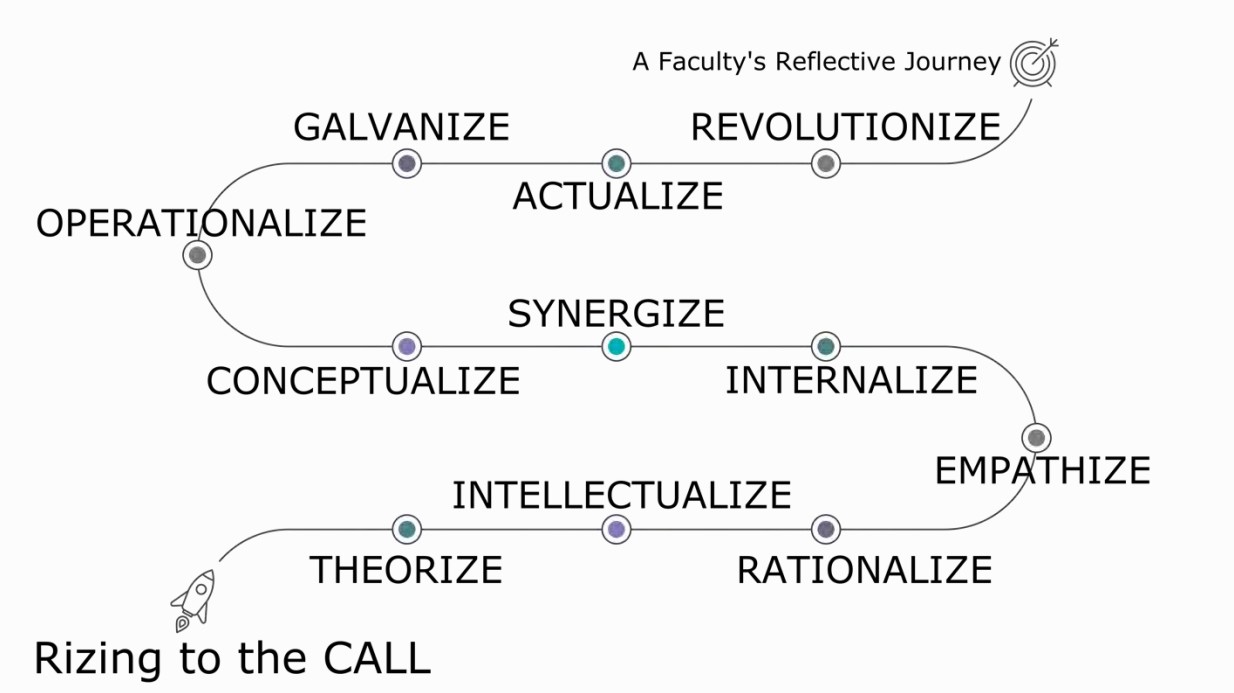
The first element of this framework is RIZE. This element provides insight into a meaningful process allowing faculty to consider how they reflect on their curriculum to align with anti-racist principles. The RIZE element engages faculty in a systematic process that helps faculty reflect on, address, and transcend systemic and structural racism at both the individual and institutional levels. This process is a journey. Anti-racism is the destination; however, everyone may not begin at the same place. This journey describes helpful places to consider on one's anti-racist journey. When considering the mental and emotional process that faculty engaged in through this study, the suffix -ize resonated because it means becoming, being productive, and crystallizing. This suffix seemed very fitting as it highlights the nature of anti-racist work. As faculty rise to the call of anti-racism, they must commit to becoming anti-racist through productive action with a crystal clear, definitive, and explicit commitment to anti-racism.

Element One: RIZE

The RIZE element contains checkpoints that detail how faculty may progress through their anti-racist journey (Figure 1). These checkpoints are theorizing, intellectualizing, rationalizing, empathizing, internalizing, synergizing, conceptualizing, operationalizing, and galvanizing. By doing so, they may actualize and revolutionize their curriculum and leadership program. The second element of the framework is CALL. This acronym outlines practical strategies to help faculty answer the anti-racism call when considering reimagining their curriculum and program. These strategies can assist faculty as they strive to transcend the hegemonic practices that maintain racism. Finally, the framework encourages faculty to consider their willingness and readiness to engage in anti-racist work. The framework concludes with a compelling letter inviting faculty to RIZE to the CALL.

Figure 1

The First Element of the Framework: The RIZE



Theorizing

Theoretical approaches can help faculty situate their anti-racism work within broader social, historical, and political contexts, and provide a framework for understanding how individual and institutional actions can contribute to or challenge systemic racism. Faculty might theorize about anti-racism using critical frameworks, such as critical race theory (CRT) and postcolonial theory. CRT is a theoretical and analytical approach that recognizes the pervasive and enduring nature of racism in society and its impact on the lived experiences of marginalized communities. It seeks to understand how race intersects with other forms of oppression and power and how these intersections shape social structures and institutions. Intersectionality can help faculty understand how racism intersects with other forms of

oppression, such as sexism, classism, and ableism, to create complex disadvantage systems. These theoretical frameworks can help faculty understand the complex and multifaceted nature of racism and the need for systemic and intersectional approaches to anti-racist work. Racism is deeply embedded in legal, political, and social structures, and understanding how it perpetuates through everyday practices and interactions is essential when endeavoring to become anti-racist. Faculty are encouraged to draw on other critical theories better to understand the complex nuances and dynamics of racism. Theorizing allows faculty to gain an essential understanding of racism as a first step in effectively challenging and transforming themselves, their curriculum, and their institutions.

Intellectualizing

Faculty members can intellectualize by conducting a comprehensive review of the literature in the field, including research on the history of systemic racism, the impacts of systemic racism on marginalized communities, and the various approaches to addressing systemic racism within education. Faculty members may engage in professional development, book clubs, attend workshops and conferences, and engage in learning communities that promote open and honest dialogue about racism. This knowledge and understanding are needed to analyze systemic inequalities and power structures perpetuating racism. By intellectualizing, faculty members gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of systemic racism and are better suited to develop a comprehensive and informed approach to addressing it.

Rationalizing

Faculty can rationalize by considering their moral, ethical, and experiential perspectives. Anti-racism requires individuals to consider preconceptions, beliefs, prejudices, and practices that have historically privileged some groups while marginalizing others. Such practices create

tension, discomfort, and even resistance from individuals who benefit from these systems of privilege. Before faculty begin exploring their concerns and barriers or addressing institutional policies and practices, they must articulate and defend the importance and relevance of anti-racism within their work and their broader community.

Empathizing

By cultivating empathy, faculty can recognize their own biases and privilege; this can help faculty better understand how they may contribute to or perpetuate racist structures and practices. Empathy can also help faculty better understand students and colleagues from diverse backgrounds. This understanding can lead to greater vulnerability, trust, and meaningful relationships. As faculty come together to engage in dialogue and reflection about their own experiences with racism and privilege, they may share stories, discuss relevant literature, and reflect on how their identities and experiences shape their perspectives on anti-racism. Sharing can help faculty reflect on their curriculum and instruction and consider how they may include or exclude individuals. This thoughtful consideration may help faculty infuse pedagogical strategies and content that promotes an anti-racist academic environment. Empathizing enables faculty to understand their students, colleagues, and broader community and leverage their understanding to advocate for systemic change, challenge racist structures and practices, and transcend racism.

Internalizing

Anti-racism requires going beyond an intellectual experience. It requires a fundamental shift in one's beliefs, attitudes, and actions. Internalization involves embracing anti-racist principles as a core part of one's identity, integrating them into all aspects of one's work and life, engaging in ongoing self-reflection, challenging one's biases and assumptions, and taking

concrete steps to address racism and inequality within one's sphere of influence. It may also involve being willing to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from failures in the pursuit of anti-racist goals. Internalizing anti-racism is important because it allows faculty to act as effective allies and advocates.

As faculty engage in critical self-reflection and examine their own experiences, biases, and privileged perspectives, they must consider how they may contribute to systemic racism. Academia has historically been a site of systemic racism, where exclusion and marginalization of underrepresented groups are normalized. This checkpoint is important because faculty must ensure that their research and teaching practices are anti-racist and do not perpetuate harmful biases, stereotypes, and racism—it promotes a deeply personal and emotional commitment to understanding, challenging, and dismantling systemic racism. By recognizing and taking responsibility for one's biases and complicity in perpetuating racist structures and committing to ongoing self-reflection and learning, faculty can model anti-racist behavior for their students, colleagues, and the broader community. While internalizing begins with the faculty member, this checkpoint can create a culture of anti-racism that extends beyond individual actions and permeates the broader academic community.

Synergizing

Faculty can work together to identify areas of curriculum and instruction that may perpetuate racist structures and practices. By collaborating to examine their teaching and learning practices critically, faculty can identify opportunities for improvement and develop strategies for infusing anti-racist pedagogy throughout their courses and program. Ongoing collaboration and reflection allow faculty to combine their knowledge, skills, and resources to develop more effective strategies for promoting anti-racism within their learning community.

Synergizing can also promote shared goals and accountability that advance anti-racism. Synergizing allows faculty teams to move beyond individual actions towards collective action and creativity, which is necessary for challenging and dismantling systemic racism.

Conceptualizing

Given the pervasive influence of systemic racism on our society and institutions, faculty members must conceptualize their curriculum through an anti-racist lens. Faculty can conceptualize an anti-racist curriculum by engaging in collaborative critical reflection and critically analyzing their existing curriculum and instructional practices. Conceptualization may involve critically analyzing course materials, assignments, and assessments to identify areas where implicit biases or assumptions about race and racism exist using a structured tool like *Towards an anti-racist leadership reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty*. They should examine the history and legacy of racism and incorporate diverse perspectives and approaches to knowledge production. Faculty should diversify course content by using alternative texts that allow for knowledge production about the social construction of race and systemic manifestations of racism. By working collaboratively to design innovative approaches and strategies grounded in anti-racist principles and frameworks, faculty may be better suited to design a curriculum that adequately prepares educational leaders to be anti-racist.

Operationalizing

Simply conceptualizing an anti-racist curriculum is insufficient. Faculty must operationalize their concept of anti-racism in their curriculum in concrete and meaningful ways. Faculty must first break free from their compliance mindset that values checking boxes and meeting minimal requirements and professional standards. Faculty must build in critical, collaborative reflection and analysis using a tool like *Towards an anti-racist leadership*

reflective guide for courageous and compassionate faculty to begin operationalizing anti-racism in the curriculum and leadership program. Next, faculty should examine course materials, assignments, practices, and policies to determine what they need to maintain and what they need to abandon. Once faculty determine their promising practices, they should build on and out, making necessary improvements and bringing current practices to scale to infuse anti-racism throughout their curriculum and program coherently. After faculty have determined what current practices must be improved and maintained, they can consider the gaps within their curriculum and program and build beyond their previous limitations. Consideration allows faculty to intentionally and thoughtfully integrate new practices to prepare anti-racist leaders better.

Galvanizing

As faculty members begin building a sense of shared purpose around the goal of developing an anti-racist curriculum, collaboration, and collective action is essential in creating sustainable change. Developing a shared vision, setting goals, and identifying concrete and specific steps to achieve those goals can inspire the team to act. Faculty can foster progress, adjustments, and continuous improvement by leveraging their collective knowledge, energy, and action. As faculty work collaboratively towards a shared vision and goal, they have a greater possibility of creating a robust, coherent anti-racist leadership program.

Actualizing

Faculty members can actualize their anti-racism goals, visions, curriculum, and program by implementing strategies and practices that promote reflection, critical thinking, analysis, and innovation. Faculty should leverage all professional standards and consciously transcend the traditional professional standards when needed to ensure that their graduates can cultivate

equitable, inclusive, anti-racist learning environments for teachers, staff, and students. Additionally, they should develop learning goals and performance assessments that require students to think critically about racial injustice issues and identify ways to use their leadership and advocacy to create change. Faculty should ensure that courses raise students' consciousness of the daily and institutional realities of racial discrimination and racial privileges experienced by different racial groups. Finally, the program's course ordinality must ensure that concepts and skills agglutinate in a structured and logical progression emphasizing anti-racist leadership.

Revolutionizing

As faculty seek to significantly transform their curriculum and program, innovation is needed to disrupt the status quo. Becoming anti-racist can drastically alter how the individual, the faculty team, and the institution function. When faculty commit to challenging and transforming their curriculum, program, systems, and structures, they must realize it requires substantial changes, not incremental ones, for comfort. Unapologetically and explicitly addressing racism is required.

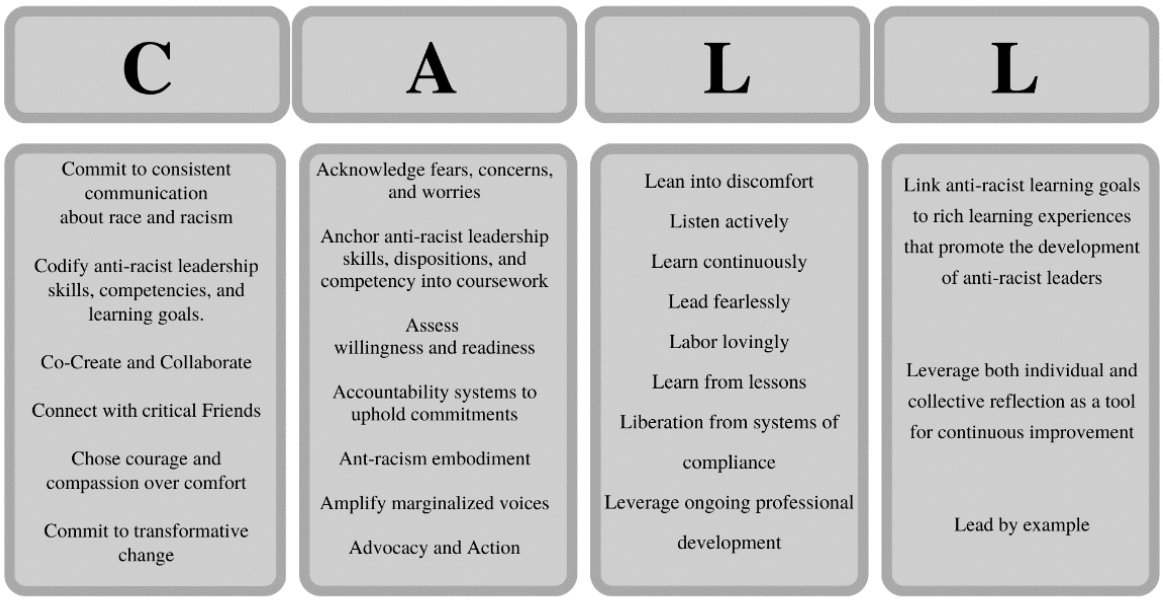
Furthermore, faculty must commit to humility and boldness as they creatively reimagine their curriculum and program through an anti-racist lens. Developing a critical consciousness that fosters reflection and action can help faculty members challenge deeply ingrained assumptions, beliefs, and practices and embrace new ways of thinking, being, and doing. As faculty transform their instructional practices, curriculum, and program, they can be a beacon of hope and a model for transformative anti-racist change within their local context and the broader academic community.

Element Two: CALL

The second element of the framework is CALL. This acronym outlines practical strategies to help faculty answer the anti-racism call when considering reimagining their curriculum and program. Figure 2 includes strategies that can assist faculty as they strive to transcend the hegemonic practices that maintain racism.

Figure 2

Second Element of the Framework: CALL



The C

Faculty must commit to building their anti-racist consciousness, capacity, and competence. However, it is insufficient only to know better; one must do better. Therefore, faculty must commit to consistently calling attention to systems, practices, and structures that protect and perpetuate racism. Faculty must forego their comfort and choose to be courageous,

compassionate, and committed to transformative change. It is important to collectively codify anti-racist leadership skills, competencies, and learning goals within the curriculum. Faculty should develop processes and structures that promote co-creation and collaboration with district partners and their local community. Faculty should connect with critical friends locally and abroad to engage in ongoing dialogue and learning.

The A

Faculty should acknowledge all stakeholders' fears, concerns, and worries to promote psychological safety and mutual understanding. Faculty should assess their and their students' willingness and readiness to engage in anti-racist work, allowing faculty to design learning carefully in a developmentally appropriate manner. Faculty should anchor anti-racist leadership skills, dispositions, and competency into coursework, fieldwork, assessments, and graduate outcomes. Additionally, faculty should create accountability systems to ensure every stakeholder understands and upholds their anti-racist commitments. Faculty should amplify the voices of marginalized communities within teaching and research. Finally, more is needed to reflect; faculty must advocate and act. They must commit to fully embodying anti-racism personally, professionally, and programmatically.

The Ls

Faculty must model how to lean into discomfort, listen actively, learn continuously, lead fearlessly, and labor lovingly as they strive to be anti-racist. As faculty lead by example, they must strategically link anti-racist learning goals to rich learning experiences that will promote the development of anti-racist leaders. They must leverage ongoing professional development. Additionally, they must leverage individual and collective reflection for continuous improvement. Finally, they must broadly share their lessons so that others can RIZE to the

CALL within their perspective roles and organizations. As faculty committed to rising to the call, their actions can encourage and invite others to RIZE to the CALL as well.

Policy Recommendations

The university should establish a formal curriculum audit process identifying areas where anti-racist instruction can be incorporated or strengthened. This process should be collaborative and not maintain a *guard and guardrail* mentality. The curriculum audit process should be something other than a performative approval process that limits the autonomy, reflection, planning, and change needed at the programmatic level. The auditing process should be multi-step and multifaceted. The process should encourage the involvement of faculty, students, and community members. The university should provide faculty with training on anti-racist instruction, including best practices for incorporating anti-racist perspectives into the curriculum. This ongoing training should include opportunities for faculty to learn from one another.

Recommendations for Universities

Universities should provide faculty with sabbaticals or paid time to align their courses with anti-racist principles and plan for incorporating anti-racist perspectives into the curriculum, including time for research, attending conferences or workshops, and collaborating with colleagues. Institutions should incorporate anti-racist principles into the evaluation criteria for faculty, including teaching, research, and service, including evaluating faculty on their efforts to incorporate anti-racist perspectives into their courses and their involvement in anti-racist initiatives on campus. The university should incentivize faculty to engage in anti-racist instruction, such as recognition, awards, or funding opportunities, to motivate faculty to incorporate anti-racist principles into their courses and to participate in anti-racist initiatives on

campus. Establishing mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the curriculum audit process, including regular assessments of faculty engagement and the effectiveness of anti-racist instruction in the curriculum, involving feedback from students, faculty, and community members, as well as data on student outcomes is a final recommendation to colleges and universities.

State Agency Policy Recommendations

Instruction department instruction should develop evaluation criteria that include an assessment of how to incorporate anti-racist principles into their leadership practices, including evaluating principals on their efforts to promote equity and diversity, engage in anti-racist professional development, and create a welcoming and inclusive school culture. The state department of instruction should provide training and support for principals to engage in anti-racist leadership practices, including professional development opportunities, coaching, mentoring, and access to resources and best practices.

The state department of instruction should use data to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of anti-racist leadership practices, including analyzing data on student achievement and discipline and survey data on school climate and culture. The state department of instruction should involve stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and community members, in the evaluation process. Such involvement may include collecting feedback from stakeholders on how well principals promote equity and inclusion and using that feedback to inform evaluations. The state department of instruction should create incentives for principals to engage in anti-racist leadership practices, including recognition, awards, or funding opportunities for schools that demonstrate a commitment to anti-racist principles and practices. The state department of instruction should establish a mechanism for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the

evaluation process, including regular assessments of principal engagement with anti-racist principles and the effectiveness of anti-racist leadership practices in promoting equity and inclusion in schools.

Recommendations for the State Legislature

State legislators can create funding opportunities for schools and principal preparation programs demonstrating a commitment to anti-racist work, including grants for schools that develop and implement anti-racist programs or initiatives or additional funding for schools that demonstrate improvements in equity and inclusion. State legislators can develop recognition programs for schools and principals demonstrating a commitment to anti-racist work, including awards, certificates, or public recognition in the media. State legislators can establish evaluation criteria incorporating anti-racist principles and practices for principals. By tying evaluations and performance metrics to anti-racist work, incentivization may engage principals in these practices. State legislators can develop and fund professional development opportunities for principals to engage in anti-racist work, including training sessions, workshops, and conferences focused on anti-racist principles and practices. State legislators can encourage and promote access to resources that support anti-racist work, such as research and data on best practices, expert consultants, and partnerships with community organizations. State legislators can establish partnerships between schools, districts, and community organizations to support anti-racist work. By leveraging the expertise and resources of community organizations, schools can better implement effective anti-racist initiatives.

Sustaining Significant Work Across Systems

This policy recommendation aims to establish a statewide post-degree support program for principals. It provides ongoing professional development, coaching, and cohort-based

learning opportunities to help them improve their leadership skills and implement high-yield strategies in their schools. The state and literature recognize that principals are critical in improving student outcomes and advancing educational equity. Therefore, North Carolina should establish a post-degree support program for principals that incorporates coaching, ongoing professional development, and cohort-based learning opportunities. This program should be available to all principals in the state who hold a master's degree or higher and help them improve their leadership skills, deepen their content knowledge, and implement evidence-based practices in their schools. The post-degree support program for principals should include coaching, professional development, and cohort-based learning. Each principal should be assigned a coach who will provide ongoing support and guidance throughout the support program. Coaches must possess experience in principalship or educational leadership and have demonstrated expertise in instructional leadership, school improvement, equity, and anti-racism.

Principals should participate in ongoing professional development activities aligned with the state's educational priorities and focus on instructional leadership, school improvement, data analysis, equity, and anti-racism. Professional development activities deliverable through in-person and online formats will allow equitable access. Principals should participate in cohort-based learning experiences that allow them to collaborate with peers, share best practices, and learn from one another. Geographic region or school size determines cohort organization facilitated by experienced educational leaders. The cohorts should also have opportunities to be reformed based on the principal's identity to allow for affinity group discussions. Leaders of similar races should be able to reflect, share their concerns, and receive specialized support. However, the principals should also be intermixed based on race following these affinity groups to share the lessons learned within the race-based group more broadly with all participants.

The state's Department of Education should administer the post-degree support program for principals in collaboration with local education agencies, universities, and professional organizations. The Department of Education would be responsible for developing program guidelines and standards that outline the expectations for coaches, professional development activities, and cohort-based learning experiences. Additionally, they would identify and recruit qualified coaches with expertise in instructional leadership, school improvement, equity, and anti-racism. The department would coordinate and deliver professional development activities in partnership with universities, professional organizations, and local education agencies.

Finally, the department would facilitate the formation of cohort-based learning experiences and provide ongoing support to cohort facilitators. A combination of state and federal funds, private donations, and grants can fund the post-degree programs. The Department of Education should establish a budget for the program that includes funds for coaching, professional development, cohort-based learning, and program administration. The Department of Education should evaluate the effectiveness of the post-degree support program for principals annually. The evaluation shall include measures of program participation, principal satisfaction, coaching effectiveness, and student outcomes. Data assessment and evaluation can help to make program improvements and adjustments as needed.

These policy recommendations will ensure that principals can advance educational equity and improve student outcomes. Therefore, establishing a comprehensive post-degree support program for principals that provides coaching, ongoing professional development, and cohort-based learning opportunities may prove helpful in improving their leadership skills and ability to implement high-yield strategies in their schools. The findings and recommendations of

this study have significant implications for educational leadership and can provide a starting point for future research and practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations for future research emerged from the identified research limitations in this study. Future research should include a wider range of participant identities, including students, district leaders, community members/parents, and graduates from educational leadership programs. Expansion may provide a more comprehensive understanding of anti-racist leadership development across different contexts, stakeholder perspectives, and institutions. Future research may also include conducting a comparative case study across different states and regions, including urban and non-urban contexts. A geographic expansion could help to identify commonalities and differences in anti-racist leadership development and shed light on the effectiveness of different approaches within differing regional contexts.

A longitudinal, participatory action research (PAR) approach to engage participants in ongoing inquiry and co-creation of knowledge after the initial reflection process could provide helpful insight into how programs change over time. PAR might help to ensure that the research is responsive to the needs and perspectives of the participants and that the conclusions are grounded in their experiences and perspectives. Future research should also go beyond making the curriculum anti-racist by examining other domains, such as candidate admissions and graduate outcomes, that impact anti-racist leadership development. Entering new academic domains could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers and opportunities for anti-racist leadership in different contexts. Future research should consider the participant identity and research institution, including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions. Finally, researchers should reflect on their perspectives

and biases and take steps to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the data are grounded in the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Summary

Principal preparation programs should endeavor to develop anti-racist leaders in North Carolina (NC) for several reasons. First and foremost, creating a diverse and inclusive educational environment is essential for promoting equitable and just outcomes for all students. Research has shown that students of color and other marginalized groups experience a range of educational disparities, including lower achievement, higher dropout rates, and disproportionate disciplinary actions. By developing anti-racist leaders who are knowledgeable about systemic racism and are committed to addressing it, principal preparation programs can help to create more equitable school environments and learning outcomes.

Secondly, the education system in NC, like in many other states, has a long history of racial inequality and segregation. As a result, there is a need for educational leaders who can address the legacy of segregation and promote more inclusive educational practices. Anti-racist leaders can work to eliminate implicit biases, address microaggressions, and create more inclusive educational environments that affirm the identities and experiences of all students.

Lastly, as North Carolina becomes increasingly diverse, educational leaders must equip themselves with the skills and knowledge to lead in a diverse environment. Anti-racist leaders can create a culture of respect, equity, and inclusion that celebrates diversity and promotes all students' academic and social success. Principal preparation programs should endeavor to develop anti-racist leaders in North Carolina to promote equitable educational outcomes, address systemic racism and promote more inclusive practices, and prepare leaders for a diverse and changing demographic landscape.

The findings of this study demonstrated the value of a reflective process in developing an anti-racist curriculum and provide a practical process and strategies for faculty members to use. Through this process, faculty members can better understand anti-racism and its impact on their program, develop clear programmatic goals, and work towards creating an anti-racist curriculum for educational leaders. Findings also highlight the importance of collaborative faculty engagement in curriculum development. By integrating issues of race and racism into the curriculum, faculty members can better prepare future leaders to lead in diverse and complex settings. This study underscores the need for leadership preparation faculty to engage in critical self-reflection to deconstruct Whiteness within their curriculum. It offers a model for curriculum development that can be applied more broadly.

By working together and supporting one another, teams can be powerful agents of change in the fight against racism and other forms of oppression. Participants concluded, “We are always on the journey. We must be careful because we can never pretend we have arrived. We feel like this is a journey, and we will always be on that journey” (Eleanor, personal communication). Join the journey. Take the first step. May this research and framework encourage and support you as you take steps toward anti-racism. I challenge you to RIZE to the CALL. The time is now. We can RIZE together.

Epilogue: An Invitation to RIZE

On 24 May 2020, I received a phone call that changed my life. It was confirmed that one of my biggest prayers had been answered, I was going to be a mom. After 8 years of battling infertility, I received the results of the DNA blood test that confirmed that I had a baby boy due in September 2020. I sat on my couch overjoyed and cried tears of relief as I envisioned what they would look like, how their voice would sound, and whom they would grow up to be. With the devastation of COVID-19 causing a stay-at-home order, I was working from home when the news app on my phone displayed a notification about a police shooting.

George Floyd

On the very same couch where I had just sat with tears of joy, my heart was broken in anguish as I watched in disbelief and anger as Floyd was killed like a hunted animal. The outcry to their mom during their last moments shattered the stillness around me as I held on to my pregnant stomach. I wept. I felt like I, too, could not breathe. I could not fathom how this could happen. All I could picture was George as a youth, as a baby, like the one I was carrying. I envisioned how they started off as an infant Black boy with limitless potential. I wondered, when did they become a threat? Were they 5, 10, 18, 20, or 46? Why did they become a threat? Why did their race have to dictate the finality of their life? How and why does racism continue to produce deadly consequences for people of color? As a faculty member in a principal preparation program and a new mom, I felt a deep commitment to intensely interrogate how our educational systems maintain Whiteness and racism; this meant starting with my profession and area of practice.

The harsh reality is that Floyd's death was not the first police killing. This moment was simply the tipping point, reminding us that critical change is necessary as it relates to racism in

America. Racism must die because if it continues to live in the hearts and minds of people, then death is the only outcome for people of color, whether that death be emotional, mental, or physical. It is time to allow racism to die and conceptualize a new possibility. As a relatively new mom, the notion of birthing seems like a helpful analogy to consider the possibility of conceiving something new.

Conception and the Possibility of New

In the United States, we continue to see disparate outcomes for marginalized groups because the systems and institutions that shape our lives create and perpetuate inequality along racial lines. As long as racism continues to permeate the interlocking systems in society, such as the educational system, criminal justice system, transportation system, financial system, and housing system, inequity will continue to be the outcome. With this in mind, I challenge the notion of only having one theoretical class within a principal preparation program that teaches equity and social justice. If that class does not thoroughly address the racism that maintains inequity, how can leaders effectively transform and lead the schools they serve? When conducting my pilot study, I interviewed a White faculty member who shared that while they serve on the anti-racist task force, they often felt limited in their ability to speak about race truly. They felt *Whitened* out. They are on the tenure track and recognizes that many of the senior faculty that would vote in their tenure process has discouraged them from being so vocal about race issues and racist policies within the college. When one cannot speak about the impact of Whiteness, how can they serve on a task force for anti-racism?

This task force is an example of privilege masquerading as theoretical anti-racism because it opposes true anti-racist work by focusing on scholarship and public relations rather than activism. This task force is the antithesis of anti-racist work as it does not allow for a true

transformation of the social realities on our campuses. Using the terminology task force suggests this is a temporary fixture within the college. Anti-racist work is a proactive, long-term, sustained commitment to address problems of racism, not a public relations opportunity.

Gestation: Growth and Development

Change takes time. However, racism has been embedded in society long enough. Principal preparation programs do not have the luxury of waiting for a long programmatic redesign process. Leaders must prepare for the heightened critical racial tensions within their schools. So, who will take the initiative? How long do we wait? What principles and theories will the faculty use do the work? Schools are waiting for leaders positioned and prepared to address racism in practices, procedures, policies, and structures within their schools. It is time for principal preparation programs to stretch because it is time to develop, grow, and birth transformative, anti-racist leaders.

Labor and Delivery

During labor and delivery, the growth within becomes evident and actualized. It does not come without pain and pushing. Likewise, principal preparation programs are in the birthing room. Producing transformative, anti-racism leaders may be painful because it will challenge faculty to address and face colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and racism within their structures, policy, culture, and procedures. However, if faculty leverage anti-racism principles, they can help produce the transformative, anti-racist leaders our schools and society desperately need. I have constructed letters to my colleagues who are co-laboring in the field of educator preparation. These letters invite faculty members to consider their role in developing anti-racist leaders and encourage them to take intentional action to transform principal preparation.

Dear Faculty Member of Color

Pause momentarily and realize that your presence in the academic space matters. You are your ancestor's wildest dream. Your ancestors paved the way, yet the world that Martin Luther King dreamed of is still so far away. Now it is up to you. May this letter provide encouragement, support, and guidance as you commit to and continue your efforts to promote anti-racism.

You have likely faced many challenges and obstacles along the way. The stress and emotional exhaustion you may experience as a faculty member of color can make you feel lonely, hurt, sad, angry, and misunderstood. The weight of racism and the toll that it can have on you personally, emotionally, physically, and mentally is real. Balancing the blessing and burden of being anti-racist can be challenging. As you educate others, you expend physical and emotional energy that can cause racial battle fatigue. If you need to rest, then rest, but do not quit. Maintaining the energy and motivation to do anti-racist work can sometimes seem counterproductive to your overall well-being. So, find moments of solitude and rest. You are not alone. Your efforts matter.

While you might be passionate about leading the anti-racist charge, remember to hold space for your White counterparts to lead the work too. This is a joint effort. Take the time to process and heal from the impact of your firsthand experiences with racism while allowing your heart to be nimble and open to seeing the perspective of others. Reflect often on your purpose and remember why you are doing this important work.

May you always remember that this work will require self-reflection, critical thinking, and a willingness to challenge your beliefs and assumptions and the assumptions of those around you. You are stronger than you can ever imagine. Generations will come to depend on

what you choose to do now. You were born for such a time as this. What will history say about you and your contribution to anti-racism? Sure, the journey is hard. However, I want you to consider lessons we can all learn from key leaders who have gone before us.

If you can imagine what an anti-racist society could be like, then dream big like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

If you are exhausted and must sit, then sit in solidarity with your White counterparts like Rosa Parks.

If you feel like you cannot find the energy to continue, then choose to persist like the Greensboro Four.

If you feel you want to quit, remember the words of Cesar Chavez, "¡Si Se Puede!" it is possible, and it can be done.

If you cannot see the whole path, then just take the first step, like John Lewis and Hosea Williams as they marched from Selma to Montgomery.

If you are ready to fight this fight of anti-racism tirelessly, get in the ring with confidence like Muhammad Ali.

If you feel like you can barely muster the courage and strength to speak with grace and conviction, speak with the wisdom of Dr. Mya Angelou. As Dr. Angelou reminds you, bring the gifts that your ancestors gave you because you are the hope and the dream of the slave, so rize… rize… rize to the call. May the RIZE to the CALL framework provide you with a way forward on your anti-racist journey.

Dear White Faculty Members

I hope this letter provides guidance, support, and encouragement as you commit to being an ally for anti-racism. I wanted to take a moment to encourage you in your anti-racist efforts and to acknowledge your commitment to anti-racism. May you never forget your power and influence as a White person. Your voice and actions can profoundly impact the fight against systemic racism. Promise yourself that you will not get consumed in the racist blame game that distracts us from anti-racism's important work. While you may not have contributed to the atrocious racist history in our country against people of color, you are uniquely positioned and responsible for shaping our country's present and future history. You may not have been there, but you are **HERE**. You were born for such a time as this. Your decision to contribute to an anti-racist society can become your legacy. What will history say about you and your contribution to anti-racism?

When it gets hard and you feel close to giving up, know that while this work can be challenging, you are not alone and your contributions matter. Many people will support you, and there will be those who will not. But I believe in your ability to make a difference, and people are waiting for the difference you can make. Remember that one of the first steps to becoming an anti-racist ally is knowing or rediscovering who you are. Next, you must educate others on how White privilege and systemic racism intersect and perpetuate inequity. Such education requires self-reflection, critical thinking, and a willingness to challenge your beliefs and assumptions and the assumptions of those around you.

Once you have developed a deeper understanding of the historical and present repercussions of racism, it's important to put your knowledge into action, involving engaging in difficult conversations with your colleagues, students, and community members. These

conversations must lead to creating inclusive spaces that foster open and honest dialogue about race and the impact of racism. It also means using your position of influence to advocate for policies and practices that promote equity and justice for all people. Recognize that anti-racist work should not fall solely on the shoulders of people of color. They must strive to both traverse and transcend systemic racism daily. Learn when to listen, when to learn, when to lead, and when to leverage your unique power and privilege to make changes.

I encourage you to connect with others who are committed to this work. Connect with local anti-racism organizations and online communities, or simply reach out to critical friends and family members who share your anti-racist values. By building a network of support and encouragement, you will be better equipped to face the challenges that may lie ahead and continue to grow and evolve in your anti-racism practice. As you strive to be anti-racist, you may make a mistake or misstep, but at least you took a step. That matters. Acknowledge your mistake, learn from it, fix it, if necessary, apologize, and continue your journey. Finally, I encourage you to welcome discomfort. Discomfort is evidence that you are going in the right direction.

When you feel like giving up, stay dedicated like William Lloyd Garrison.

When unsure if your actions matter, believe you are making a positive difference and that your words can change the world, like Harriet Beecher Stowe.

When you are emotionally and physically exhausted, fight the good fight like Charles Sumner.

When you feel you do not dare to be an ally, show up as a strong advocate like Eleanor Roosevelt.

When you need the courage just to show up, embody the courageous Anne Braden, who spent their life fighting combating racism.

Thank you for your courage, determination, and commitment to being anti-racist. You are making a difference, and your efforts can inspire others to follow your lead. Show up intentionally every day in every space and hold others accountable to do the same. May the RIZE to the CALL framework provide you with a way forward on your anti-racist journey. When you get the chance to acquiesce to the pressures of racism or ascend to be anti-racist, I hope you RIZE to the CALL.

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Appendix A

Email Request to Participate in Research

Dear Program Director:

As a doctoral student in the School of Education at Appalachian State University, I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled Towards an Anti-Racist Leadership Design: A Faculty Self-Study on an Educational Leadership Curriculum

The purpose of this study is to explore how faculty self-assess and reflect on their course content, how faculty navigate challenges and barriers to changing their curriculum, and how faculty develop innovative instructional strategies that prepare principal candidates to lead as anti-racist leaders.

Participants must be a faculty team within one principal preparation program located in the state of North Carolina at a public institution of higher education or university. Additionally, faculty who directly make curricular decisions are asked to be invited to participate. You are being contacted directly because you serve as a program director for a principal preparation program.

If your team volunteers to participate in this study, I would first ask for some brief background information by email or phone in order to prepare for our focus group sessions. With your team's consent, I would ask participants to engage in two focus group interviews and one individual interview. These interviews may take place both via zoom and in-person as

COVID-19 restrictions allow. Participants will engage in a minimum of two, 90-minute focus group sessions and one individual interview. These sessions will be audiotaped and will consist of open-ended questions and a self-study tool that allows faculty to reflect and self-assess their current curriculum to consider how it may develop anti-racist leaders.

The sessions will be scheduled at a time and place that is most convenient for your team. Potential discomfort may be experienced when discussing racism and oppression. Risks will be minimal, given these sessions are strictly voluntary and confidential and discussion questions are open-ended. Your participation is confidential and voluntary. You are free to answer any questions, withdraw your consent, and/or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Your participation in the research will be of great importance as it may provide guidance to other principal preparation programs who want to engage in redesigning their programs to develop anti-racist school leaders.

If you would like to participate or have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact Karen Anderson at andersonkl3@appstate.edu. I greatly appreciate your help and look forward to working and learning with you.

Sincerely,

Karen Anderson

Appendix B

Consent to Participate in Research

Towards an Anti-Racist Leadership Design: A Faculty Self-Study on an Educational Leadership Curriculum

Principal Investigator: Karen Anderson

Department: The Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

Contact Information: andersonkl3@appstate.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Vachel Miller

Contact Information: millervw@appstate.edu

Consent to Participate in Research

I agree to participate in two focus group interviews and one individual interview for this research on how faculty in principal preparation programs self-assess and reflect on their course content. The focus group interviews may take place both via zoom and in-person as COVID-19 restrictions allow. At minimum two, 90-minute focus group sessions will take place. I understand that additional focus group sessions can be requested at the discretion of participants. I understand that the focus group interviews will include questions about how faculty reflect on and reimagine their curriculum, how faculty navigate challenges and barriers to updating their curriculum, and how faculty develop innovative strategies that prepare principal candidates to lead as anti-racist leaders.

I understand that there are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. The risks related to this research may include possible discomfort when sharing experiences about racism and oppression. There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. The indirect benefits of participation is self-reflection that may lead to transformative change efforts for faculty who want to engage in equity and racial justice work that addresses principal candidates' learning needs. Also, future policy changes and professional development opportunities may be developed to address findings highlighted through this study.

During the course of the focus group interviews, I will not mention any personal or private, identifiable information (such as names) of individuals who are not participating in the focus group. In addition, I agree that all conversations which take place in the focus group should not be discussed with anyone outside of the focus group and its participants.

The information that I share will be held in confidence to the fullest extent allowed by law. Protecting my privacy as related to this research is of utmost importance. Data that will be shared with others about me will be de-identified. De-identified data is information that at one time could directly identify me, but Karen Anderson will record this data so that my identity is separated from the data. Karen Anderson will have a master list with my pseudonym and real name that they can use to link to my data. When the research concludes, there will be no way my real identity will be linked to the data we publish.

I understand that the focus group(s) will be audio and/or video recorded. I give Karen Anderson ownership of the tapes, transcripts, and recordings from the interview(s) they

conducted with me and understand that tapes and transcripts will be kept in the researcher's secured possession. I understand that information or quotations from recordings and/or transcripts will be published.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can end it at any time without consequence. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions and can end the interview at any time with no consequences.

If I have questions about this research project, I can call Karen Anderson at [redacted] or the Appalachian Institutional Review Board Administrator at 828-262-2692 (days), or through email at irb@appstate.edu or at Appalachian State University, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, IRB Administrator, Boone, NC 28608.

This research project was approved on April, 13, 2021 by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Appalachian State University.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read this form, had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and received satisfactory answers, and want to participate. By proceeding with the activities described above, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the research procedures outlined in this consent form, and voluntarily agree to participate in this research. I understand I can keep a copy for my records.

Participant's Name

(PRINT):_____

Signature:

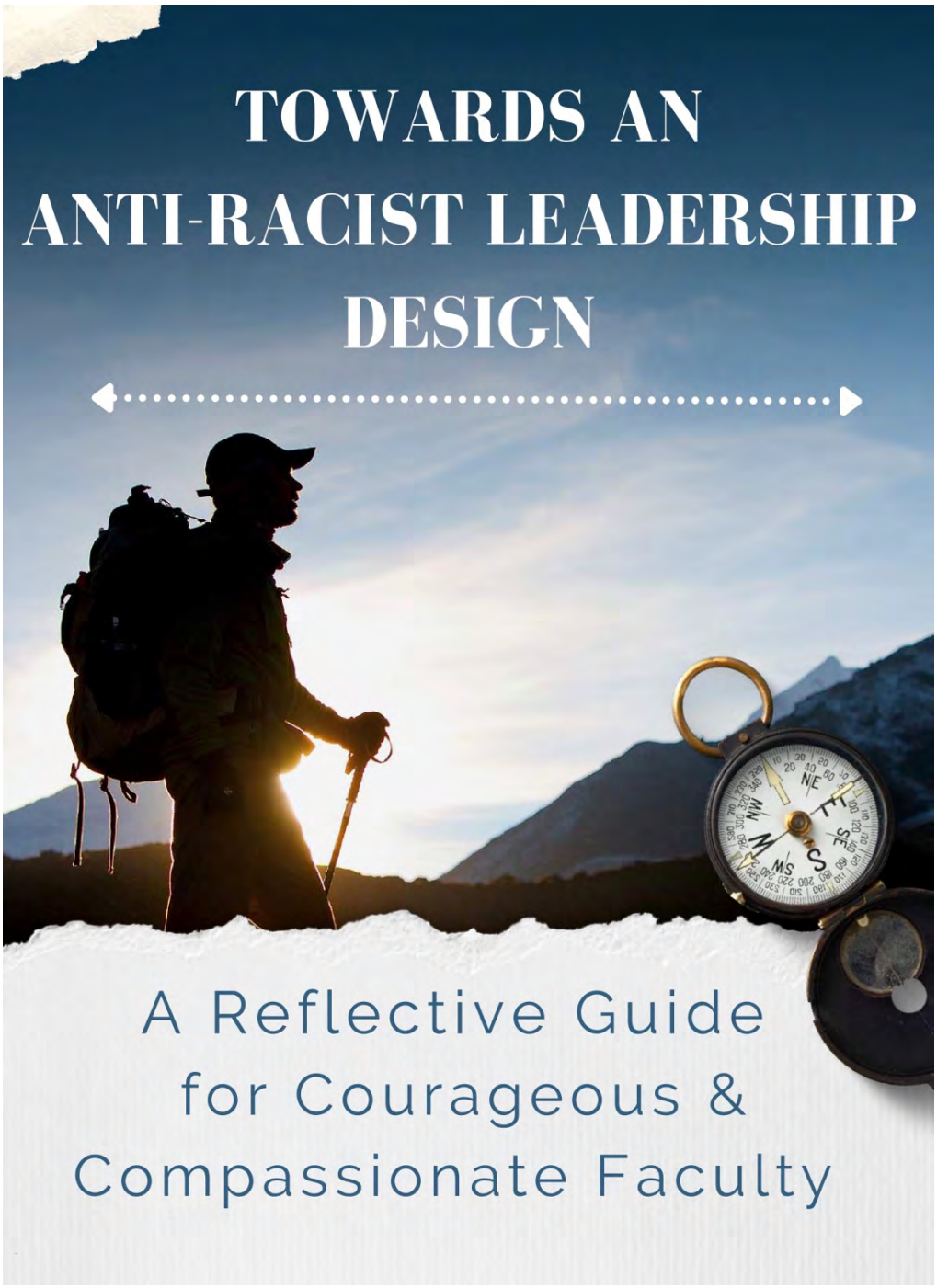
_____

Date:

_____

Appendix C

Excerpts from Towards an Anti-Racist Leadership Reflective Guide for Courageous and Compassionate Faculty



Towards an Anti-Racist Curricular Design:

A Reflective Guide for Courageous and Compassionate Faculty

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Since 2004, the Quality Measures Center for Program Assessment and Technical Assistance at EDC has championed and supported excellence in the preparation of school principals. Their work supports the detailed vision for high-quality principal preparation, drawn from current research and articulated through the rubric of program domains and indicators at the heart of their Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Self-Study Toolkit (QM Toolkit).

They engage principal preparation program faculty and their district and state partners in conducting evidence-based self-assessments of program quality, using that rubric as a guide. Quality Measures tools and protocols support self-study teams' reflection, dialogue, and identification of areas for improvement. This resource builds on the extraordinary and impactful work that Dr. Cheryl King led by developing the QM tools and processes over the span of 10 editions and more than 15 years.

This guide elevates and explicitly infuses anti-racism in educational leadership curriculum and coursework as a means to encourage educator preparation programs to "create more inclusive spaces that work to de-center whiteness by critically examining their current climate and culture and revising policies that perpetuate white supremacist culture in K-12 and higher education"(The DRIVE Task Force, with support from The Hunt Institute, 2020, p. 10).

Written permission has been granted for the modification of the *Quality Measures™ principal preparation program self-study toolkit: For use in developing, assessing, and improving principal preparation programs* (10th ed.) to create this self-reflection guide.

King, C. (2018). *Quality Measures™ principal preparation program self-study toolkit: For use in developing, assessing, and improving principal preparation programs* (10th ed.). Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Using the Guide

This self-reflective process consists of four parts:

1. A group interview and a brief orientation covering the self-reflection guide, domain, and indicators.
2. A collaborative reflective period where the team engages in dialogue and gathers examples from their daily work that help them engage in deeper reflection and learning.
3. A second interview will allow the group to share their collective learning and reflection. Samples or examples may be shared and are encouraged. The group will share where they feel they are on the anti-racist journey for each indicator. The team may consider/share any thoughts or next steps for programmatic improvement.
4. A follow-up 30-60 minute individual interview will be offered but not required.

Domain 2: Inclusive and Anti-Racist Coursework

INDICATOR I: STANDARDS	
CRITERIA	Courses are based on specific, measurable, and comprehensive school leader performance standards that include an explicit commitment to anti-racist leadership (e.g., PSEL, NELP, and/or state or local leadership standards).
GUIDING RESOURCES	Reflection & Discussion Prompts • Where/How does equity and anti-racist leadership show up in our program's leadership standards? • If what we choose to teach reflects what we believe is important, is our curriculum an accurate reflection of what we believe is important? • How do the North Carolina Executive Standards impact our ability to teach about equity and anti-racism? (positively, neutrally, negatively) • How do other leadership standards impact our ability to teach about equity and anti-racism? (positively, neutrally, negatively) • Are there any other constraints that may impact the standards that guide our curriculum? (Accreditation standards, university standards, etc.) Resources for deeper learning and reflection: 1. Preparing leaders for wicked problems? How the revised PSEL and NELP standards address equity and justice 2. National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Recognition Standards 3. Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) 4. Principals Need Help Building Anti-Racist Schools 5. What an Anti-Racist Principal Must Do (Opinion) 6. Anti-Racist Educational Leadership and Policy: Addressing Racism in Public Education
Anti-Racist Journey	**Toward** ☐ Leadership standards are used to help students understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture. ☐ Leadership standards are used to help students understand the broader social and political concerns with equity and inequality in the use of educational resources, procedures, and opportunities **Forward & Upward:** ☐ Faculty interrogate leadership standards to consider how standards may impact their ability to teach about equity and anti-racism. ☐ Faculty seek opportunities to teach beyond the traditional leadership standards to address topics related to equity, racism, and anti-racism. **Inward and Onward** ☐ Leadership standards inform course design and content that helps students evaluate root causes of inequity, bias, and racism. ☐ Faculty leverage all professional standards and make the conscious decision to transcend the traditional professional standards when needed to ensure that their graduates will be capable of cultivating equitable, inclusive, anti-racist learning environments for teachers, staff, and students.
Reflection Notes	

Domain 2: Inclusive and Anti-Racist Coursework

INDICATOR II: ANTI-RACIST AND EQUITY-CENTERED LEARNING GOALS	
CRITERIA	Courses articulate clear learning goals for candidates, derived from the standards. Learning goals include both the content knowledge and the educational leadership skills that demonstrate the candidate's ability to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equity and anti-racism. Learning goals promote transformative and deep learning that develop candidates' equity-centered and anti-racist leadership skills and behaviors.
GUIDING RESOURCES	Reflection & Discussion Prompts • How are our equity-oriented and anti-racist learning goals reflected within the courses? • How do our learning goals frame our curriculum approach to preparing principal candidates who engage in action-oriented strategies for institutional, systemic changes that address racism and other interlocking systems of oppression? Resources for deeper learning and reflection: 1. UW School of Public Health Anti-Racism Universal Training Proposal (see page 7-10) 2. Effective Teaching Is Anti-Racist Teaching | Sheridan Center | Brown University
Anti-Racist Journey	**Toward:** ☐ Faculty explore how to embed equity-oriented and/or anti-racist learning goals in their course(s). ☐ Faculty have equity-oriented and/or anti-racist learning goals reflected in a course. **Forward:** ☐ Equity-oriented and/or anti-racist learning goals are reflected within and across all courses. ☐ Faculty intentionally add anti-racist course content that aligns with learning goals and outcomes. ☐ Learning goals specify how instruction will lead to the development of critical analytical skills needed to deconstruct how racism may be invisible yet is still prevalent in our societal systems, including educational institutions. **Inward and Onward:** ☐ Learning goals specify that students will demonstrate knowledge of key concepts such as: race and ethnicity, privileges and benefits based on racial identity, racial prejudice and racism, institutional discrimination, and assimilation and exclusion. ☐ Learning goals require that students go further into depth on a particular racial injustice issue and identify ways they can use their own leadership and advocacy to create change. ☐ An assessment instrument has been designed to measure student knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors before and after completing the preparation program
Reflection Notes	

Domain 2: Inclusive and Anti-Racist Coursework

INDICATOR III: INCLUSIVE COURSE DESIGN AND SEQUENCING	
CRITERIA	The design of each course explicitly connects learning goals, course content, and course assessments. The program's course sequence is ordered to ensure that concepts and skills build upon each other in a structured progression of learning. A focus on equity and anti-racist leadership is embedded throughout the sequence.
GUIDING RESOURCES	Reflection & Discussion Prompts • How do we allot time and content within courses to discuss and develop skills for productive conversations about race (Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017; Leonardo & Porter, 2010)? • What do we want our students to remember from our courses 10-15 years from now? • How should students be changed after completing our course sequence? • What are current barriers that impact our course design? How might these barriers hinder the development of anti-racist educational leaders? • How might our course design need to change to ensure that we prepare future educational leaders to be anti-racist? • How do we engage in collective collaborative course planning that leads to the consistent and comprehensive integration of topics related to race, racism, and anti-racism. Resources for deeper learning and reflection: 1. Antiracist Pedagogy and Praxis 2. "Decolonization" of Syllabi and the Classroom - Antiracist Praxis - Subject Guides at American University 3. Race talk and the conspiracy of silence: Understanding and facilitating difficult dialogues on race. 4. Decolonizing Your Syllabus, an Anti-Racist Guide for Your College | ASCCC 5. Anti-Racist Pedagogy Resources 6. Racial Justice, Racial Equity, and Anti-Racism Reading List | Harvard Kennedy School 7. A 12-Step Program for Decolonizing the University: Archived Webinar - Social Science Space 8. Effective Teaching Is Anti-Racist Teaching | Sheridan Center | Brown University
Anti-Racist Journey	**Toward:** ☐ Courses are scaffolded by design to build upon previous content and skills to engage in topics like equity and social justice. ☐ Courses are designed to deliver information, concepts, and vocabulary that are loosely related to anti-racism. ☐ Course design establishes knowledge acquisition on topics related to race and racism but may not lead to students critically examining these topics. **Forward:** ☐ Courses are scaffolded by design to build upon previous content and to infuse anti-racism skill development. ☐ Courses are designed to help students critically analyze power relations, the systemic nature of racism, and how our social positions operate within these structures. ☐ Courses require students to learn and practice self-reflection regarding their individual social position and socialization. **Inward and Onward:** ☐ Incorporates an anti-racism lens in program design, implementation and assessment. Engages both colleagues and students in establishing an understanding of how an incident, action, practice or policy maintains racism and, as appropriate, identify anti-racist alternatives. ☐ Courses are designed to examine the historically and socially constructed concepts and meanings of race, racism, ethnicity, and oppression addressing African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, and/or Latino/as (Racial Issues Colloquium, 2006). ☐ Courses are designed to explore the patterns of racial oppression, racial domination, and hate crimes; the impact of racial classification; as well as the heritage, culture, and contributions of under-represented and oppressed people of color (Racial Issues Colloquium, 2006). ☐ Courses are designed to raise consciousness of the daily and institutional realities of racial discrimination, as well as racial privileges experienced by different racial groups. In addition, a course must explore how members of racially oppressed groups maintain a sense of identity in the face of persistent and systemic racial oppression (Racial Issues Colloquium, 2006). ☐ Courses are designed to engage students in critical dialogue and self-reflection on the role of racial power relations in students' lives (Racial Issues Colloquium, 2006). ☐ The program's course sequence is ordered to ensure that concepts and skills build upon each other in a structured progression of learning. A focus on equity-oriented leadership and anti-racist leadership are embedded throughout the sequence.
Reflection Notes	

Domain 2: Inclusive and Anti-Racist Coursework

INDICATOR IV: COURSE CONTENT	
CRITERIA	Course content applies an anti-racist lens to instructional leadership, school improvement, family and community relations, management, and organizational culture. Courses include content that helps candidates understand systemic inequities; analyze policy and practice with an anti-racist lens; and practice engaging others in conversations around race-related issues.
GUIDING RESOURCES	Reflection & Discussion Prompts • Does our course content go beyond teaching "diversity" to discuss racism, institutional racism? If so, how? • Does our course content infuse racial issues across courses? • How does the current course content increase the principal candidate's knowledge and ability to lead as an anti-racist leader? • How do we review course materials and content to ensure that our course design is intentionally and explicitly anti-racist? Resources for deeper learning and reflection: 1. A Cross-Curricular and Collaborative Model for Teaching about Race in the University 2. The Social Justice Syllabus Design Tool: A First Step in Doing Social Justice Pedagogy 3. Multicultural Education vs Anti-Racist Education: The Debate in Canada 4. Kernahan, C. (2019). Teaching about race and racism in the college classroom: Notes from a white professor. West Virginia U.P.
Anti-Racist Journey	**Toward:** ☐ Courses are compartmentalized and assign the discussion of race to a specific experience, training, or a few class sessions. ☐ Course content incorporates multiculturalism or diversity topics using descriptive terms such as intolerance, human cultures, cultural perspectives, cultural appreciation, respect for difference, sensitivity to needs, interactions between individuals of different groups, changing nature of American society, and foreign cultures (St Clair & Kishimoto, 2010). **Forward:** ☐ Courses focuses on "the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other institutionalized systems of inequality" (Xing, Li, Roper, & Shaw, 2007). ☐ Discussions and assignments help students connect racial issues and concepts to their daily lives. ☐ Self-reflection and action empowers students and faculty to engage in anti-racist dialogue in in a supportive environment. ☐ Faculty share experiences from their life and model how they unpack their own social locations, learning, and development and encourage students to do the same. **Inward and Onward:** ☐ Course content goes beyond teaching "diversity" and discusses racism, institutional racism, white privilege, etc. and also integrates racial issues across the program curriculum (St Clair & Kishimoto, 2010). ☐ Race is taught within and across the curriculum and is not delivered through a one-time workshop or training. ☐ Efforts to legitimize the discussion of race is a shared responsibility of teaching among faculty throughout the program. ☐ Discussions and assignments help students connect racial issues and concepts to their own leadership ethic and responsibility and provides strategies that empower the student to dismantle and/or disrupt racism within education.
Reflection Notes	

Domain 2: Inclusive and Anti-Racist Coursework

INDICATOR V: DIVERSIFYING COURSE MATERIALS	
CRITERIA	Course materials are culturally responsive, reflect diverse authorship, and are inclusive of multiple perspectives. Program faculty conduct regular audits of course materials to ensure they include timely, relevant, rigorous, and research-based sources on equity-oriented and anti-racist leadership.
GUIDING RESOURCES	Reflection & Discussion Prompts • What processes do we have in place to help us regularly and collaboratively audit our course material? • What is the program's approach to ensuring that materials in every course are culturally responsive and inclusive of multiple perspectives? What resources or support do faculty have in this area? • What different perspectives and viewpoints are included in the course content? • In what ways have we diversified learning outcomes, class readings, assignments, and resources to reflect marginalized peoples, scholarship, and practices? • In what ways might we need to diversify learning outcomes, class readings, assignments, and resources to reflect marginalized peoples, scholarship, and practices? Resources for deeper learning and reflection: 1. Teaching Race: Pedagogy and Practice Vanderbilt University 2. "Teaching Race, Racism, and Racial Justice: Pedagogical Principles and " by M. Brielle Harbin, Amie Thurber et al.
Anti-Racist Journey	**Toward:** ☐ Faculty meet periodically to audit their course material to ensure that they are exposing students to topics related to equity, racism, and race-related issues. ☐ Faculty invite guest speakers who bring different perspectives. ☐ Faculty ensure different perspectives and viewpoints are included in the course content. ☐ Faculty ensure their syllabi to communicate openness to multiple perspectives and experiences. **Forward:** ☐ Faculty engage students' diverse perspectives, even when they are flawed, to help students think more deeply about issues of race and racism (Harbin, Thurber, & Bandy, 2019). ☐ Faculty exposes students to alternative viewpoints, and voices arguments that may be considered problematic or political. ☐ Faculty diversify course content by using alternative texts that explore course content and non-traditional resources that allow for new forms of intellectual, emotional, and social development. ☐ Faculty diversify how students engage and participate in learning. ☐ Faculty diversify how students access curriculum content and demonstrate their learning. ☐ Faculty diversify how students can demonstrate their learning. **Inward and Onward:** ☐ Faculty regularly reflect on their curriculum and replace/modify curriculum in order to increase representation of previously marginalized and diverse knowledge or underrepresented perspectives with their texts, media, lectures, labs, and learning activities across their preparation program (O'Neill & Miller, 2015; Lichty & Palamaro-Munsell, 2017). ☐ Faculty diversify course content by using alternative texts that explore course content and non-traditional resources that allow for knowledge production about the social construction of race and systemic manifestations of racism.
Reflection Notes	

Domain 2: Inclusive and Anti-Racist Coursework

INDICATOR VI: CURRICULAR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	
CRITERIA	Faculty engage in ongoing professional learning and reflection. Faculty regularly audit courses and course material(s) to ensure that students develop critical consciousness, deep connections and deep learning experiences that lead to the development of transformative, anti-racist educational leaders.
GUIDING RESOURCES	Reflection & Discussion Prompts • How do we ensure that our topics are updated to reflect timely, relevant, or controversial topics in education related to race, racism, or anti-racism? • How do we anticipate the future needs of our partnership districts and the educational landscape? • How does our current curriculum design explicitly connect course content, learning activities, resources and materials, and course reflection measures to increase the principal candidate's knowledge and ability to lead as an anti-racist leader? • Do we tend to be more reactive or proactive in our continuous improvement efforts? Resources for deeper learning and reflection: 1. Resources for Educators Focusing on Anti-Racist Learning and Teaching 2. African American Histories: Curricular Resources and Information to Build Teachers' Background Knowledge 3. Understanding Racism and Educational Institutions Resources 4. Scaffolded Anti-racist resources 5. Antiracist Pedagogy in Higher Education - Anti-racism Resources - LibGuides at Merrimack College 6. Anti-racist pedagogy: from faculty's self-reflection to organizing within and beyond the classroom 7. Anti-Racism in Higher Education: A Model for Change
Anti-Racist Journey	**Toward:** ☐ Faculty understand that anti-racism is a lifelong journey and commitment which is a continuous endeavor. ☐ Faculty engage in ongoing professional learning relevant to topics such as social justice, equity, and anti-racism. ☐ Faculty engage in regularly scheduled, systematic review of the curriculum. **Forward:** ☐ Faculty understand and commit to anti-racist practices and pedagogy as a lifelong journey and a continuous endeavor. ☐ Faculty leverage their ongoing professional learning on topics such as social justice, equity, and anti-racism to develop and deliver anti-racist curriculum. ☐ Faculty engage in regularly scheduled, systematic review of the curriculum and modify curriculum to reflect most relevant material and content related to equity, and anti-racism. ☐ Faculty regularly receive structured feedback from students that shape modifications to the curriculum and/or their teaching practices. **Inward and Onward:** ☐ Faculty engage in ongoing professional learning relevant to topics such as social justice, equity, and anti-racism and leverage their knowledge to analyze their own relationship to these topics, identify implicit biases, and identify anti-racist pegagogy and instructional practices. ☐ Faculty consistently challenge the status quo, the idea of meritocracy, color-blindness, and white supremacy culture evident within their programming and graduate outcomes. ☐ Faculty engage in consistent, collaborative and individual reflection on their shared commitment to anti-racist practices/pedagogy, they identify curricular areas for improvement and modify/update curriculum and/or teaching practices. ☐ Faculty meet frequently to discuss challenges and strategies for implementing anti-racist content and pedagogy in their teaching and classes. Faculty create a supportive community and hold each other accountable in their individual and collective efforts.
Reflection Notes	

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Guide and Protocol

Interview Guide for Focus Group Interview #1

RQ 1: How do faculty in educational leadership programs self-examine and reflect on how their course content aligns with racial equity or anti-racist leadership design?

How does your program define equity-oriented leadership?

How would you define anti-racist leadership design?

Based on these definitions, where are you currently as a program, more equity oriented or anti-racist oriented?

What is your program's vision equity and anti-racist oriented curriculum?

What is leading or motivating you to do equity/anti-racist work?

What are our concerns, fears, worries about engaging in equity/anti-racist work?

What tools, protocols, or collaborative structures have been used to reflect on or self-assess your program's curriculum?

Is there anything else you would like to share?

At the conclusion of this interview, participants will be provided an overview of the self-study toolkit, directions for their independent review, and the self-study guide. Participants will have four weeks to complete the self-assessment.

Interview Guide for Focus Group Interview #2

Research Question 1: How do faculty in educational leadership programs self-examine and reflect on how their course content aligns with racial equity or anti-racist leadership design?

Based on your self-assessment, what did you see as areas of strength in your program's curriculum?

Based on your self-assessment, what did you see as areas of opportunity in your program's curriculum?

Based on your self-assessment, how does the current course design explicitly connect course content, learning activities, resources and materials, and course assessment measures to increase the principal candidate's knowledge and ability to lead as an anti-racist leader?

In what ways might the curriculum require changes? (Based on responses and material from the self-assessment the following questions will be considered to prompt participants to think deeply.)

In what ways might the curriculum need to diversify learning outcomes, class readings, assignments, and resources to reflect marginalized peoples, scholarship, and practices?

How does your curriculum prepare principal candidates to engage in action-oriented strategies for institutional, systemic changes that address racism and other interlocking systems of oppression?

How does your curriculum explicitly name the issues of race, social difference, and issues of power and equity?

What curricular and co-curricular offerings already reflect or offer opportunities toward ending systemic racism?

What necessary classes or experiences are missing?

Is this self-assessment process similar or different to the tools, protocols, or collaborative structures that you have used to reflect on your program's curriculum in the past? How so?

Research Question 2: How do faculty navigate the challenges and barriers to creating or sustaining a program to reflect equity and anti-racist leadership design?

What are the challenges to consciously and intentionally centering race, racism, and anti-racism in your curricular choices, practices, and program?

What are the challenges to consciously and intentionally decentering Whiteness in your curricular choices, practices, and program?

How do you handle and navigate these challenges?

How do you avoid privileging White fragility, White emotionality, or comfort when talking about race, racism and oppression?

Are there policies or practices at the institutional level that create barriers for your program to address race, racism, and oppression in your curriculum? How might you counteract and dismantle these barriers?

How has this self-assessment process influenced or impacted you, your team, or your curriculum?

Vita

Karen Anderson serves as Clinical Faculty at North Carolina State University. She works in the Educational Leadership, Policy, and Human Development department as an instructor for undergraduate pre-service teachers and a director and leadership coach for graduate level pre-service school administrators. She brings her wealth of experiences as a highly awarded K-12 teacher, curriculum coach, assistant principal, and principal to the distinguished and highly ranked North Carolina Leadership Academy. She leverages her passion and commitment to teaching, leading, and serving in diverse, high-poverty, and high-needs school communities to help future educators become effective agents of change. She provides support, professional development, and strategic executive leadership coaching to sustain a laser like focus on the development educators. Karen has a record of accomplishment in developing pre-service school administers through growth-focused protocols that increase the leader's confidence and competence to become more innovative, solutions-oriented, and reflective. This results in leaders who are better suited and positioned to execute bold and strategic initiatives that transform schools and improve student outcomes, particularly for underserved and underrepresented populations.

Karen holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from North Carolina State University, a Master of School Administration from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, an Education Specialist Degree in Educational Administration (Ed.S) from Appalachian State University, and Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from

Appalachian State University. Karen is a proud member of her beloved sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Karen is honored to be married to James Anderson and is the proud mother of a beautiful and brilliant son.