

Race and Ability Talk in Early Childhood:  
Critical Inquiry into Shared Book Reading Practices with Pre-Service Teachers

By  
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## Abstract

In early childhood contexts, reading literature to engage children in critical discussions about ability and race – and how it impacts their daily lives – is a promising practice. Indeed, critical literacy scholars see the use of language, text, and discourse structures as powerful ways to address inequity in educational settings (Gainer, 2013; Luke, 2012; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011). However, research investigating the ways in which teachers and young children participate in dialogue about ability and race through shared-book reading is sparse. Further, research on ways pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediate these classroom interactions is limited (Aboud et al., 2012; Yu, Ostrosky, & Fowler, 2012). This study investigated how four pre-service teachers constructed identities and transformed their practice as they facilitated dialogue about ability and race with young children during shared-book reading in preschool fieldwork placements. Grounded in a humanizing stance (Paris, 2011) and conceptually framed through sociocultural theory (de Valenzuela, 2013; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978), discourse theory (Alim, 2005; Gee, 2014; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Rogers, 2011), and Disability Critical Race Theory (Annamma et al., 2013), this qualitative multiple-case study aimed to inform future early childhood educators in facilitating critical conversations about ability and race with young learners. Data collection sources included: interviews with pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and children; shared-book reading video data; and pre-service teachers' Critical Conversation Journey Maps (adapted from Annamma, 2017). Results from Critical Discourse Analysis and across-case thematic analysis demonstrated that pre-service teacher participants controlled the amount of child talk and ways children could contribute to talk during shared book reading. When topics of ability and race were discussed, pre-service teachers constructed themselves as experts, focused on naming physical differences, and emphasized universal sameness. In doing

so, pre-service teachers conveyed the notion that individual differences of ability and race are neutral and did not engage in conversations about the consequences of ability and race in children's lives. Given what they gleaned from their early educational experiences, experiences in university coursework, and fieldwork, pre-service teachers had few means by which to enter critical conversations about ability and race with young children during shared book reading. Co-analyses of discursive interactions led pre-service teachers to consider young children's conceptualizations of ability and race, and pre-service teachers recognized the need to talk about ability and race with young children. Even as pre-service teachers felt challenged by the conversations they had with children throughout the study, reflecting on ability and race talk allowed them to see new possibilities for their future practice. Implications for teacher education and future research are discussed. By examining the multifaceted nature of pre-service teachers' social, professional, and discursive identities in practice, this study contributes to understanding how to support pre-service teachers with engaging young children in critical dialogue about ability and race in early childhood classrooms.

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## **Chapter 1: Background & Context**

For pre-service teachers in early childhood (EC) and early childhood special education (ECSE), learning how to facilitate conversations about ability and race can be challenging. In the context of their fieldwork placements, EC/ECSE pre-service teachers may recognize children are grappling with ideas about ability and race, but may be unsure how to intervene, or feel hesitant about what is appropriate to say. Further, as pre-service teachers acquire the skills to become EC/ECSE professionals, their identities and background experiences may influence the extent to which they are comfortable engaging in conversation about ability and race with young children. The present study aspires to understand how pre-service teachers learn to talk about ability and race with young children during shared-book readings, and to investigate how pre-service teachers' professional identities and backgrounds influence these interactions.

This chapter begins by outlining background information for the proposed study regarding definitions of “quality” in EC/ECSE teacher preparation. Specifically, I describe shifting demographics in the U.S, the achievement gap in early childhood, and definitions of inclusion. I then discuss ideological contexts in which EC/ECSE teachers are prepared, including young children’s conceptualizations of race and ability and the implications for critical conversations during shared-book reading. As I discuss this background information, I highlight gaps and issues evident in these areas of knowledge. The chapter concludes with the statement of the problem.

### **“Quality” EC/ECSE Educators in the Public Eye**

In the U. S., enrollment in early childhood programs is on the rise. Recent data indicate that the percentage of 3- to 5-year-old children enrolled in early childhood programs in the U.S. increased from 59% to 65% between 1990 and 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, Institute for

Education Sciences [IES], National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2016). With enrollment numbers climbing, early childhood programs have received increasing public attention and investment in recent years. The recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) places national priority on funding for early childhood education (Parker, Atchinson, & Workman, 2016). Over the past four years, states have seen increases in funding of early childhood programs. According to the most recent report from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), total state funding of pre-k programs increased by over \$533 million (10%) in the 2014-2015 budget cycle (Barnett, Friedman-Krauss, Gomez, Horowitz, Weisenfeld, Clarke Brown, & Squires, 2016). With current policy discourse and initiatives aimed at expansion of preschool more than ever before (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2013), it is likely that increased access to and enrollment in early childhood programs will continue to rise in the coming years.

The benefits of high quality early childhood programs serving children aged 3-5 years are well documented. According to Center on the Developing Child (2007), high quality early childhood programs comprise a number of key characteristics, including highly skilled teachers, warm and responsive interactions between staff and children, a language rich environment, and high and consistent levels of child participation. In a recent and comprehensive meta-analysis summarizing the results of 123 studies since 1960, researchers found positive effects of high quality early childhood programs in the U.S., including gains on cognitive tests, improvements in social and emotional development, and improvements in school success (Camilli, Vargas, Ryan, & Barnett, 2010). Considering current research, enrollment data, and policy initiatives, a conversation centers on what constitutes a “quality” teacher in early childhood education and the expectations for pre-service teacher training (e.g., Bassok & Galdo, 2016; Cannella, 2010;

Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2013; Goodwin, Cheruvu, & Genishi, 2007; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Inherent in this conversation is the question of *who* early childhood teachers are being prepared to serve. This includes attention to shifting demographics, the achievement gap, and definitions of inclusion in early childhood.

### **Shifting Demographics**

The discussion of quality early childhood teacher preparation is occurring in a time of major demographic changes within the United States. Indeed, populations of young children in the United States are becoming more racially diverse than ever before (Banerjee & Luckner, 2016; BUILD Initiative, 2008; Hanson & Espinosa, 2016; Kohli, 2014). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016) and the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2015), the percentage of children of color enrolled in early childhood programs and public schools in the U.S. increased from 2013 to 2014, while percentages of White children decreased. Furthermore, the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2015) projected that by 2020 there will be no “majority” racial group among United States’ youngest members of society. Additionally, the U. S. Census Bureau recently reported that the population of multiracial children is expected to grow from 8 million to 26 million (a 226% increase) by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015). As demographic shifts take hold, proponents of early childhood education are working to prepare teachers who respond to greater racial diversity in early childhood contexts.

Some teacher education programs have responded to increasing racial diversity by offering multicultural education or other diversity-related courses (Keengwe, 2010; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2010). Although these courses are designed to prepare early childhood teachers to serve young children in racially diverse contexts, a growing body of literature

documents that early childhood pre-service teachers may continue to see diversity as a problem to overcome (Keengwe, 2010; Kidd, Sanchez, & Thorp, 2008; Villegas, 2007; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). In many teacher education programs, diversity courses are offered as stand-alone experiences (He & Cooper, 2009). By offering these learning opportunities in isolation, pre-service teachers may be tasked with applying ideas about racial diversity to their own classroom settings with little support from faculty. Further, the ways early childhood pre-service implement curricular practices may be influenced by their social identities (e.g., ability, race) (Cheruvu, Souto-Manning, Lencl, & Chin-Calubaquib, 2015; Spooner-Lane, Tangen, & Campbell, 2009; Taguchi, 2005) and professional experiences (e.g., prior interactions with former teachers, exposure to pedagogical ideas during coursework in teacher education programs, interaction with cooperating teachers in fieldwork placements) (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Graue, Karabon, Delaney, Whyte, Kim, & Wager, 2015; Moloney, 2010). Therefore, more research is needed to understand how pre-service teachers perceive racial diversity as well as how pre-service teachers' identities and experiences influence their implementation of practices introduced in diversity-related courses.

### **The Achievement Gap in Early Childhood**

In addition to shifting demographics, dialogue about the preparation of high quality early childhood educators is situated in accountability pressures to ensure positive academic outcomes for young children (Chandler et al., 2012). Teacher preparation programs face a pressing need to provide pre-service teachers with the skills to help close the achievement gap – a term which refers to the discrepancy in educational outcomes for students in relation to group differences, such as race (i.e., Black vs. White, Latino vs. White) and economic status (i.e., low income vs. middle income, low income vs. upper income) (Howard, 2010). Recent research documents that

the achievement gap for children of color and children from low-income backgrounds is well established by the time children are 3 years of age (Burchinal, McCartney, Steinberg, Crosnoe, Friedman, McLoyd, & Pianta, 2011). Based on achievement gap data like this, children of color and children from low-income backgrounds may be labeled as “at risk,” and efforts to narrow these gaps emphasize skills related to school readiness (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Oyler, 2011a). Yet, as Ladson-Billings (2014) warned, in contexts in which certain children are labeled as “at risk” a focus on academic readiness emphasizes children’s presumed deficits (e.g., what a child lacks/needs to be “ready”), and suggests that children of color and children from low-income communities need to be taught basic, academic skills as opposed to facilitating expansive, innovative curriculum in which children can contribute ideas based on their own background knowledge.

Given the early age at which these disparities in achievement are found, researchers have recommended increased access to early intervention and early childhood programs (Barnett & Frede, 2010; Duncan & Soujourner, 2013; Heckman, 2011). By intervening early, EC/ECSE teachers are seen as playing a critical role in closing the achievement gap (Howard, 2010). Yet, current emphases on closing the achievement gap through child/teacher assessments and standards-based quality in the United States have also led researchers to suggest that preschool programs for children considered “at-risk” now over-emphasize academic skills related to kindergarten readiness (Peters, Ortiz, & Swadener, 2015) and over-regulate teacher’s agency in curricular decision-making (Bullough, Hall-Kenyon, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014). At the same time, in the face of accountability pressures in high-stakes teaching contexts, early childhood teachers may struggle to teach beyond the standards, because they recognize that their own success as teachers is determined by their ability to ensure children meet policymakers’

achievement narrow expectations of child learning (Brown & Weber, 2016).

Given the increased pressure to teach kindergarten readiness skills in early childhood classrooms (Brown, 2013; Bullough, Hall-Kenyon, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014; Kim, 2016), as they meet accountability demands in their field placements prospective early childhood educators may struggle to engage in practices that are responsive to children. For example, pre-service teachers may believe it is important to connect curriculum to children's backgrounds and experiences, but adopt managerial teaching practices grounded in deficit-laden views of what constitutes effective teaching for children of color in their fieldwork placements (Watson, Charner-Laird, Kirkpatrick, Szczesiul, & Gordon, 2006). Additionally, early childhood pre-service teachers may carry knowledge and beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) learned in coursework, but feel challenged by how to apply DAP in early childhood classrooms in which teachers use worksheets and direct instruction to teach kindergarten readiness skills (Kim, 2011). Further, as pre-service teachers grapple with pedagogical decision-making in light of standards-based reform, they can become easily discouraged about their ability to facilitate practices that benefit young children (Nickel, Sutherby, & Garrow-Oliver, 2010). In view of the emphasis on the achievement gap, more research is needed regarding how to best support pre-service teachers practice child-centered, responsive teaching as they encounter accountability pressures in their field placements.

### **Definitions of Inclusion in Early Childhood**

The conversation about preparing high quality early childhood educators is also influenced by heightened attention to the value of inclusion (Lee, Yeung, Tracey, & Barker, 2015; Oyler, 2011b; Pelatti, Dynia, Logan, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2016; Stayton, 2015). Yet, the term "inclusion" carries multiple meanings. In the field of special education in the U.S., a

traditional definition of “inclusion” refers to placement of children with and without disabilities in classrooms. A traditional definition of inclusion emerged in the U.S. in response to a history of children with disabilities being excluded from educational experiences with typically developing peers, being denied access to the general education curriculum, and being educated in programs with little or no accountability (Ferri & Connor, 2005). Efforts of the disability rights movement led to national legislation mandating that preschool-aged children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986). In EC/ECSE contexts, a traditional definition of inclusion means serving all young children, with and without disabilities, in inclusive environments (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016).

With early childhood education in the national spotlight, proponents of this traditional definition of inclusion emphasize its benefits (e.g., Barton & Smith, 2015; Bruder, 2010). Over three decades of research grounded in a traditional definition of inclusion suggest social, cognitive, and academic benefits for young children with and without disabilities (e.g., National Professional Development Center on Inclusion, 2009; Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011; Gupta, Henninger, & Vinh, 2014). Thus, from a traditional definition of inclusion, as enrollment and access to early childhood programs in the U. S. expand, so too do efforts to serve all young children through increased enrollment in and access to early childhood programs that promote accommodation, developmental progress, and social integration for children with and without disabilities (e.g., Barton & Smith, 2015; Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Lawrence, Smith, & Banerjee, 2016; Puig, Erwin, Evenson, & Beresford, 2015).

At the same time, scholars in the fields of special education and disability studies offer an expanded definition of “inclusive education,” (e.g., Allen, 2003; Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller,

2011; Kozleski & Waitoller, 2010; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013), conceptualizing inclusive education as a social movement in response to the exclusion of children viewed as different (e.g., children with disabilities, children of color, children from low SES backgrounds) by educational systems. An expanded definition of inclusive education recognizes that children are viewed as different in comparison to an often unspoken status quo (e.g., White, Euro-centric, able-bodied, English-speaking, heteronormative) (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Taking an expanded inclusive education perspective means assuming that educators are often unaware of the underlying and potentially oppressive structures that organize the work of teaching and learning. When conceptualized as an educational value for legitimizing multiple and diverse ways of being in classrooms (Allan, 2003; Artiles et al., 2011), an expanded definition of inclusive education requires a dynamic process that involves constant attention, reflection, and action toward understanding how historically marginalized populations of children and families can more equitably participate in educational processes and communities.

The multiple meanings of inclusion add to the complexity of preparing high quality early childhood educators. Drawing on a traditional definition of inclusion, scholars in the fields of EC and ECSE have collaborated over the past 30 years to develop programs in which teacher candidates can learn to implement evidence-based practices and gain dual licensure to support children with diverse abilities in classrooms (Pugach, Blanton & Correa, 2011). More recently, two major professional organizations in early childhood – the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – have begun work to align personnel standards so that early childhood teacher candidates are prepared to provide services for children with and without disabilities (Chandler et al., 2012; Cochran, Gallagher, Stayton, Dinnebeil, Lifter, Chandler, &

Christensen, 2012; Stayton, 2015). At the same time, some EC/ECSE teacher preparation programs have adopted an expanded definition of inclusion, designing curriculum from an inquiry approach so that pre-service teachers learn to generate practices based on analysis of local classroom contexts, as well as interrogation of key assumptions, such as definitions of diversity, normalcy, and capacity (Ferri & Bacon, 2011; Kidd, Sanchez, & Thorp, 2008; Oyler, 2011a; Puig & Recchia, 2012). While these efforts hold promise for the recruitment and preparation of high quality early childhood teachers, it can be difficult to identify optimal fieldwork sites in which pre-service teachers can gain practical experiences with traditional (Hanline, 2010) and expanded (Oyler, 2011a) models of inclusion. Yet, having the chance to apply ideas and materials from coursework helps EC/ECSE pre-service teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice (Hampshire, Havercroft, Luy, & Call, 2015). Additionally, even when pre-service teachers have positive experiences implementing inclusive practices in their fieldwork sites, they may still feel challenged by the complex instructional and behavioral needs of children in their classrooms (Frankel, Hutchinson, Burbidge, & Minnes, 2014). Accordingly, more research is needed to understand the kinds of opportunities that might allow EC/ECSE pre-service teachers to build confidence and refine their instructional skills as they negotiate multiple meanings of inclusion in real-life contexts.

### **Preparing Early Educators in Ideological Contexts**

The challenge of preparing pre-service teachers to serve all children in early childhood contexts is further complicated by deficit views and oppressive ideologies that often infiltrate educational systems (Ferri & Bacon, 2011; Oyler, 2011a). Efforts to prepare early childhood educators are situated in institutional learning contexts in which both ableism and racism operate (Oyler, 2011b). Ideologies of ableism and racism work in ways that seek to normalize socially

constructed identity categories such as Whiteness and ability (Reid & Knight, 2006), and justify the exclusion of those marked as “different” (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013). Two examples of the physical exclusion of young children illustrate this point. First, while the majority of preschoolers with disabilities attended general early childhood programs as of 2014, more than half of these children received their special education and related services in segregated environments (U. S. Department of Education, 2014b). This phenomenon may be due, in part, to bureaucratic processes such as resource distribution and neoliberal values for competition that locate ability within individuals in order to reinforce exclusionary practices (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015; Sherfinski, Weekley, & Mathew, 2015; Vandenbroeck & Lazzari, 2014). Further, a recent report from the Office of Civil Rights outlined a number of educational disparities related to racial exclusion in early childhood settings in the 2011-2012 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a). At the preschool level, African-American and Hispanic children were disproportionately expelled and suspended as compared to their White peers (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Scholars suggest that zero tolerance policies work to disproportionately punish and even criminalize young children of color, justifying their exclusion in educational spaces (Bentley-Edwards, Thomas, & Stevenson, 2013; Wright & Ford, 2016). Indeed, for young children from marginalized populations in the United States (e.g., children of color, children with disabilities), institutionalized racism and ableism can lead to systematic exclusion from educational opportunities.

### **Young Children’s Conceptualizations of Race and Ability**

Young children are not naïve to ideologies of racism and ableism. In early childhood settings, young children are developing an awareness of self in relation to others (Zakin, 2012).

This includes a developing awareness of socially constructed identity categories such as ability (Diamond & Tu, 2009) and race (Aboud et al., 2012). However, as discussed above, this learning process does not occur in a neutral context. As young children traverse complex worlds in which some individual identities are often implicitly defined as “deficit” based on race or ability, they have to learn to negotiate these ideologies (Araujo & Strasser, 2003; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). Early childhood classrooms are often the first setting where young children encounter messages about the meanings of disability (Ostrosky, Mouzourou, Dorsey, Favazza, & Leboeuf, 2015) and race (Farago, Sanders, & Gaias, 2015). Devoid of opportunities to explore the politically charged nature of identity construction, young children are likely to draw conclusions based on the implicit messages they perceive in their environments (Jones, 2004). For instance, pre-school aged children can develop exclusionary social behaviors toward peers with disabilities (Diamond & Tu, 2009; Hestenes & Carroll, 2000; Yu, Ostrosky, & Fowler, 2012). Moreover, young children as early as age three years old have been found to form prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors toward children whose race or ethnicity differs from their own (Aboud et al., 2012). Without explicit opportunities to discuss the topics of ability and race, young children are likely to rely on their own observations and related assumptions. Therefore, research investigating how to prepare teachers to facilitate critical conversations about ability and race with our youngest population is needed.

### **Critical Conversations during Shared Book Reading**

The ways EC/ECSE pre-service teachers engage young children in discussion about ability and race during shared book reading is one area that is under-researched. Curricular practices that support young children’s understandings of socially constructed identity categories (e.g., ability, race) and unfairness have been widely discussed in the field of EC/ECSE (e.g.,

Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Husband, 2012; Aina & Cameron, 2011; Lin, Lake, & Rice, 2008). By providing explicit opportunities for children to discuss the complexity and nuances of human diversity (Nieto, 2000; Nieto, 2005), early educators have the potential to teach children to be proud of themselves and their families, to respect a range of human differences, to recognize unfairness and bias, and to speak up for issues of social justice (Barrier-Ferreira, 2008; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Husband, 2012). Researchers recommend reading literature to engage children in discussions about ability and race and how it impacts their daily lives (Ostrosky et al., 2015; Souto-Manning & Martell, 2016; Kuby, 2013b; Vasquez, 2014; Zirkel, 2008), which may be a promising instructional practice. Added to this, critical literacy scholars see the use of language, text, and discourse structures as powerful ways to address oppressive ideologies in educational settings (Gainer, 2013; Luke, 2012; Johnson & Vasudeven, 2012; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011). However, research investigating the ways in which pre-service teachers and young children talk about ability and race during shared-book reading is sparse. And while critical literacy may be a beneficial approach for addressing issues of institutionalized ableism and racism with young children, unlike the well-defined procedures of dialogic book reading, critical literacy itself is not an explicitly defined set of practices, but instead an inquiry approach to examining relationships between language, power, and identities in local contexts (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013). Therefore, to support EC/ECSE pre-service teachers to develop the inquiry strategies and critical language awareness necessary to engage young children in critical literacy, more information is needed about how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers and young children currently participate in dialogue about ability and race through shared-book reading in conjunction with an inquiry approach to reflecting on their own literacy practice.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Several challenges in preparing early childhood pre-service teachers to engage young children in critical discussions about ability and race are evident in the background and contextual information presented above. While a number of studies have demonstrated the value of reading literature to engage children in discussions about ability and race (Ostrosky et al., 2015; Souto-Manning & Martell, 2016; Kuby, 2013b; Vasquez, 2014; Zirkel, 2008), to date no research was identified that investigated ways in which pre-service teachers engage young children in these conversations. Further, pre-service teachers' confidence with talking ability and race with young children is likely to be influenced by shifting demographics, accountability pressures, and definitions of inclusion. To support pre-service early childhood teachers to critically discuss ability and race with young children during shared book reading, more information is needed regarding how they currently facilitate talk within their field placements. The present study sought to identify ways pre-service teachers and young children discursively construct meaning about ability and race during shared book reading in fieldwork placements.

In EC/ECSE, pre-service teachers' identities (e.g., ability, race) (Cheruvu, Souto-Manning, Lencl, & Chin-Calubaquib, 2015; Spooner-Lane, Tangen, & Campbell, 2009; Taguchi, 2005) and professional experiences (e.g., encounters with accountability pressures, prior experiences talking about identities in school, exposure to pedagogical ideas during coursework in teacher education programs, interactions with cooperating teachers in fieldwork placements) (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Graue et al., 2015; Moloney, 2010) can influence their implementation of curricular practices. However, there is a lack of research on how pre-service teachers' identities and experiences may influence the ways they talk about ability and race during shared book reading in early childhood settings. To support pre-service teachers in facilitating critical conversations about ability and race, more information is needed to

understand ways EC/ECSE teachers' social identities and professional experiences mediate their practice. In the present study, I sought to contribute to the existing knowledge base by helping to better understand how pre-service teachers' identities and experiences influence their interactions with young children about ability and race during shared-book readings.

Finally, while reading literature to engage children in discussions about ability and race (Ostrosky et al., 2015; Souto-Manning & Martell, 2016; Kuby, 2013b; Vasquez, 2014; Zirkel, 2008) is a promising practice, there is a current lack of research in professional development models to support pre-service teachers as they practice facilitating these conversations in their field placements. According to Tochon (2007) videos can be used as a reflexive tool, allowing participants to raise awareness of their own practices. Moreover, video can be used as a tool for teachers to research their own practices, which is beneficial because it engages teachers in a cycle of inquiry (Roth, 2007). However, there is a dearth of research on the uses of reflexive video analysis with pre-service EC/ECSE teachers. To support pre-service EC/ECSE teachers to build awareness and confidence in facilitating conversations about ability and race with young children, in the present study I sought to add to what is currently known about reflexive video analysis in the context of field placements.

The purpose of the current study was to better understand how pre-service teachers constructed identities and transformed their practice as they facilitated dialogue about ability and race with young children during shared-book reading. The present study investigated the following interrelated questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct identities about ability and race during shared-book readings?

2. How do pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?
3. How does pre-service teacher and research co-analyses of discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?

In subsequent chapters, I review relevant literature (Chapter 2), outline my methodology (Chapter 3), present results (Chapter 4). The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the results in relation to existing literature (Chapter 5).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

In the present study, I extended current understandings of teacher-child talk about ability and race during shared-book reading by learning from early childhood pre-service teachers and facilitating critical inquiry into their own practice. Several areas of literature were relevant in framing such a study. As I reviewed the body of literature, I attended to five core questions:

1. What is known about the relationship between classroom talk and ideologies and how is it known?
2. What is known about EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' critical language awareness and transforming practice? How is it known?
3. What is known about using books to engage young children in critical conversations about ability and race and how is it known?
4. What is known about teacher-child interactions during shared-book reading and how is it known?
5. What is known about the relationship between EC/ECSE teachers' identities and their practice and how is it known?

Throughout the review, I drew upon both conceptual and empirical works in order to build on and learn from prior research (Boote & Beile, 2005; Shulman, 1999), and to refine my argument for the purpose and design of the present study.

### **Classroom Talk and Ideologies**

The critical study of discourse has a history that can be traced to social theorists and language philosophers, including Bahktin (1981), DuBois (1903/1990), and Wittgenstein (1953), whose work explored the relationship between everyday language and broad social forces. Further, in the social sciences, Michael Halliday's (1978) theory of systemic functional

linguistics, which states that language is socially structuring and socially structured, has been foundational in the critical study of relationships between language and social contexts (Rogers, 2005). In educational contexts, decades of educational researchers have studied the relationship between discursive micro-interactions and macro-level societal structures in educational contexts (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Cazden, 1988; Delpit, 1988; Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Gee, 2000; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972; Luke, 1995; Michaels, 1981; Rogers, 2011; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Educational researchers in the U. S. have been particularly influenced by James Gee's (2014) theory of discourse, which explains how "little d" discourse (i.e., micro-interactions, language bits) are associated with "Big D" Discourses - socially situated identities that are constituted as characteristic ways of saying, doing, and being. In education, researchers investigating classroom talk draw upon Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to understand the relationship between "little d" discourse and power structures in socially and historically situated contexts, as well as the extent to which discourse can be both oppressive and liberatory (Alim, 2005; Gee, 2014; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Rogers, 2011). As these scholars suggest, CDA aims not only to uncover assumptions of power and ideology, but also to disrupt these relationships to promote change.

In this section I discuss three exemplar studies relevant to the present study that utilized CDA and explored relationships between classroom interactions and ideologies. First, Moje (1997) utilized CDA to understand what counted as science knowledge in the oral and written discourse of 22 White high school students from working/middle-class backgrounds and their White teacher (also from a working/middle-class background) in a year-long chemistry class. Data sources for this ethnographic study included daily audio-recordings and weekly videotaped classroom activities, as well 5 teacher interviews and 13 student interviews. Analysis of

transcripts included a focus on how discursive practices positioned teachers and students in relation to one another, specific words used and the particular meanings they constructed about the discipline of chemistry or the activity of teachers and students in schools, the ideologies that underpinned these interactions, and the consequences of these interactions in terms of the assumptions about science that were constructed. Through close and critical analysis of classroom talk, Moje (1997) found that the teacher consistently, discursively positioned herself as an expert and producer of knowledge, whereas the students took up positions as consumers whose roles were to demonstrate knowledge. Despite the teacher's stated goals to engage students in scientific discussions focused on inquiry and critical thinking, the teacher's words and discursive practices were grounded in institutional ideologies that valued orderliness, management, and precision in a narrow definition of learning. Thus, her practices, in combination with her asymmetrical power relationship with students, led students to engage in attempts to prioritize getting answers "right" and completing schoolwork (Moje, 1997). As a result, teacher and student discourse conveyed a focus on scientific accuracy and knowledge transmission as opposed to inquiry and critical thinking.

Gebhard (2002) also used CDA to investigate how three 3<sup>rd</sup>- and 4<sup>th</sup>-grade Hispanic second language learners assumed, negotiated, and resisted the roles assigned to them by the discourses of school reform in an urban magnet school. The researcher was interested in how ideologies regarding the education of second language learners undergirded classroom discourse and connected assumptions regarding societal multilingualism and diversity. Gebhard (2002) employed a case study methodology, drawing on the following data sources: field notes from observations, relevant documents, and audio-recorded interviews with children, parents, and teachers. The researcher's analysis included both grounded theory and CDA examining aspects

of school restructuring. A CDA of documents, field notes, and interview transcripts focused on lexicon (i.e., classification schemes and metaphors used in discussion second language learners), syntax (i.e., the arrangement of words and the extent to which these were passive, personalized, imperative, declarative, or interrogative), textual structure (i.e., structures for participation in talk), and images (i.e., visual and non-linguistic symbols used in conjunction with language). Based on this analysis, Gebhard (2002) found that school reform efforts at the magnet school emphasized children's roles as self-directed actors and teachers' roles as consultants, but constructed learning as an individual phenomenon acquired through skills-based work with minimal support. Establishing legitimacy as a student at this magnet school typically required children to achieve high scores on standardized tests to display academic English language proficiency. Thus, second language learners were given limited access to the distributed knowledge around them, making it difficult for them to be seen as competent, contributing to deficit-based ideologies about multilingualism in society

Finally, Clarke (2007) employed CDA to understand how 5 children engaged in a small-group discussions of the book *Shiloh* (Naylor, 2000) during a fifth-grade literature circles, and connections between their talk and social issues beyond the text (e.g., class, gender). As part of a larger three-year qualitative study exploring how boys' and girls' language practices differed, Clarke (2007) audio- and video-recorded students as they engaged in small-group conversations around a chosen novel. The researcher also watched selected videos with student informants, taking notes about the discussion of the video. Clarke's (2007) analysis of transcripts and field notes followed Fairclough's (1995) analytic framework of textual description (i.e., content analysis, coding discursive behavior, creating a data display), interpretation (i.e., relating textual themes to larger discursive influences found in field notes, writing samples, student journal

entries), and explanation (i.e., exploring relationship of text and discursive production in relation to larger context through examination of school demographics and previous research). Findings of this CDA included the consistent exclusion of girls from text-based discussion, the marginalization of one particular girl whose attempts to participate were frequently ignored, and the domination of talk by three boys, all of which reflected an underlying ideology of male discursive power (Clarke, 2007). Taking a sociocultural perspective, the researcher further examined classroom, institutional, and societal contexts to understand how this gender-based ideology was reinforced in male-dominated environments. Given CDA's commitment to change, Clarke (2007) used this analysis to inform her own future practice, including introducing literature that directly addressed gender issues, watching video-recordings of student discussion to focus on processes as well as content, and reinserting her role in student discussions as a "coach."

### **Summary and Implications**

A body of CDA research in educational contexts demonstrates the relationship between language use in micro-interactions and macro-level power structures and ideologies (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Cazden, 1988; Delpit, 1988; Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Gee, 2000; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972; Luke, 1995; Michaels, 1981; Rogers, 2011; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). The three studies reviewed here in depth exemplify how classroom discourse is never neutral, but connected to ideologies in educational contexts. Further, these studies demonstrate the potential use of CDA to identify, disrupt, and even transform oppressive ideologies that are perpetuated through language use. These studies informed my research methodology in several ways. All three studies utilized audio and/or video data of classroom interactions in combination with other data sources (e.g., field notes, interviews, document analysis). This allowed

researchers to provide additional contextual information as they used CDA to understand the relationship between classroom interactions and broader social issues. In the present study, I drew upon audio and video data from classroom interactions as well as teacher and child interviews.

Additionally, the reviewed research informed my data analytic plan. Moje (2007) highlighted ways in which teacher-student power relationships and discursive practices worked against the teacher's stated instructional goals. Therefore, as I examined how pre-service teachers and young children talk about ability and race, I utilized CDA to understand how teacher-child interactions supported or inhibited pre-service teachers' goals for the discussion. Further, Gebhard's (2002) study pointed to ways instructional goals themselves might be influenced by ideologies that work to further marginalize particular students. As I investigated how pre-service teachers and young children talk about ability and race during shared-book reading, I explored the ways institutionalized ableism and racism are constructed or resisted through talk. Moreover, Clarke's (2011) study demonstrated the possibility of reflecting on video data with participants to transform interactional processes. In the present study, I intentionally viewed video data of shared-book reading with pre-service teachers to engage them in analysis of their practices with the aim of transforming group processes. This will be discussed further in the following section, as well as in the methodology section.

### **Using Books to Engage Young Children in Critical Conversations about Ability & Race**

A body of research has emerged that seeks to understand the ways in which young children conceptualize socially constructed differences, such as ability and race (e.g., Diamond & Tu, 2009; Dunham, Stepanova, Dotsch, & Todorov, 2015; Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012; Yu et al., 2014). Moreover, research has demonstrated that young children in the United States not

only develop awareness of identity categories such as ability and race, they may form prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors toward individuals with disabilities (Diamond, Hong, & Tu, 2008; Diamond, Le Furgy, & Blass, 1993; Diamond & Tu, 2009; Guralnick & Groom, 1987; Odom et al., 2006) or individuals in particular racial/ethnic groups (Aboud et al., 2012; Dunham, Chen, & Banaji, 2013; Katz, 2013; Newheiser & Olson, 2012; Park, 2011) as early as age 3 years. In response to these studies, scholars suggest using classroom literature to help children develop understanding and appreciation for ability differences (e.g., de Boer, Pijl, Post, & Minnaert, 2013; Meyer & Ostrosky, 2016; Nasatir & Horn, 2003) and racial differences (e.g., Farago et al., 2015; Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007; Xiao, Fu, Quinn, Qin, Tanaka, Pascalis, & Lee, 2014).

Further, in light of the oppressive ideologies surrounding identity categories such as ability and race (Ferri & Bacon, 2011; Oyler, 2011a), critical literacy is increasingly seen as a promising way to engage young children in critical conversations about literature (Comber, 2001; Kuby, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2009; Vasquez, 2014; Winograd, 2015). Critical literacy is an inquiry approach to teaching and learning that sees language, text, and discourse structures as a central means to disrupt and transform inequitable ideologies in educational contexts, and to imagine new ways of constructing the world (Gainer, 2013; Johnson & Vasudeven, 2012; Luke, 2012; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011). Taking a critical inquiry approach with young children means planning literacy instruction based on observations of children's interactions and questions, and being responsive to social and cultural issues they encounter in their communities (Vasquez, 2008). This includes creating curricular spaces in which children can enter into dialogue with texts and explore the politics of representation (Harwood, 2011; Kuby, 2013a; McIntyre, 1997; Vasquez & Felderman, 2013). By positioning children as critics of texts, teachers support

children's capacity to wrestle with complex nature of power as they conceptualize what it means to be a citizen and take action toward social justice (Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013).

A number of studies have investigated how teachers used books to engage young children (preschool to second grade) in critical inquiry and rich curricula by taking a critical literacy approach (James & McVay, 2009; Labadie, Pole, & Rogers, 2013; McCloskey, 2012; Vasquez, 2014). Here, I describe three examples of teacher research that illustrate how teachers used books to engage in an inquiry process with children as they explored concepts of race and ability in the United States. First, Labadie, Wetzel, and Rogers (2012) explored how a teacher (Melissa Mosley Wetzel, the second author) created space for critical literacy during book introductions (i.e., as a teacher introduced a new book for guided reading) with second graders in a racially diverse working-class neighborhood in the St. Louis area. The researchers analyzed four video-recorded, small group, guided reading lessons, as part of a yearlong teacher research project, in which children read books related to slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. Using critical discourse analysis and multimodal analysis, Labadie et al. (2012) found that the teacher created spaces for critical literacy during the book introduction by carefully selecting books that extended children's understandings of race and inequality by exploring movements toward social justice, providing purposeful prompts to allow children to generate and test theories about the text, and allowing for teacher silence (i.e., providing wait time, listening for children's talk, letting children speak for themselves) to allow children to construct meaning about race.

Kuby (2013a), a White teacher researcher from the southern United States, described examples from her teacher research project in a summer program with 5- and 6-year-old children in a large urban city in the southern United States. Kuby and the children explored racial segregation in juxtaposition with the injustice children perceived on the playground when they

learned that a playground bench in the shade was for adults only. Data was collected during planned and spontaneous classroom interactions through audio- and video-recordings, photographs, children's artifacts, parent newsletters and questionnaires, and a teacher journal. The Critical Performative Analysis of Emotions (Kuby, 2010) was used to analyze data. By reading children's literature, creating class books, and role-playing, Kuby and the children negotiated issues of segregation and co-constructed understanding about racial segregation and unfairness. Based on her teacher research, Kuby (2013a) recommended three practical strategies that can help teachers create opportunities to engage children in critical dialogue with texts: the importance of listening to young children's persistent questions, fostering children's spontaneous verbal role play while discussing texts, and viewing unexpected moments as productive opportunities.

Souto-Manning (2009) took a critical literacy approach as she engaged in teacher action research with her teaching assistant and nineteen first graders. The focus of her action research emerged from children's questions about why some children went to certain classes (e.g., special education, gifted education, English Language Learning instruction) while others could not opt to do so. Over a period of two years, Souto-Manning (2009) used multicultural literature to explore this focus. She took field notes, collected children's artifacts, interviewed children and other teachers, audio- and video-recorded and transcribed small and large group discussions about books, and kept a reflexive journal. As she analyzed the data, she developed grounded theory. Findings included a polarizing right/wrong outlook, which children had been socialized into and which fostered exclusion and competition, as well as the important role of classroom dialogue about a book in supporting group problem-solving and social action. When Souto-Manning read different versions of the same story, children began to accept multiple perspectives

as evidenced by their discussion of hearing a story through the lenses of different story characters. Further, when Souto-Manning discussed literature focused on civil rights history, children made connections between racial segregation and segregation at their own school according to ability and race, ultimately advocating that all services be provided in the classroom. Importantly, through dialogue about literature, both Souto-Manning and the children in this study engaged in critical conversation about ability and access, as well as the intersections between race and ability.

### **Summary and Implications**

Based on recommendations to read books about ability and race with young children and the promises of a critical literacy approach in helping young children navigate ideological contexts, taking a critical literacy approach to talk about ability and race when reading books with children has great potential. However, few studies have examined how critical literacy approaches can engage young children in conversations about ability and race. Further, to date, no studies were identified that have examined how pre-service teachers practice critical literacy with young children. Therefore, more information is needed about how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers and young children currently participate in dialogue about ability and race through shared-book. The present study sought to fill this gap by exploring how pre-service teachers developed the inquiry strategies and critical language awareness necessary to engage young children in critical literacy.

The three studies reviewed presented investigations and rich examples of critical literacy from teacher research, all of which have an impact on the proposed study. The literature reviewed here provided important examples from practice that were useful references as I examined how pre-service teachers developed inquiry strategies necessary to reflect on their own

practice and engage young children in critical literacy. These included the extent to which pre-service teacher discussed: carefully selecting books to extend children's understandings, providing purposeful prompts to allow children to generate and test theories about the text, recognizing the importance of teacher silence, listening to young children's persistent questions, fostering children's verbal and spontaneous role play, viewing unexpected moments as productive opportunities, reading supplementary texts; reading multiple texts; reading from a reflective and resistant perspective in response to experiences of marginalization; producing counter-texts; having children conduct research about topics of personal interest; and challenging children to take social action (Kuby, 2013a; Labadie et al, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2009). Importantly, critical literacy itself is not an explicitly defined set of practices, but instead an inquiry approach to examining the relationship between language, power, and identities in local contexts with children (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013).

### **Pre-Service Teachers' Critical Language Awareness & Transforming Practice**

As EC/ECSE pre-service teachers read books about ability and race with young children, they are in a powerful position to influence how young children conceptualize these socially constructed identity categories. As representatives of educational institutions, teacher talk helps speakers and listeners better understand the institutions themselves, as well as the values of those institutions (Mehan, 1991; Ochs & Capps, 2001). Teacher talk specific to ability and race, then, sends a message to children about how educational institutions view these socially constructed identity categories. Further, discursive practice can be a powerful form of resistance (Peters & Reid, 2009). Yet, research demonstrates that pre-service teachers may feel uncomfortable talking about both ability and race (Martin & Williams-Dixon, 1994; Pennington, 2007; Peters & Reid, 2009) and may lack awareness of their own discursive practices (Harman, Ahn, & Bogue, 2016).

Moreover, it can be difficult for teachers to know how to begin engaging children in critical inquiry around texts (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). Thus, to engage in critical conversations with young children about ability and race, pre-service teachers need support.

One approach for supporting pre-service teachers to become aware of their own discursive practice is critical language awareness (CLA) (Alim, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 1993). CLA is grounded in an assumption that language is a semiotic system that constructs and is constructed by social contexts (e.g., Halliday, 1978) and social relations of power (Fairclough, 1992). Alim (2010) noted that in language education and second language acquisition, CLA can be useful in raising language educators' awareness of the ideological processes that occur through discourse. Scholars have extended the tools of CLA to explore oppressive ideologies in literacy practices, including critical examinations of commercialism (Comber & O'Brien, 1994), popular culture (Dyson, 1997; Mission & Morgan, 2006), history (Carpenter, Achugar, Walter, & Earhart, 2015), gender (Kamler, Maclean, Reid, & Simpson, 1994), and race (Janks, 2000).

Wetzel and Rogers (2015) have begun to explore the potential of CLA as a professional development tool for pre-service teachers. They employed a case study method to examine the relationship between critical language awareness and racial literacy as one White pre-service teacher engaged her first grade student, who identified as Black, in a discussion of race. These researchers were curious about the tools and contexts that might support this pre-service teacher to analyze, critique, and reconstruct her understandings of racial literacy practices as she participated in their literacy course as a part of a teacher preparation program. Over the course of one year, the researchers collected ethnographic data relevant to racial literacy and CLA: a literacy lesson in and debriefing event (documented using video recording), journal entries, online discussion posts focused on whiteness and race, field notes, two semi-structured

interviews, and supporting documents, such as assessments. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Wetzel and Rogers (2015) analyzed this pre-service teacher's racial literacy across several events, finding that CLA, including watching a video of herself as she attempted to open up a conversation about race with her first grade student, and reflecting on her with her peers, provided analytic tools for pre-service teachers to break a silence about race.

### **Summary and Implications**

In EC/ECSE contexts, video-recording teaching practices has been used widely as a professional development tool (e.g., Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014; Durand, Hopf, & Nunnenmacher, 2016; La Paro, Maynard, Thomason, & Scott-Little, 2012; Pianta et al., 2014). Indeed, Tochon (2007) explained that videos can be used as a reflexive tool, allowing participants to raise awareness of their own practices. Moreover, viewing and discussing video data can support teachers to research their own practices, which is beneficial because it engages teachers in a cycle of inquiry (Roth, 2007). However, there is a dearth of research on the uses of reflexive video analysis to support critical language awareness with pre-service EC/ECSE teachers. The present study sought to fill this gap by examining how pre-service teachers raised critical language awareness and transformed their practice as they reflected on video recordings of shared book reading with young children.

### **Teacher-Child Interactions during Shared-Book Reading**

Given this study's focus on the ways in which pre-service teachers facilitate critical conversations about ability and race during shared-book reading, I next review studies that closely analyzed the discursive behavior of teachers and young children during shared-book reading in early childhood settings. Shared-book reading (i.e., interactive reading, read-alouds) involves an adult reading a book to an individual child or a group of children (U.S. Department

of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse, 2015) to foster the development of language, listening comprehension, and print-based skills (Schickedanz & McGee, 2010). During shared-book reading in early childhood classrooms, a teacher uses interactive techniques (e.g., asking open-ended questions about vocabulary and story meaning, inviting children to label pictures, commenting on aspects of the story, imitating and expanding on children's responses) to engage groups of children in the text as she or he reads (Blewitt, Rump, Shealy, & Cook, 2009; Milburn, Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2014; Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006; Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angell, Smith, & Fischel, 1994).

While shared-book reading is a routine in most early childhood classrooms, the kinds of interactive techniques that teachers use, and the interactions that occur between teachers and children, can vary significantly (Cabell, Justice, Vukelich, Buell, & Han, 2008; Dickinson, Darrow, Ngo, & D'Souza, 2009; Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta, 2008; Massey, Pence, Justice, & Bowles, 2008). Indeed, in reviewing the literature on shared-book reading, Lennox (2013) pointed out the potential for rich and meaningful interactions between teachers and young children, as well as a need for more research to support quality teacher-child interactions. In the following sections, I describe research investigating the quality of teacher-child interactions during shared-book reading relevant to my study purpose: (a) instruction for literacy readiness; and (b) participation frameworks.

### **Instruction for Literacy Readiness**

As early childhood programs move toward increased accountability and standardization (Chandler et al., 2012), early childhood teachers are under pressure to ensure young children leave their classrooms equipped with language and literacy skills such as oral language,

awareness of the conventions of print, letters and letter sounds, vocabulary, and comprehension (Brown & Weber, 2016; Lennox, 2013; McGill-Franzen, Lanford, & Adams, 2002). Citing the importance of young children's development of alphabetic knowledge, Bradley and Jones (2007) conducted an exploratory quantitative study to understand how frequently teachers talked about features of the alphabet (e.g., letter names, letter sounds, letter shapes) when reading alphabet books with young children. The researchers audio recorded 13 early childhood teachers as they each read 3 different alphabet books in whole-class settings. Audio recordings were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings demonstrated that while the frequency with which teachers encouraged children to engage in text-based discussions varied, both preschool and kindergarten teachers emphasized alphabetic knowledge in relation to letter names more frequently than letter sounds and letter shapes as they read these books, and that the genre of the alphabet book (i.e., whether the book focused on alliteration or letter names) influenced the aspects of alphabetic knowledge that teachers emphasized during extra-textual talk. Findings and recommendations highlight the critical influence of the text itself (i.e., a text-to-talk link) on the ways teachers facilitate talk with young children during shared-book reading.

In addition to studying how book discussion can support young children's developing alphabet knowledge, researchers have also investigated the quality of teachers' questioning during shared-book reading and its relationship to children's vocabulary development (e.g., Blewitt, Rump, Shealy, & Cook, 2009; Lonigan, Anthony, Bloomfield, Dyer, & Samwel, 1999; Walsh & Blewitt, 2006; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006). For instance, Zucker, Justice, Piasta, and Kaderavek (2010) studied the frequency of 25 preschool teachers' inferential questioning as they each facilitated one whole-class shared-book reading of an informational narrative text and the extent to which teacher questions were associated with features of the text (i.e., explanations,

definitions, inferences), child responses (i.e., length, level of abstraction), and children's vocabulary development (as measured by standardized vocabulary assessments). All preschool teacher participants worked in classrooms serving 3- to 5-year-old children experiencing developmental risks due to poverty, the majority of which were urban and general education classrooms. Preschool teacher participants were racially diverse (e.g., White, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, multi-racial) and had various levels of education (e.g., high school diploma, associate's degree, 4-year college degree, Master's degree). Teacher-child discourse was transcribed from video recordings and coded according to teacher utterance type (i.e., teacher reading, teacher comments, teacher directives), teacher question type (i.e., text-related, conversational, turn-taking), child utterance length (i.e., low or high), child utterance abstraction (i.e., literal or inferential), and child utterance appropriateness (i.e., inadequate, unclear, acceptable). Each page of the informational narrative text itself also was coded based on level of abstraction. Through descriptive statistical and quantitative sequential analysis, study results showed statistically significant associations between the level of teachers' questions and children's responses, with teachers' inferential questions consistently eliciting children's inferential responses. While the frequency and proportion of teachers' inferential questioning was not associated with children's vocabulary growth, teachers were found to pose slightly more inferential questions than literal questions, corroborating previous research which has found that informational narrative texts give rise to more complex, inferential conversations than story narrative texts (Price, van Kleeck, & Huberty, 2009; Smolkin, McTigue, & Donovan, 2008). Based on these findings, Zucker et al. (2010) recommended that teachers increase awareness of the types of questions teachers ask, and that future studies analyze small-group shared-book

reading to gain a more nuanced understanding of how individual children respond to teacher questions.

In the context of increased accountability and standardization in early childhood, researchers have also examined the quality of teachers' use of shared-book reading scaffolds to support children who are struggling to acquire the language and literacy concepts (e.g., Liboiron & Soto, 2006; Proctor, Dalton, & Grisham, 2007; van Kleeck, Vander Woude, & Hammett, 2006; Verhoeven, & Snow, 2001). For example, Pentimonti and Justice (2010) investigated the extent to which five White Head Start teachers used high support (i.e., co-participating, reducing choices, eliciting) and low support (i.e., generalizing, reasoning, predicting) scaffolds during whole group shared-book reading, and the relationship between teachers' perceived and actual use of specific scaffolds. The researchers video-recorded shared-book reading once in each classroom and coded the frequency of high and low support scaffolds using systematic observation procedures. Teachers also completed questionnaires regarding their reported use of scaffolding strategies. Descriptive statistics showed that teachers frequently used low support scaffolds (i.e., generalizing, reasoning, predicting), and that teachers' perception of their use of specific scaffolds differed substantially from observed use. Study findings demonstrate that teachers may need additional support in differentiating strategies during shared-book reading to support all children's engagement in read aloud interactions.

### **Participation Structures for Talk**

Just as researchers have investigated the quality of instruction for literacy readiness during shared-book reading with young children, so too have they studied the quality of participation structures for talk during shared-book reading. Participation structures are socially organized interactions, guided by tacit and conventional norms for conversational partners (Duff,

2008; Mehan, 1998). Through conversational and discourse analytic methods, studies of early childhood classroom talk have revealed ways discursive frameworks (i.e., participation structures) contribute to classroom learning (e.g., Au & Mason, 1983; Erickson, 1996; Goffman, 1981; Goodwin, 2007; Heath, 1983; Mehan, 1998; Philips, 2009). In early childhood classrooms, participation structures establish conditions for talk through explicit and implicit rules for who will talk when and to whom (Erickson, 1996; Philips, 2009) (for a graphic representation of a participation structure, see Appendix A). Participation structures include expectations for how conversational participants demonstrate their engagement in the activity, as well the relevance of particular types of displays within the interaction (Ekström, 2013). The teacher, as a representative of the educational institution, typically determines and regulates conditions for children's participation during these interactional routines (Duff, 2008).

In response to England's National Literacy Strategy (NLS), a program aimed to improve the quality of literacy teaching and learning in schools, Dombey (2003) examined child participation as he compared the participation structures during shared-book readings recorded in three classrooms of 5 and 6 year olds. One video recording was from an NLS demonstration video of shared-book reading intended for teacher induction, while the other two were recorded in classrooms of practicing teachers not using NLS. Recordings were transcribed and utterances were qualitatively coded as types of exchanges (i.e., initiation, response, feedback, continue) and questions (i.e., authentic, tag, pseudo, display) through discourse analytic techniques. Results of this analysis illustrated that the teacher in the NLS demonstration video established the most rigid participation structure by dominating the talk, limiting children's opportunities for talk, and emphasized mechanical aspects of the text. Through the shared-book reading, this teacher constructed herself as a director and tester and children were expected to participate as

instruction followers and test subjects. In contrast, the two practicing teachers established more collaborative participation structures, allowing children to actively investigate the text through talk, ask questions, initiate conversational topics, and verbally respond to one another. While the NLS purported to value teacher-child interaction, a comparison of these transcripts exhibits ways in which the demands of standards-based instruction for shared-book reading can be translated into some teachers' adopting more restrictive participation structures (i.e., those that resulted in a focus on following instructions) and ultimately limiting child participation.

Teacher-child interactions and participation structures were also the focus of Pantaleo's (2007) investigation of shared-book reading in a first grade classroom. In this study, the researcher audio-recorded 6 shared-book reading sessions, including 5 small group shared-book readings (3-4 children per group) and one whole class shared-book reading. Using discourse analysis, Pantaleo (2007) examined how participation structures for talk provided space for children's collective thinking. Analysis of transcripts revealed the teacher's attempts to promote multiple interpretations of the text by seeking several answers to each question she posed and allowing children to take conversational turns to debate aspects of the text. As children rehearsed and tried out their ideas through oral language, they engaged with one another's ideas, and scaffolded one another's interpretations. From a sociocultural perspective, Pantaleo (2007) suggested that this kind of collaborative literacy experience is important to the construction of knowledge through group talk.

In a study of teacher-child interactions during shared-book reading discussions, Wiseman (2011), examined exemplary participation structures for facilitating collaborative literacy experiences as well as cultivating a community of learners. Over the course of 9 months, the researcher audio-recorded and transcribed a total of 54 shared-book readings in an urban public

kindergarten. Participants included 21 children (all African-American and 95% received free or reduced lunch), and one White, female teacher. Using grounded theory to develop themes, Wiseman (2011) identified transcript excerpts in which teachers went beyond encouraging children's responses through "open-ended questioning," but encouraged children's participation by confirming, modeling, extending, and building. By using a transactional methodological approach, Wiseman (2011) indicated that the teacher facilitated opportunities for children to contribute to the shared-book reading discussions in active ways, building on children's conceptualizations of both reading and literacy.

Finally, Oyler (1996), examined children's discursive contributions to participation structures during shared-book reading. Using data from a year-long ethnographic study, the researcher audio-recorded a total of 31 shared-book readings in an urban first grade classroom, in which almost all children were Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, or African-American. Their White female teacher, Ann, commuted to work from the suburbs. Each recording was transcribed and analyzed in terms of process (i.e., flow of talk during conversation) and content (i.e., what counts as knowledge and who is validated as knowing). Through discourse analysis, Oyler (1996) noted that participation structures moved away from a common IRE pattern (in which teacher initiates, children respond, and teacher evaluates) (Cazden & Beck, 2003; Heath, 1983; Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Mehan, 1998). Instead, she identified seven types of child initiations (i.e., when a child offered more than she or he had to as a compliant listener): directing process, questioning for understanding, understanding text, personal experience, intertextual link, claiming expertise, and affective response. Study findings offer evidence of the ways children can share conversational authority with a teacher, speaking and acting as experts. As Oyler

(1996) noted, providing children multiple opportunities to share authority is critical in encouraging children to become producers, versus consumers, of knowledge.

### **Summary and Implications**

The reviewed studies of teacher-child interactions during shared-book reading document rich opportunities for meaning-making, as well as potential challenges. Each of these studies methodologically influenced the proposed study. First, the studies of instruction for literacy readiness (i.e., Bradley & Jones, 2007; Zucker et al., 2010; Pentimonti & Justice, 2010) illustrate an emphasis in the field on the frequency with which teachers incorporate instructional strategies to increase children's alphabetic knowledge, support children's inferential thinking, and provide access to high-quality literacy experiences for all children. As pre-service teachers read books about ability and race with young children, I recognized that the instructional strategies they drew upon may be influenced by increased attention to teach literacy readiness skills, which I accounted for in my data analytic plan.

Next, reviewing studies of participation structures during shared-book reading (Dombey, 2003; Oyler, 1996; Pantaleo, 2007; Wiseman, 2010) highlights how conversational structures can both afford and constrain children's capacities to build on one another's ideas, connect classroom literacy events to literacy experiences outside of school, build community, and collectively produce knowledge. In the present study, examining participation structures aided in understanding how teachers and young children negotiated topics of ability and race during shared-book readings, as well as lent insight into the consequences of these discursive frameworks.

Additionally, in several of the reviewed studies (i.e., Bradley & Jones, 2007; Oyler, 1996; Pantaleo, 2007; Wiseman, 2010), researchers observed multiple shared-book readings in each

teacher's classroom to gather a range of teacher-child interactions. In the present study, I investigated children's and pre-service teachers' interactions during shared-book reading by observing and audio-recording shared-book readings. Based on the reviewed studies, I increased credibility, one of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness, by gathering shared-book reading data on multiple occasions.

Finally, the finding in two studies that book genre influenced what teachers emphasized during discussion in shared-book reading (i.e., Bradley & Jones; Zucker et al., 2010) lead me to wonder how other features of the printed text (e.g., presence of character speech, non-fiction text features), visual design (e.g. illustrations, photographs), and pragmatic issues beyond the text (e.g., children's background knowledge of the text topic, teacher's background knowledge of text topic) may influence teacher-child interactions during shared-book reading. As I examined the ways pre-service teachers and young children talked about ability and race during shared-book reading, I attended to the ways the books themselves mediated these discursive interactions.

### **Relationship Between Early Educators' Social Identities and Practices**

In light of accountability pressures to teach literacy readiness skills and macro-level ideologies of racism and ableism, new teachers are likely to feel challenged by a critical literacy approach. Understanding ways pre-service teachers position their own identities in relation to critical literacy may be helpful for teacher educators who are interested in supporting future EC/ECSE teachers to facilitate critical conversations about ability and race. In this section, I review research investigating pre-service early childhood teachers' social identities and practices.

Identities can be understood as multifaceted, enabling individuals to call on different strengths, and different "selves," in the different circumstances they meet (Vitanova, 2005). These plural identities give individuals multiple ways to relate to each other, and multiple ways

to belong to communities. Further, identities are dynamically expressed in practice, situated in culturally-historically bound activity (Abasi, Akbara, & Graves, 2006). Accordingly, depending on context, different identities might emerge as more salient than others. The studies described in this section examine the role of pre-service teachers' gender identities, racial and ethnic identities, and linguistic identities in the context of early childhood practice.

For EC/ECSE pre-service teachers, gender may be a particularly salient identity experienced by males working in a profession seemingly dominated by females (Sumsion, 2000). For example, through in-depth interviews Sumsion (2000) examined the gender positioning of Bill, a White, male, pre-service teacher, as he entered the field. Important in her analysis was Bill's construction of gender groups, which he perceived in terms of a male/female dichotomy (Sumsion, 2000). During Bill's early experiences as an early childhood teacher, he described his awareness of the perception that early childhood teaching was "women's work," and strategically positioned himself in socially sanctioned ways including: capitalizing on his status as a parent when interacting with families; accentuating the benefits of masculine influence in an all-female work setting; distancing himself from "female" behavior; and emphasizing his access to professional and political power in order to increase the prestige and visibility of the profession (Sumsion, 2000). In-depth interviewing over the course a 12-month period allowed Sumsion (2000) to gather a rich and contextually specific understanding of Bill's gender identity.

In the context of a Swedish university-level early childhood teacher education program, Through a teacher inquiry project, Lenz Taguchi (2005) examined how 23 female students constructed and re-constructed themselves through process writing. The instructor in this early childhood mathematics methods course asked students to use feminist theory as they wrote about their own mathematical histories. Taguchi noted that the majority of the pre-service teachers in

this course utilized the process writing as an opportunity to acknowledge how they had constructed themselves as “being bad at math” based on a dominant, gendered conception of math being a “male” subject. However, a small portion of these students actively resisted the process writing activity itself, which Lenz Taguchi (20015) postulated was an attempt to avoid normalizing the idea that girls are not good at math. This study offers insight into researching pre-service teachers’ gender identities - including explanations for what pre-service teachers choose not to reveal. For my own research, this study highlights the importance of collecting data from pre-service teachers through multiple means.

In investigating pre-service teachers’ social identities, consideration for the experiences of pre-service teachers of color is also salient. Cheruvu, Souto-Manning, Lencl, and Chin-Calubaquib (2015) explored pre-service teachers’ childhood experiences, their attitudes and beliefs toward diversity in early childhood, and their experiences as students of color in teacher education. In-depth interviews suggested that these pre-service teachers felt disconnected from their White peers but strongly connected to peers of color. They also negotiated multiple identities as they grappled with pedagogical values and attempted to establish legitimacy in their education program; felt judged and misunderstood by their White university supervisors and mentor teachers but supported by faculty of color; and considered some curricula to be exclusionary of their experiences, but were more willing to engage when faculty’s pedagogical practices seemed to value diversity (Cheruvu et al., 2015). As Cheruvu et al. (2015) pointed out, these pre-service teachers of color masked elements of their identities at times in order to prove that they belonged in the field of early childhood.

While Clark and Flores’s (2001) study does not specifically focus on early childhood pre-service teachers, it does provide a useful method for understanding how bilingual pre-service

teachers identify ethnically. Researchers asked pre-service teachers to answer the question, “Who am I?” in 20 words or phrases of their choice. Following this item, pre-service teachers were asked to separately identify their ethnicity. Clark and Flores coded identity categories, which were peer-reviewed and cross-referenced with previous literature. The researchers then created a profile for each participant in a database, entering codes for ethnicity, training, and identity. Chi-square tests revealed a statistically significant association between ethnicity and self-conceptualization categories (e.g., ambitious, antisocial, faithful, struggling student, artist, single mother). The relationship between participants’ identity descriptors and identification of ethnicity, finding that bilingual pre-service teachers do not always consider ethnicity as the most salient social identity category, but reported a range of identity descriptors (e.g., personality, interpersonal style, moral, body, tastes, school, occupation, family) (Clark & Flores, 2001). This study speaks to the notion that ethnic self-identification is an individualistic conceptualization, reflective of the heterogeneity found within groups.

Researchers also have investigated ways in which EC/ECSE pre-service teachers perceive and construct language identities in the context of early childhood education. Through semi-structured focus-group interviews with Korean, Japanese, and Chinese international pre-service teachers whose first language was not English, researchers inquired into how participants prepared for and undertook their practicum experience (Spooner-Lane, Tangen, & Campbell, 2009). Focus groups were conducted in English as participants in this study were not all from the same language group and English was their common language. Importantly, focus groups allowed these pre-service teachers to express their ideas freely in a supportive context. Major concerns expressed by these international pre-service teachers were their lack of English language proficiency, their lack of knowledge about the culture of schooling, and difficulty in

developing positive relationships with supervising teachers (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009). While not explicitly discussed in the article, this study demonstrates the importance of acknowledging the dominant structures and assumptions that might mediate pre-service teachers' own conceptions of their competence during initial practicum experiences.

### **Summary and Implications**

In studying the relationship between EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' identities and their engagement in critical literacy practices, social identities (i.e., gender identities, racial identities, ethnic identities, language identities) appear to be particularly relevant. The reviewed research demonstrates the importance of investigating multiple, converging aspects of pre-service teachers' social identities. In response to this, I individually interviewed participants about multiple aspects of their identities through in-depth interviews. Based on the literature reviewed in this section, in-depth interviewing is a method of data collection that was useful in more deeply understanding the importance and influence of pre-service teachers' social identities in practice. Equally important, because social identities are fluid, constructed, and socially situated, collecting data at multiple points of time was useful in understanding whether and how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' social identities shifted as they engaged in shared-book reading activities with young children.

Based on my review of Sumsion's (2000) study, attention to the ways in which pre-service teachers' conceptions of gender challenge traditional gender roles appeared to be important, particularly if pre-service teachers are to engage in critical inquiry with young children. Based on this work, in the present study I scheduled in-depth interviews with pre-service teachers at multiple points of time to investigate pre-service teachers' social identities (e.g., ability, race, gender). Further, in reviewing this study I believed observational data would

also have been helpful in understanding how Bill practiced gender identity in context. I accomplished this in my own research by audio- and video recording classroom interactions which I analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis.

Cheruvu et al.'s (2015) finding was particular meaningful for the present study. While my focal participants were White, pre-service teachers, it was important that I was transparent about my own identity work in the context of in-depth interviews, and that I revealed my interest in learning from pre-service teachers, in order to create a safe space for participants to share. Further, I conducted in-depth interviews to understand how the racial and ethnic identities of White, pre-service teachers informed their experience with critical literacy practice. Finally, although Cheruvu et al. focused on pre-service teachers of color, study findings led me to wonder whether young children of color may also feel more comfortable with EC/ECSE teachers who value diversity, and whether children may mask elements of their identities at times in order to prove that they belong in EC/ECSE communities. This is a theme that I explored further through focal child interviews and Critical Discourse Analysis of shared book reading.

Clark and Flores' (2001) study also offered important implications for my own research. First, this study reinforced the idea that a demographic survey is not sufficient in understanding pre-service teachers' racial/ethnic identities. Second, while my interest was not to statistically analyze pre-service teachers' responses to a prompt, such as "Who am I?", this prompt provided participants an opportunity to demonstrate the nuanced and multi-faceted aspects of their identities. An open-ended prompt has the potential to provide a beginning look at the ways in which pre-service teachers conceptualize their own social identities as multidimensional and situated. In the present study, I used an open-ended prompt (i.e., identity mapping) to collect preliminary data from pre-service teachers about their identities. Pre-service teachers'

representations of their identities aided in identifying important challenges (e.g., tensions between self-conceptualization and teaching expectations) in their practice which I further explored via in-depth interviews.

### **EC/ECSE Teachers' Professional Experiences and Identities**

Examining teachers' professional experiences can be useful in understanding how they enact, contest, and re-construct their professional identities (Weedon, 1987; Zembylas, 2005). As they construe their possible identities as future teachers of young children, considering EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' process of interpreting and reinterpreting previous experiences (Weedon, 1987) can enrich understanding of how pre-service teachers' engage in critical conversations with young children. In this section, I look at studies that examine the influence of pre-service teachers' experiences and pedagogic interactions on their professional identities.

#### **Prior Experiences and Professional Identities**

Pre-service teachers' interactions with former teachers may inform how they see themselves as professionals in the field of education (Flores & Day, 2006; Luehmann, 2007; Walkington, 2005). For example, during a semester-long developmental theory course at a northeastern state university in the United States, Aldemir and Sezer (2008) explored how 14 pre-service teachers' prior experiences with their own teachers affected their images of an early childhood teacher and their related beliefs about teaching. Through qualitative case study method, these researchers collected and analyzed demographic surveys, journal entries, and other course artifacts (e.g., worksheets from in-class activities). Based on this case study analysis, Aldemir and Sezer suggested that pre-service teachers' own experiences being a student, as well as their formal teaching experiences (e.g., tutoring in pre-k setting) and informal teaching

experiences (e.g., summer camp counseling), contributed to their professional identities as an EC/ECSE professional in the field and their beliefs about teaching.

Similarly, in a study by Chang-Kredl and Kingsley (2014), 53 Canadian (majority White and female) pre-service teachers' childhood experiences also influenced their identities as EC/ECSE professionals. Data included pre-service teachers written narratives, collected as pre-service teachers completed a prekindergarten practicum. Analysis of pre-service teachers' biographical narratives allowed researchers to gain rich, contextually specific information about each pre-service teacher's life history. In the context of narratives, researchers found that pre-service teachers often held idealized images of favorite teachers, referred to emotionally charged memories, and presented convictions to promote change in schools (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014).

### **Pedagogy and Professional Identities**

While a number of studies explored ways professional development supports EC/ECSE teachers' identities (Graue et al., 2015; Moloney, 2010; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2007; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004), research on ways in which coursework in a teacher preparation program influences EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' identities appears to be limited. Nevertheless, in a semester-long course on family centeredness and diversity, Fults and Harry (2012) documented how pre-service teachers' heightened sense of their own complex identities affected their imagined future work with family members. Eight of the 9 participants were female, and participants' self-identified ethnicities included Black/African-American, Hispanic/Cuban-American, and White/Anglo. Analysis of pre- and post-course written responses, semi-structured interviews, and member checks indicated that pre-service teachers' began to see themselves as family-centered professionals through this course, which was

particularly true for pre-service teachers who had the least understanding of course content at the beginning of the course (Fulst & Harry, 2012)

In addition, Strong-Wilson et al. (2014) centered their investigation on how pre-service teachers' critical engagement with picture books during coursework in a Canadian teacher preparation program might influence their professional identities. Through case study research, Strong-Wilson et al. (2014) explored pre-service teachers' engagement in contemporary multicultural picture books to understand whether or how the literature informed and broadened pre-service teachers' conceptualizations of diversity. After introducing the picture books from a critical perspective, Strong-Wilson et al. (2014) gathered and analyzed data from focus groups and interviews to know which of the picture books were most engaging to pre-service teachers and why. Pre-service teachers' responses to the picture books seemed to rely on inter-textual connections to personal stories or experiences, sometimes creating a barrier for pre-service teachers to engage critically with the books.

### **Summary and Implications**

From these studies, pre-service EC/ECSE teachers' professional identities can be understood in terms of prior interactions with former teachers, as well as exposure to particular pedagogical ideas during coursework in their teacher education program. Studies of prior interactions with former teachers (e.g., Aldemir & Sezer, 2008; Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014) demonstrate that an investigation of how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers engage in critical literacy practices should account for the ways their own prior experiences in schools mediate their professional identities in early childhood settings. In the present study, I explored pre-service teachers' prior experiences through in-depth interviews at multiple points of time. Further, I utilized picture books and reflexive video analysis to understand the extent to which

pre-service teachers engaged with critical literacy in their own process of becoming EC/ECSE professionals. Moreover, studies investigating the influence of teacher preparation programs on pre-service teachers' professional identities (e.g., Fults & Harry, 2012; Strong-Wilson et al., 2014) offered a useful lens in thinking about the influence of course ideas on pre-service teachers' professional identities. In the present study, I included interview questions about pre-service teachers' prior exposure to talking about race and ability with young children in teacher education courses, as well as examined the influence of course concepts on pre-service teachers' professional identities over time.

### **Conclusions and Implications for the Present Study**

Evidence has emerged in recent years that demonstrates young children are not only aware of socially constructed identity categories such as ability and race (e.g., Diamond & Tu, 2009; Dunham, Stepanova, Dotsch, & Todorov, 2015; Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012; Yu et al., 2014), but may form negative attitudes and behaviors toward these perceived differences early on (Aboud et al., 2012; Diamond, Hong, & Tu, 2008; Diamond, Le Furgy, & Blass, 1993; Diamond & Tu, 2009; Dunham, Chen, & Banaji, 2013; Guralnick & Groom, 1987; Katz, 2013; Newheiser & Olson, 2012; Odom et al., 2006; Park, 2011). Without opportunities to explore the politically charged nature of identity construction, young children are likely to draw conclusions based on the implicit messages they perceive in their environments (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Husband, 2012; Jones, 2004; Nieto, 2005). While using books to talk about ability and race in the classroom is recommended (e.g., de Boer, Farago et al., 2015; Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007; Pijl, Post, & Minnaert, 2013; Meyer & Ostrosky, 2016; Nasatir & Horn, 2003; Xiao, Fu, Quinn, Qin, Tanaka, Pascalis, & Lee, 2014), the literature on supporting pre-service teachers to engage in this practice, especially in ways that challenge oppressive ideologies, remains

limited. The literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates a stronger understanding of how in-service teachers facilitate talk with young children than of how pre-service teachers talk with young children. To augment and better understand patterns evident in the literature reviewed here, five significant areas warrant further study.

First, scholars have demonstrated a clear relationship between classroom talk and ideologies (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Cazden, 1988; Delpit, 1988; Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Gee, 2000; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972; Luke, 1995; Michaels, 1981; Rogers, 2011; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), and the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate this relationship (e.g., Alim, 2005; Gee, 2014; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Rogers, 2011), existing studies tend to focus on classroom talk in elementary and secondary school contexts (e.g., Clarke, 2007; Gebhard, 2002; Moje, 1997). Additional work is needed to understand teacher-student power relationships and discursive practices (Moje, 1997), the relationship between instructional goals and ideologies (Gebhard, 2002), and the potential of using CDA with video data to reflect on and transform teaching practice (Clarke, 2011) in early childhood contexts.

The second primary research gap has to do with using books to engage young children in critical conversations about ability and race. While scholars have demonstrated the promise of taking a critical literacy approach to engage children in dialogue and inquiry with literature (e.g., Comber, 2001; James & McVay, 2009; McCloskey, 2012; Vasquez, 2014; Winograd, 2015), few studies have explored the potential of critical literacy in discussing ability and race with young children (e.g., Labadie et al., 2012; Kuby, 2013a; Souto-Manning, 2009). Moreover, to date no research was identified that investigated ways in which pre-service teachers facilitate talk through a critical literacy approach. Thus, more research is needed to understand how pre-service teachers engage in critical inquiry with young children when reading books.

A third limitation of the current body of literature is a dearth of studies on ways to support pre-service teachers' critical language awareness. Critical Language Awareness (CLA) has been used as a way for teachers to become more aware of their own practices in language teaching and to explore literacy practices related to commercialism, popular culture, history, gender, and race (e.g., Alim, 2005; Carpenter, Achugar, Walter, & Earhart, 2015; Comber & O'Brien, 1994; Dyson, 1997; Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 1993; Jannks, 2000; Kamler, Maclean, Reid, & Simpson, 1994; Mission & Morgan, 2006). No studies were identified that explored the use of CLA to explore literacy practices related to ability. Further, while video-recording teaching practices has been found to be a useful professional development tool in EC/ECSE contexts (e.g., Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014; Durand, Hopf, & Nunnenmacher, 2016; La Paro, Maynard, Thomason, & Scott-Little, 2012; Pianta et al., 2014), only one study examined the potential of using video to support early childhood pre-service teachers' critical language awareness (Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). The present study adds to what is known about using CLA and video data to support pre-service teachers literacy practices related to ability and race.

A fourth area for further research involves teacher-child interactions during shared-book reading. Shared-book reading has been studied extensively in EC/ECSE contexts (e.g., Blewitt, Rump, Shealy, & Cook, 2009; Milburn, Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2014; Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006; Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angell, Smith, & Fischel, 1994). Studies of teacher-child interaction during shared-book reading point to the fact that instructional strategies teachers draw upon may be influenced by increased attention to teaching literacy readiness skills, such as children's alphabetic knowledge, support children's inferential thinking, and provide access to high-quality literacy experiences for all children (e.g., Bradley & Jones, 2007; Zucker et al., 2010; Pentimonti & Justice, 2010). However, no studies

were identified that examined the relationship between expectations for teaching literacy readiness skills and teacher-child interactions during shared-book reading about ability and race. This is an area I explored further in the present study.

A final area identified for further research is the relationship between pre-service teachers' identities and their engagement in curricular practices. Indeed, research documents the salience of social identities (i.e., gender identities, racial identities, ethnic identities, language identities) and professional experiences in EC/ECSE pre-service teachers pedagogical decision-making (e.g., Aldemir & Sezer, 2008; Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Cheruvu et al., 2015; Flores & Day, 2006; Fults & Harry, 2012; Luehmann, 2007; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009; Strong-Wilson et al., 2014; Sumsion, 2000; Taguchi, 2005; Walkington, 2005), to date no studies were identified that investigated how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' identities and experiences influence their engagement in critical conversations with young children.

Therefore, the present study took into account these five gaps in the literature, and was designed to add to the existing knowledge base about shared-book reading with young children by exploring how pre-service teachers' identities and experiences influenced how they engaged in critical conversations about ability and race.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

In the first two chapters, I argued that additional research investigating how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers talk about and reflect on the topics of ability and race during shared book reading is necessary to better understand ways in which teacher educators can support pre-service teachers to resist oppressive ideologies in their future classrooms and its impacts for children. In this chapter, I describe my methodological approach for engaging in the research process and answering my research questions. To this end, I first describe my theoretical orientations and conceptual framing of the study. I then provide a brief overview of my study and strategy of inquiry. Last, I discuss my research design and analytic process for this study: (a) participants and sites; (b) researcher reflexivity; (c) data collection tools; and (d) data analysis.

#### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framing**

The epistemological assumptions for any study inform how we understand “what counts” as knowledge, how we justify knowledge claims, and how we view the relationship between researcher and research participants (Creswell, 2013; Erickson, 2006; Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). This study was underpinned by a dialectic relationship between social constructivist and critical epistemologies. Ontologically, I recognized that multiple realities are constructed and known through individually lived experiences, and that these realities are simultaneously situated within relationships of power and identity struggles (Carspecken, 1996). Thus, I sought to confront inequity related to ideologies of ableism and racism in early childhood contexts by highlighting the social arrangements that create disparities, while acknowledging that the sources of inequities are multiple, diverse, and embedded in sociocultural patterns of activity. Simultaneously, I sought to identify and support ways in which pre-service teachers and young children confront and resist these ideologies through everyday practices.

## Theoretical Orientations

At the theoretical level, I framed this study through three complimentary perspectives: sociocultural theory, discourse theory, and Disability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit).

**Sociocultural theory.** The roots of sociocultural theory can be traced back to the work of Lev Vygotsky and his Russian colleagues, who emphasized that cognitive processes are always situated in socially-, culturally-, and historically-embedded contexts, and mediated by physical and/or symbolic tools (e.g., language) (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). While sociocultural theory has been re-interpreted and extended to include a number of perspectives, including cultural psychology (Shweder, 1990), communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 2002), distributed cognition (Rogoff, 2003), and cultural-historical activity theory (Engeström & Sannino, 2010), each of these strands share the view that individuals and cultural worlds are mutually constituted (de Valenzuela, 2013; Lantolf, 2000; Shweder, 1990). From a sociocultural lens, mental activity is culturally constructed through dynamic patterns of individual engagement with ecological affordances (Adams, 2012).

A sociocultural perspective highlights the mutual constitution of individual learning in interaction with others within learning contexts (Adams, 2012; Engeström & Sannino, 2010; Lantolf, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 2002; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). For example, through interactions, both children and pre-service teachers make meaning of the topics of ability and race. Further, language (a symbolic tool) in talk and texts mediates knowledge production. Through language, people construct identity categories (e.g., ability, race) by classifying, categorizing, and labeling during talk (Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). As pre-service teachers and children talk about identity categories (e.g., ability, race), they both consume and produce discourses. From a sociocultural perspective, the ways that pre-service teachers learn to talk

about ability and race, and related injustices, with young children in early childhood settings is important to children's learning about these identity categories and to their construction. Further, both pre-service teachers and children learn to talk about identity categories such as ability and race by observing language, which is modeled by those around them. For pre-service teachers, this might include former teachers, supervising teachers, faculty, or textbooks in their coursework. For children, this might include teachers, peers, or books in their EC/ECSE classroom environment. Moreover, a sociocultural perspective also illuminates that both pre-service teachers and children learn how *not* to talk about identity categories based on the kinds of topics and texts discussed by those around them. Consequently, employing sociocultural theory for this study helped with framing the analysis on discursive practices that occur between pre-service teachers and children as they read books, with attention to ways in which language mediates these interactions.

Additionally, a sociocultural perspective is useful in understanding both the fluid and situated nature of individuals' identities. From a sociocultural perspective, identities are not static "social addresses" to label and sort individuals by social groups (Rogoff, 2003, p. 77). Rather, identities are fluid and dynamic constructs that shift in salience depending on social context (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Spencer, 2013). Consequently, taking a sociocultural perspective to study the relationships between pre-service teachers' experiences, their identities as future early childhood educators, and their talk about identity categories requires recognition that identities are fluid, changing across time and context. Further, from a sociocultural perspective, a one-size-fits-all experience of identity is an artificial concept. Individuals understand and practice identities in locally situated contexts. Pre-service teachers' identities as future early childhood educators are socially, culturally, and historically mediated by

experiences with locally situated tools (e.g., language, social media, course ideas, classroom books) (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). In the present study, I took a sociocultural perspective to understand how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers enact, contest, and re-construct their identities. In doing so, I attended to pre-service teachers' multifaceted selves, including their social identities, professional experiences, and discursive practices.

**Discourse theory.** While sociocultural theory accounts for ways pre-service teachers and young children learned to talk about ability and race, a discursive approach provided a means to examine particular ways this knowledge was enacted and its real-world consequences. The critical study of discourse has been used to explore the relationship between everyday language and broad social forces (Bahktin, 1981; DuBois, 1903/1990; Wittgenstein, 1953). For the present study, I adopted Gee's (1999) definition of discourse, which is:

Different ways in which humans integrate language with non-language “stuff,” such as different ways of thinking, acting ... using symbols, tools, and objects in the right place and at the right time to enact and recognize different identities and activities ... distribute social goods in a certain way, make certain sorts of meaningful connections in our experiences, privilege certain symbol systems and ways of knowing over others (p. 13).

In the present study, I examined the discourses of ability and race – looking at different ways pre-service teachers and children think about and act in response to ability and race, and how they used material and symbolic tools to enact and recognize ability and race, make sense of their experiences, and uphold/challenge dominant systems or ways of knowing.

Significant in discourse theory is the conception of language as social action. From a linguistic perspective, meanings are always being invented, as opposed to inherited, through language (Halliday, 1978). Yet, in institutional contexts, individuals have differential access to

linguistic resources and are positioned in asymmetrical relationships of power (e.g., teacher and student) (Baxter, 2002). Further, Gee (2013) explained how “little d” discourse (i.e., micro-interactions, language bits such as syntax) are associated with “Big D” Discourses - socially situated identities that are constituted as characteristic ways of saying, doing, and being. These Discourses have implications in terms of status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power. Thus, language is bound up with power, because language use has consequences.

In the present study, I examined the relationship between “little d” discourses and “Big D” Discourses in shared-book reading, as well as the extent to which discourse performed both oppressive and liberatory ideological work (Alim, 2005; Gee, 2014; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Rogers, 2011). Discourse theory can be useful in critically examining classroom discourse to identify, disrupt, and transform oppressive ideologies. In my study, discourse theory was useful in that it allowed me to not only uncover assumptions of power and ideology in EC/ECSE contexts, but also to raise participants’ meta-discursive awareness so that pre-service teachers and children could exercise agency even within the limitations posed by institutional structures.

**Disability critical race studies (DisCrit).** To address the broader systems of power and politics in which pre-service teachers’ identities and practices are situated, I added a critical theoretical orientation to my conceptual framework. Connecting Critical Race Theory and Disability Studies, DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013) addresses implicit and explicit ways in which institutionalized racism and ableism inform individuals’ identity construction. DisCrit emphasizes how political ideologies and structures socially construct identity categories of race and disability as deviations from a White, able-bodied, normative standard in schools. Although these identity markers are socially constructed, they are simultaneously instantiated in a socially stratified society within the United States (Banks, 2015; Coll & Szalacha, 2004). Moreover,

identity categories of both race and disability are often attached to discourses of deficit (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2011; Valencia, 2012), and situated in oppressive patterns of cultural and historical activity (Artiles, Kozleski, Waitoller, & Lukinbeal 2011). Therefore, DisCrit considers the broad political contexts in which learning about identity categories is situated. In this study, I focus specifically on the intersecting social processes that contribute to the construction of ability and race in four classroom contexts. While I foregrounded ability and race as identity categories, like Erevelles and Minear (2010), I recognized other intersecting identity categories (e.g., class) that became relevant along the way.

I specifically drew on three of DisCrit's major tenets. First, I attended to DisCrit's Tenet One, which emphasizes the ways racism and ableism interconnect as they maintain conceptions of normalcy through neutralized and invisible processes (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016). A DisCrit perspective allows for exploration of how oppressive ideologies (i.e., racism and ableism) collude as instruments of oppression (Ferri & Connor, 2014). When identity categories such as Whiteness and ability are implicitly defined as "normal," they justify the exclusion of those marked as "different" (Annamma et al., 2013). Thus, in the present study, I rejected commonly held assumptions of normalcy. Based on DisCrit's Tenet One, I sought to understand how pre-service teachers and children made use of tools and symbol systems to enact and recognize socially situated identities, as well as the implicit and explicit ways in which institutional power and privilege informed classroom talk about ability and race.

Simultaneously, I drew upon DisCrit's Tenet Three, which emphasizes the social construction of race and disability as identity markers, while recognizing the significance of these categories in people's lives (Annamma et al., 2016; Fergus, 2016). Although biological differences may exist between individuals (e.g., different amounts of melanin in our skin,

number of chromosomes we carry), DisCrit emphasizes that race and disability are constructed as social responses to differences, and that these constructions rely on Whiteness and ability being normative. Further, DisCrit draws attention to the way identity markers are used to justify material, discursive, and psychological forms of exclusion (Collins, 2016). Therefore, DisCrit informed my analysis of how pre-service teachers and young children recognized identities as socially constructed, as well as the consequences of these identity constructions.

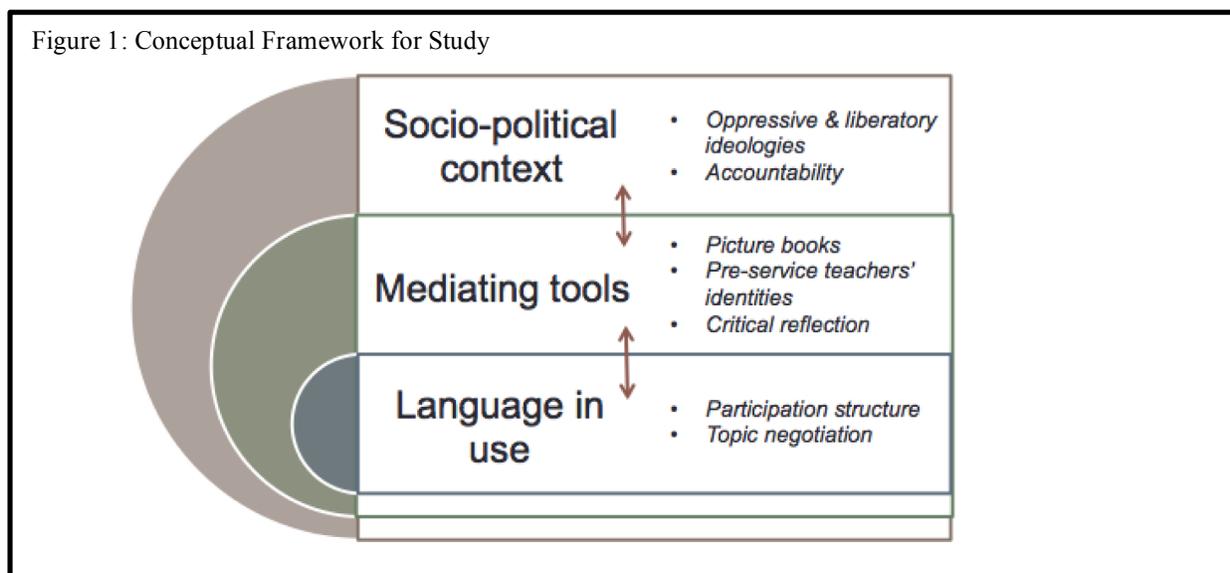
Finally, I draw on DisCrit's Tenet Seven, which supports various forms of resistance to ableism and racism through community-oriented activity (Annamma et al., 2016). From a DisCrit perspective, for pre-service teachers to engage in critical conversations about ability and race, they must recognize and work to resist ableism and racism with children. In this study, I sought to identify how pre-service teachers engaged in both activism and resistance as they talked about ability and race, and as they reflected on their discursive interactions.

### **Conceptual Framing**

To reiterate, I drew on sociocultural theory, discourse theory, and DisCrit to conceptually frame the present study. From these three theoretical perspectives, I examined how young children and EC/ECSE pre-service teachers influenced, and were influenced by, discursive practices in sociopolitical contexts. Specifically, my research centered on *how* meaning about ability and race was made during shared-book reading, with attention to the dynamic and interrelated relationships between EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' and children's language in use, mediating tools, and sociopolitical contexts (see Figure 1).

As I examined language in use, I looked closely at language practices (i.e., classroom talk, shared-book reading) and discursive behavior (i.e., participation structures, topic negotiation) as pre-service teachers and children talked about ability and race. I examined how

language influenced and was influenced by mediating tools (e.g., picture books, pre-service teachers' identities, pre-service teachers' engagement in critical reflection on their practices).



Further, I examined how language in talk and texts contributed to knowledge production in these local contexts of interaction. Finally, I explored how sociopolitical contexts, including both oppressive ideologies (i.e., racism, ableism) and liberatory ideologies (i.e., activism), informed and were produced through talk in early childhood contexts. Through reciprocal and dialogic processes, I strove to conduct research that was practically beneficial for my participants and will ultimately support study participants and future early childhood educators in facilitating critical conversations about ability and race with young learners.

### Key Terms

Definitions of key terms used in this study, are as follows (in alphabetic order):

- *disability*: An identity marker socially constructed in the relationship between an individual and opportunities provided in environment/activity setting, and which relies on the concept of “ability” being normative (Collins, 2013; McDermott, Goldman, & Varenne, 2006)

- *discourse*: “little ‘d’ discourse”; micro-interactions, language bits like syntax (Gee, 2014)
- *Discourse*: “big ‘D’ Discourse”; socially situated group identities that are enacted and constituted as characteristic ways of saying, doing, and being through discourse (Gee, 2014)
- *discursive practices*: recurring episodes of micro-interaction that have social and cultural significance to a community of speakers
- *identity*: A fluid, multidimensional, and dynamic construct that is socially constructed, and shifts in salience depending on social context (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Spencer, 2013)
- *race*: A political and historical construction in the United States that operates to normalize “Whiteness” and legitimize oppression based on skin color (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). The term “ethnicity” is often used to classify people based on shared group characteristics (e.g., cultural practices, religion, ancestral geographical base). Ethnicity and race are sometimes used interchangeably. While I use the word race to refer to a socially constructed identity category, I employ the term “ethnicity” when it was used by participants or in the literature.

### **Study Overview**

I focused my study on shared-book reading – a classroom communicative event in early childhood contexts. My strategy of inquiry and research design are guided by my conceptual framework for this study, as well as a pilot study I conducted with my advisor, which I describe in more detail in the next section.

## **A Work in Progress**

My research questions and design build on findings from a previous study in which I investigated discursive practices of young children and teachers when reading books about race in Head Start classrooms (Beneke & Cheatham, in press). Drawing on critical and interactional perspectives on classroom discourse to understand the identities (e.g., teacher and learner) and Discourses (e.g., early childhood literacy) that the children and teachers co-constructed (Gee, 2014; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007), I found that teachers used shared-book reading time to enact a Discourse of literacy readiness and treated the shared-book reading activity as an opportunity to teach academic skills (e.g., classification and color vocabulary) through teacher recitation (Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Additionally, I found that the books themselves constructed race as “skin color,” distancing themselves from the power and politics embedded in racial discourse in the U.S. I concluded that during shared-book reading experiences, because teachers focused instruction on literacy skills and relied on the book as a neutral resource, teachers and children constructed skin color as politically neutral, without acknowledging the word “race” or its deeply embedded meanings in the United States or engaging in dialogue about the topic.

## **Study Purpose and Questions**

The purpose of the current study was to better understand how pre-service teachers constructed identities and transformed their practice as they facilitated dialogue about ability and race with young children during shared-book reading. The present study investigated the following interrelated questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct identities about ability and race during shared-book readings?

2. How do pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?
3. How does pre-service teacher and research co-analyses of discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?

### **Strategy of Inquiry: Case Study**

In case study research, the researcher examines a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals in depth (Cinderby & Forrester, 2016; Creswell, 2003; Garcia et al., 2013; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Stake, 2006). Bounded by time and activity, case study research involves systematically investigating a complex problem answering questions framed by “How?” and “Why?” (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002; Yin, 2013). Merriam (2009) further emphasized the importance of utilizing case study when the researcher is interested in understanding a particular phenomenon in relation to its situated, real-life context. Given that the focus of my research was on understanding *how* pre-service teachers and young children talked about ability and race during shared book reading – a classroom communicative event – I utilized case study as my strategy of inquiry. Case study served my commitments to sociocultural and DisCrit theories as I sought to understand shared book reading in terms of the local and sociopolitical contexts in which they occur (Annamma et al., 2013; Baglieri, 2016; Broderick & Leonardo, 2016; Gutiérrez & Stone, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 2002; Lewis et al., 2007; Mendoza, Paguyo, & Gutiérrez, 2016; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Finally, case study afforded the possibility of drawing on a number of data collection methods over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2013).

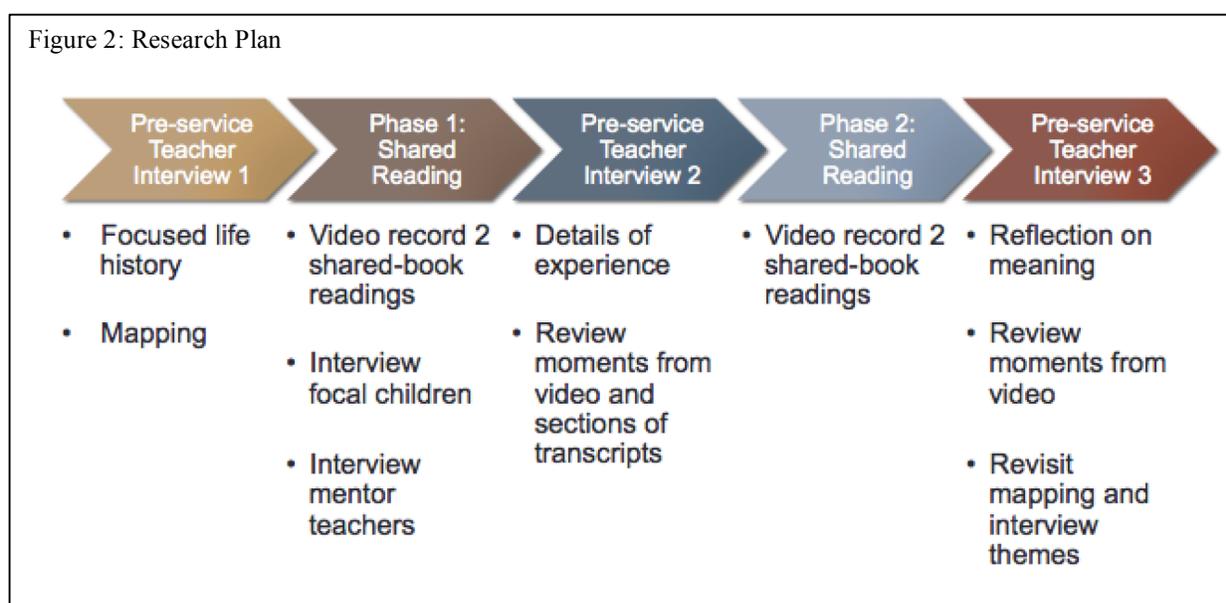
Yin (2013) suggested that case study is an appropriate strategy of inquiry when the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of the participants. While my research aimed to

transform pre-service teachers' practices, I did not intend to experimentally change pre-service teachers' practices through implementation of an intervention package. Instead, I built on the recent participatory approaches to case study (Cinderby & Forrester, 2016; Garcia et al., 2013), in which researchers collaborated with participants in making decisions throughout the research process, including research design, data collection, and analysis. In my study, I approached case study through inquiry-based research with a humanizing stance, by building reciprocal relationships with participants grounded in dignity, care, and dialogic consciousness-raising (Paris, 2011). Thus, I anticipated that pre-service teachers' practices would change, because we engaged together in reciprocal and dialogic research processes (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). While a fully participatory approach to research was limited by the fieldwork requirements of my pre-service teacher research participants (e.g., number of pre-service teachers' fieldwork hours per week, length of field work experience), I made every effort to include pre-service teachers in both data collection and analysis. In a subsequent section, I describe my case study design and the qualitative methodological tools I employed: phenomenological interviewing, identity mapping, reflexive video analysis, and critical discourse analysis. By using a variety of methodological tools through case study research, I was able to understand the multiple facets of shared-book reading from the perspectives of pre-service teachers and children.

### **Research Design**

As I examined my research questions across multiple classroom sites, I utilized a multiple-case study design (Yin, 2013; Stake, 2006). I treated each classroom site as single case with its own unique contextual affordances and constraints. Further, my multiple case study design was embedded, meaning that for each case (i.e., classroom site), I researched multiple units of analysis (Stake, 2006). According to Yin (2013), an embedded design allows for

increased sensitivity in understanding and focusing on each case. I examined the following units of analyses: the communicative event (i.e., the interactions between a pre-service teacher and young children during shared book reading, mediated by the book), pre-service teachers' narratives in relation to Discourses of race, disability, and early childhood professionalism constructed during interviews, mentor teachers' perspectives on race, disability, and early childhood professionalism, and young children's conceptualizations of ability and race constructed during interviews. I present a visual of my research plan in Figure 2.



In the sections that follow, I discuss my research methods for this study: (a) participants and sites; (b) researcher reflexivity; (c) data collection; and (d) data analysis plan.

### Participants and Sites

Gathering social and cultural information is fraught with power differentials between researchers and participants. Conceptually and theoretically, methods signify our assumptions about the knowledge claims we are making and whose knowledge is valued in our research (Carspecken, 1996; Creswell, 2003; Erickson, 2006; Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). In articulating my research methods, it is important to make visible my attempts to center the voices of my

participants to advance research that supports a humanizing stance. Souto-Manning (2014) wrote that qualitative researchers can risk de-humanizing the research process by imposing ethnocentric understandings and critiques onto other people's lives. In this study, I aimed to humanize the research process through building reciprocal relationships with participants grounded in dignity, care, and consciousness-raising (Paris, 2011). Erickson (2006) suggested that by engaging with participants as partners, researchers can shift the default power differentials between the observer and observed. While I recognized that I could not completely ameliorate the researcher-participant power differential (Erickson, 2006), humanization between researcher and participants occurred through authentic participation in conversation while recognizing the social and cultural worlds in which both researcher and participants were situated (Paris, 2011). As I interacted with pre-service teacher participants I sought to bring about change in their discursive practices by collaboratively engaging in critical dialogue *with* (as opposed to *on* or *about*) them. By building reciprocal researcher-participant relationships, I strove to conduct research that was both useful and meaningful for these pre-service teachers.

Study participants included four focal EC/ECSE pre-service teachers, six mentor teachers, and 19 children (ages 3.11-5.0 years old) at two different sites and in four different classrooms (see Table 1 for participants by case below). Based on the level of rich detail I aimed to represent through an iterative data collection process, multiple data sources, granular data analysis, and thick description, I purposefully selected a participants and sites (see Appendix B for timeline for study timeline).

Table 1

*Participants by Case*

Case	Pre-service teacher	Classroom, Site	Mentor Teacher (s)	Child participants	Focal children (interviews)
1	Cora	Caterpillars, Children's Campus	Mentor 3 Mentor 4	Child 15 Child 16 Child 17 Child 18 Child 19	Child 15 Child 17 Child 18 Child 19
2	Grace	Sparrows, Children's Campus	Mentor 1 Mentor 2	Child 11 Child 12 Child 13 Child 14	Child 11 Child 12 Child 13 Child 14
3	Maddie	Ladybugs, Midwest Head Start	Mentor 5	Child 1 Child 2 Child 3 Child 4 Child 5	Child 1 Child 5
4	Sydney	Bumblebees, Midwest Head Start	Mentor 6	Child 6 Child 7 Child 8 Child 9 Child 10	Child 7 Child 8 Child 9 Child 10

**Pre-service teacher participant selection.** Primary participants in this study were pre-service teachers. Consequently, the selection of pre-service teacher participants was a necessary first step in determining site selection, followed by selection of mentor teacher participants and child participants for each case. At the time of this study, pre-service teacher participants were enrolled in an undergraduate fieldwork course as part of a dual licensure program (early childhood and early childhood special education) at Midwestern University (MU), a public university in the Midwest. The undergraduate EC/ECSE dual licensure program at MU is a nationally-accredited program with high national rankings and a small number of core faculty. The program prepares early educators to work in both special and general education settings for children ranging from birth to age eight years through a broad-based curriculum (i.e., general education and special education coursework) and multiple hands-on practical experiences in the field. Further, the program prepares pre-service teachers to use evidence-based practice to

support the needs of young children with disabilities and their families. The program aims to develop pre-service teachers' competencies in supporting all young children's access to and participation in fully inclusive community and educational settings. Finally, the program supports pre-service teachers in developing as teachers and leaders in the field, requiring that graduates understand the complexities of early education, the diversity of service delivery models, and the importance of theory- and research-based practices.

Pre-service teachers in this study were enrolled in a fieldwork course that is typically taken their junior year of the undergraduate program. This course is an early opportunity to observe and participate in an inclusive early childhood classroom in the teacher preparation program, and is taken prior to two full semesters of student teaching. While pre-service teachers in this study had some previous experiences interacting with children in EC/ECSE classroom settings, it is important to note their role as novice teachers. The MU fieldwork course was their first formal experience in their teacher preparation program in which they were expected to assume a teaching role. The fieldwork course is intended to allow pre-service teachers an opportunity to apply knowledge about inclusive strategies and interventions for preschoolers, by working with young children in inclusive settings/programs for 10 hours per week. A component of this course also includes fieldtrips to observe in a range of settings in which services are provided for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with and without disabilities. It is important to note here that I was not a course instructor, nor was I responsible for pre-service teachers' grades.

I first contacted two MU Early Childhood faculty (the fieldwork course instructor and dual licensure program director) to verbally explain the study scope and generate interest. Once approval from the course instructor and program director were received, I attended a regularly-

scheduled meeting with the undergraduate fieldwork class to give a short presentation, providing pre-service teachers with detailed information about the study, including my interest in how pre-service teachers facilitate communication about ability and race during shared-book reading with young children. During this class visit, I also distributed a letter of introduction (see Appendix C for letter of introduction), making sure to communicate that participation by pre-service teachers in the study would not impact course grades in the fieldwork course. I reviewed the letter with the pre-service teachers, highlighting key points, and allowed time for questions. At this time, I also shared that upon completion of the study, each participating pre-service teacher would receive \$75.00 worth of books from the *Teaching for Change* bookstore (2016a; 2016b). Pre-service teachers were invited to indicate whether they consented to participate, and pre-service teachers were asked to complete a simple demographic form (see Appendix D for pre-service teacher demographic form). All pre-service teachers were asked to place consent forms and demographic forms in a sealed envelope.

In qualitative research, purposeful selection enables researchers to select information-rich cases that will allow for detailed exploration (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting participants who are especially experienced with the research phenomenon of interest (Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant, & Rahim, 2014). In selecting pre-service teacher participants, I utilized typical purposive sampling (Merriam, 2009), meaning I deliberately included cases that reflected typical demographics of pre-service teachers in the United States. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017a), as of 2016, 97.5% of preschool/kindergarten teachers were women and 70.8% of preschool/kindergarten teachers were White. I intentionally selected participants from this MU fieldwork course, given that all of the pre-service teachers enrolled in the MU fieldwork course (members of a cohort of 26 pre-service teachers) where

White women. Further, the majority of pre-service teachers are able-bodied. As of 2016, individuals with disabilities were less likely to be employed than their counterparts with no disabilities, and were also less likely to work in professional occupations (i.e., education) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017b). Given these statistics, I purposefully selected and identified pre-service teacher participants who shared these demographics (i.e., White, female, able-bodied). Selected participants included four pre-service teachers: Cora, Grace, Maddie, and Sydney (see pre-service teacher participant demographic information in Table 2), who each expressed an interest in talking about diversity with young children during shared book reading.

Table 2

*Pre-Service Teacher Participant Demographics*

Participant	Age <sup>a</sup>	Gender <sup>b</sup>	Race	Undergraduate Major	Disability <sup>c</sup>
Cora	20	F	Caucasian (White)	Early Childhood Unified	N
Grace	25	F	Caucasian (White)	Early Childhood Unified	N
Maddie	19	F	Caucasian (White)	Early Childhood Unified	N
Sydney	20	F	Caucasian (White)	Early Childhood Unified	N

<sup>a</sup>Age in years. <sup>b</sup>F = female. <sup>c</sup>N = no.

While the four selected pre-service teacher participants shared some demographic similarities, they each brought their own unique perspectives and experiences to the study, which I briefly describe here. Cora grew up in a very religious family, and with an older brother with autism. Throughout her childhood, she saw her parents advocate for Kole to be included in their Midwestern parochial school. As a teenager, Grace came out as gay, and experienced exclusion based on her sexual identity. In contrast to the other three pre-service teacher participants, Grace did not begin her college directly after high school graduation. Instead, Grace served in the U.S. Army for several years before enrolling at MU. Like Cora, Maddie also grew up with an older

sibling with a disability. Maddie's sister, Paige, was born with Down Syndrome and Maddie's family struggled to find quality special education services for Paige in her rural hometown. Finally, growing up, Sydney and her siblings attended schools in which they were in the racial minority. The extent to which pre-service teachers' shared identity markers mediated their practice, as well as the mediating role of their unique identities and experiences, will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

**Site selection.** Sites for this study were dictated based on the participating pre-service teachers' fieldwork placements. Pre-service teachers in this fieldwork course were placed in preschool classrooms for 10 fieldwork hours per week in one of two different sites: Midwest Head Start and Children's Campus (a university-affiliated, private preschool). I individually met with preschool program directors at both Midwest Head Start and Children's Campus to provide a letter of introduction and explanation of the study (see Appendix E for letter of introduction to program directors). At these meetings, each program director was invited to ask questions related to the study, and I agreed to complete any approval process forms required in each preschool setting. At Midwest Head Start, this meant providing materials for the executive director and board members to review, including: consent and assent materials for children, mentor teacher interview protocols, and child interview protocols.

**Book selection.** Once approval at each site was given, I shared a choice of books with each program director (see Appendix F and Appendix G for book choices offered). While it was important to the study that the picture books used for shared book reading were the same across cases for consistency, I also wanted program directors to have input into which books they felt would best fit in their site. However, I didn't take book selection lightly, as I knew the books read during the study would, in part, determine the context and content of the talk during shared-

book reading. Book choices were identified from the Teaching for Change Early Childhood Anti-Bias Education Booklists: Learning About Different Abilities (2016a) and Learning about Racial Identity (2016b). These booklists, recommended by anti-bias educators and NAEYC author Louise Derman-Sparks, are designed to support teachers in talking about race and ability with young children (birth through age 8 years) through a social justice lens. Given that pre-service teachers were going to be placed in preschool classrooms, and to expedite the book selection process, I narrowed the booklists based on each book's recommended child age range and availability of book in print. I further refined these choices by cross checking which selections were listed on other recommended booklists for early childhood practitioners, including The Rosmarie Greiner Children's Peace Library (Edwards, 2012) and the Making Friends Program Books About Diversity (Favazza, Ostrosky, & Mouzourou, 2016). The resulting book choices about race were *Bein' with You This Way* (Nikola-Lisa, 1994) and *Shades of Black* (Pickney, 2000). The resulting book choices about ability were *The Amazing Erik* (Huber, 2014) and *We Can Do It!* (Dwight, 2005).

Program directors were given each book title, author(s) name(s), image of the book cover, and a brief synopsis of the book. I told program directors that they could approve of both books for the topic (i.e., ability, race), or choose the one book they felt would be most fitting for pre-service teachers to read at their site during the study. When presented with the books for each topic (i.e., ability, race), the Midwest Head Start program director confidently approved all books. The Children's Campus director, however, expressed concerns about *Shades of Black* (Pickney, 2000) and *We Can Do It!* (Dwight, 2005), noting that these books were centered on a single identity marker (i.e., disability), which she felt was exclusionary for children from different racial backgrounds and/or ability profiles. I was initially surprised by her sentiment, as

she seemed to be communicating that centering Blackness or disability in a book was exclusionary, given the underrepresentation of children of color and children with disabilities in children's literature – as they are regularly “excluded” from literacy curriculum. However, I was also aware that the program directors were not participants, nor was this a moment to push back. I took note of this conversation in my research journal, as I was curious to see how such a sentiment might influence the discourse of children and teachers at Children's Campus. Based on my review of books, and on program director input, the final book selections for this study were *The Amazing Erik* (Huber, 2014) and *Bein' with You This Way* (Nikola-Lisa, 1994).

**Mentor teacher participant selection.** Mentor teacher participant selection was dictated by participating pre-service teachers' fieldwork placements. Cora and Grace were placed in two different co-taught preschool classrooms at Children's Campus, so Cora and Grace each had two mentor teachers. Maddie and Sydney were placed in two different preschool classrooms at Midwest Head Start, and each had one mentor teacher. Once program directors approved, I contacted each mentor teacher, and individually met with them. During these meetings, I shared a letter of introduction and explanation of the study (see Appendix H for letter to mentor teachers). After sharing the letter of introduction, mentor teachers were invited to ask any questions related to the study, to sign consent, and to complete a simple demographic form (see Appendix I for mentor teacher demographic form). All six mentor teachers consented to participate (see Table 3 for mentor teacher demographics). As a small token of appreciation, mentor teachers were promised classroom copies of the two books used in the study upon study completion.

Table 3

*Mentor Teacher Participant Demographics*

Participant	Site	Classroom	Gender <sup>a</sup>	Race	Teaching Experience <sup>b</sup>
Mentor Teacher 1	Children's Campus	Sparrows	F	Caucasian (White)	3
Mentor Teacher 2	Children's Campus	Sparrows	F	Latina/Hispanic	3
Mentor Teacher 3	Children's Campus	Caterpillars	F	Multiracial	11
Mentor Teacher 4	Children's Campus	Caterpillars	F	Caucasian (White)	7
Mentor Teacher 5	Midwest Head Start	Ladybugs	F	Caucasian (White)	23
Mentor Teacher 6	Midwest Head Start	Bumblebees	F	Caucasian (White)	11

<sup>a</sup> F = female. <sup>b</sup> Teaching Experience in years.

**Child participant selection.** Mentor teachers were asked to use existing home-school communication routines (i.e., child's backpack, family mailboxes) already in place to help distribute packets containing the following materials to children's families: a letter of introduction for parents/guardians, a parent/guardian consent form, a child/family demographic form, and information about the two books selected for the study (including the title, author, brief synopsis, and links to where the books could be found online; see Appendix J for materials sent to families). In the letter, I offered to lend my personal copy of each book to families in the event that they would like to review the books in advance. The letter and consent form included telephone and email contact information for me, so parents and guardians could ask any research-related questions. An envelope was attached to each packet of materials. Parents/guardians were asked to return consent forms and demographic information to classroom teachers in the sealed envelope via home-school communication methods already in place (i.e., child's backpack, family mailboxes, handing envelope to teacher). Mentor teachers were responsible for collecting these envelopes and returning them to me.

After consent and demographic forms were returned ( $n = 30$ ), I utilized maximum variation sampling (Merriam, 2015) to select the small groups of child participants from each classroom, looking for the widest possible variation in characteristics relevant to the study. This allowed me to include different child perspectives on ability and race during shared-book events (Creswell, 2013). A maximum variation sampling approach also allowed me to identify shared patterns that cut across cases (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). Further, maximum variation sampling allowed me to document the variations in ways children participated in and experienced shared-book reading across different settings. Based on consent forms and demographic forms completed by parents and guardians, 19 total children were selected to participate in the study (four to five children per classroom) through purposeful selection for maximum variation (Creswell, 2013). Child participants were selected for maximum variation in terms of gender, ability, age, and racial identity, with the rationale that these identity markers would allow me to capture a diverse range of child perspectives on ability and race. In Table 4 (below), I present demographic information for each child participant.

Next, a sub-sample of child participants was selected to participate in child interviews. As a new adult in the classroom, I wanted to ensure that selected focal children would feel comfortable talking to me during the child interviews. For this reason, I first spoke with mentor teachers regarding focal children they believed would readily interact with a new adult, and then selected two focal children per classroom based on mentor teacher recommendations. However, when I began inviting focal children for individual interviews, I found that additional children asked me if they could also be interviewed. I agreed, knowing that interviewing more children would help me build relationships with child participants as well as enrich my data. Further, when working with young children as participants, an ethical concern is the extent to which they

understand what they are being asked to do. Prior to each child interviews, I engaged each child participant in discussions about their participation to obtain their assent to participate (see Appendix L for child assent procedure).

Table 4

*Child Participant Demographics*

Participant	Gender <sup>a</sup>	Race	Age <sup>b</sup>	Special Education Services <sup>c</sup>	Interview <sup>d</sup>
Child 1	F	Other	5.0	“At risk for school failure”	Y
Child 2	F	Latina/ Hispanic	4.3	“At risk for school failure”	N
Child 3	F	Caucasian (White)	4.10	Speech/language	N
Child 4	F	Multiracial	4.0	“At risk for school failure”	N
Child 5	F	African American	3.11	“At risk for school failure”	Y
Child 6	M	Latino/ Hispanic	4.2	“At risk for school failure”	N
Child 7	M	Caucasian (White)	4.10	“At risk for school failure”	Y
Child 8	M	African American	4.11	“At risk for school failure”	Y
Child 9	F	Native American	4.2	“At risk for school failure”	Y
Child 10	F	Caucasian (White)	4.9	“At risk for school failure”	Y
Child 11	M	Asian/ Pacific Islander	4.8	N/A	Y
Child 12	F	Caucasian (White)	4.5	N/A	Y
Child 13	F	Asian/ Pacific Islander	4.8	N/A	Y
Child 14	M	Caucasian (White)	4.4	N/A	Y
Child 15	F	Caucasian (White)	4.7	N/A	Y
Child 16	M	Caucasian (White)	4.11	Autism	N
Child 17	M	Caucasian (White)	4.3	N/A	Y
Child 18	M	Latino/ Hispanic	4.7	Specific learning disability	Y
Child 19	M	Other	4.5	N/A	Y

<sup>a</sup> F= female, M = male. <sup>b</sup> Age in years and months (i.e., 4.5 = 4 years, 5 months). <sup>c</sup> Children attending Head Start programs considered “at risk for school failure.” <sup>d</sup> Indicates whether child participated in child interview. Y = Yes, N = No.

## **Researcher Reflexivity Statement**

After eight years working with young children in classrooms diverse across a number of socially constructed identity categories (e.g., race, family structure, socio-economic status, language, ability, religion), I was often painfully aware of the ways my own identities (e.g., White, English-speaking, middle class, United States citizen, able-bodied, cisgender) were privileged, particularly within literacy practices, in school. However, as a new teacher, I was concerned about what was developmentally appropriate to talk about with young children and what my responsibility was in facilitating these conversations. Thus, I often found it difficult to discuss issues of inequity with children. At the same time, I was particularly struck by the ways in which racism and ableism were presented and re-presented in everyday conversations and communication. For example, my classroom library included biographies of Martin Luther King, Jr., Susan B. Anthony, and Helen Keller, but I felt these books seemed to suggest that historical injustices have been resolved and no longer exist. While my instinct was to talk about these issues with children, I did not know how to begin or enter conversations about these topics in my classroom.

Through analytic dialogue with my mentor and support from colleagues, I reflected on my own social and professional identities, which (I soon realized) were contributing to my discomfort. Growing up, I had learned not to talk about race and disability, a phenomena that many teachers entering the field, especially those from a similar demographic as me, face (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Kidd, Sanchez, & Thorp, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Nieto, 2002). Being new to the profession, I also felt unsure about what I was allowed to say to children. By processing my own identities and experiences with colleagues, I become more comfortable with recognizing how my privileged identities were both a part of the problem as well as the solution.

I began to actively engage children in conversations to challenge oppressive narratives (e.g., Columbus day and other stories that valorize White men throughout history; “traditional” family structures in picture books) (Rogers & Mosley, 2006), and saw that not only are young children very capable of engaging in these critical conversations, they have much to say about these topics. Given these experiences, I was interested in understanding how pre-service teachers constructed and transformed their own identities through dialogue about race and ability with young children.

**Building trust.** In this section, I discuss the influence of my own social locations and my attempts to build trust with pre-service teacher participants throughout the study. As a developing scholar, I acknowledge the hegemonic discourses that exist in the structures of the social world in the United States, which afford particular ways of knowing (Adams, Biernat, Branscombe, Crandall, & Wrightsman, 2008; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). I also recognize that proactively addressing inequity, critically examining identities, and engaging children in conversations about difference is fraught with tensions involving values, beliefs, and politics. For instance, I assumed that pre-service teachers might resist talking about disability and/or race with young children, because they might believe children are too young to engage in these critical conversations (Husband, 2012; Winograd, 2015). I knew pre-service teachers might also avoid talking about race issues because of a concern that talk itself would be considered racist (Aukrust & Rydland, 2009; Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006). Additionally, I was aware that pre-service teachers might evade conversations about racial inequity, because of assumptions that race should not matter or is no longer a salient issue (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Stoll, 2014). Further, I understood that pre-service teachers might refrain from critical discussions of disability because they subscribed to a medical model, equating disability as a biologically determined “abnormality,” located within

individual bodies as opposed to emphasizing how people are disabled by physical and/or psychological barriers (Ferri & Bacon, 2011; Lalvani, 2013; Peters & Reid, 2009). In sum, despite the potential benefits of engaging young children in critical conversations about race and disability, I realized pre-service teachers might initially silence these topics during shared-book readings based on personal, developmental, or political concerns.

To fully engage pre-service teachers in unpacking these concerns and tensions, I aimed to partner with pre-service teachers, honoring their knowledge, feelings, and experiences surrounding the complexity of this work. I acknowledged that this would not be easy and would require building reciprocal relationships of trust (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). I also recognized that pre-service teachers would not see me as a peer. Not only did I represent a more seasoned teacher, I was primarily seen as a researcher. By humanizing the research process (Paris, 2011; Paris & Winn, 2014), I sought to create respectful spaces in which pre-service teachers could grapple with these tensions as they reflected on their identities, experiences, and practice with young children.

To address the researcher-participant power differential, I selected methodological tools (e.g., mapping, phenomenological interviews, reflexive video analysis; described in a subsequent section in further detail) that allowed me to take a humanizing stance, centering the voices and experiences of pre-service teachers (Paris, 2011; Paris & Winn, 2014). As I engaged with pre-service teachers through the research process, I also shared my awareness of my own privilege related to social and professional identity markers, the discomfort I have felt in talking about race and disability with young children, and stories of times I found it difficult to discuss issues of inequity with children. The more I opened up, the more my pre-service teacher participants were able to relate to and trust me.

I began analysis of classroom practice based on the challenges and experiences pre-service teachers shared during the interviews and in their maps, as well as the reflections pre-service teachers brought to bear as they viewed video footage of their practice. The purpose of this process was to help pre-service teachers to closely look at their own practice, and to offer support. I sought to honor these pre-service teachers' vulnerability, and reassure them that I was not out to "catch" them being racist or ableist but to highlight how everyday practices in institutional contexts can (re)produce discourses of racism and ableism. During subsequent interviews and feedback sessions, I shared selected transcripts with a focus on pre-service teachers' own goals related to their practice, as well as opportunities for teachers and children to talk about and resist oppressive narratives. I asked many questions to acknowledge that I was, and am, still learning. I also affirmed practices that I felt were effective in my pre-service teacher participants' teaching. Given my background as a teacher, my theoretical orientations, and my commitment to humanizing research, there were moments when I felt I had to push back on pre-service teachers' ideas about ability and/or race. When there were challenges, I took a "join and share" approach (Michael, 2015, p. 110), attempting to notice without judgment. Taking a join and share approach meant that when pre-service teachers described a problematic story or expressed a statement that could perpetuate ableism or racism, I often joined them by sharing how their statements connected to something I once believed or was taught, and then talked about what I have learned or how I have changed. For example, Maddie expressed her uncertainty about bringing up the topic of disability with young children, stating "Maybe I shouldn't bring it up" (Interview #2). I joined her by describing how her feeling connected to a feeling I once had as a teacher, and then shared how my feelings had shifted:

MAGGIE: In my own teaching, that's something that I also struggled with in the beginning, when I was a new teacher: what is appropriate to talk about with children? I think the more I read, and the more I learned as a teacher, to me... [I saw that children are] picking up on messages, anyway. And...it was important for me to give them real information, so that they could start to think about...what that might mean, in terms of, how to interact, or how to be fair, how to be a friend.

Taking a join and share approach grounded conversations with pre-service teachers in the humility of our journeys as teachers, creating shared momentum as we discussed the complexity of talking about ability and race with young children.

**Representation.** In this section, I discuss how I attended to my own influence on the data as I represented the views of pre-service teacher participants. First, in view of my own engagement with participants (i.e., sharing my own stories, providing feedback), I understood that I was co-constructing the data I sought to analyze (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014; Paris, 2011). I recognized that as soon as I tried to tell the stories of these pre-service teachers and the children they teach, I would be dialogically using their words and ideas to construct my own thoughts (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). Indeed, the stories pre-service teachers shared in dialogic conversation with me were influenced by the very nature of our speaking and listening together. Representing pre-service teacher participants' narratives in a way that was closest to what they would want, while also recognizing my own influence, involved ongoing in-depth member checking processes (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). Additionally, my aim was not to present these pre-service teachers' identities, experiences, and practices as decontextualized and frozen in time, but to acknowledge the changes that occur through their engagement in these interactions (Fine, Katsiaficas, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Sirin, Yosef-Meitav, Farah, & Zoabi, 2012; Norton &

Toohey, 2011; Creswell, 2013). Through iterative opportunities to analyze the data, pre-service teachers were invited to critique their own changing narratives as well as my representation.

### Methodological Tools and Data Collection

Guided by my conceptual framework and research questions, I employed multiple methodological tools: Critical Discourse Analysis of video data, phenomenological interviewing, mapping, reflexive video analysis, modified clinical interviewing, and semi-structured interviewing. As I considered the tools that would help answer my research questions, I thought through the data sources each methodological tool would yield, and took care aligning these data sources to each research question. Further, I differentiated between primary and secondary data sources (see Table 5 for primary and secondary data sources by research question).

Table 5

#### *Primary and Secondary Data Sources by Research Question*

Research Questions	Data Sources				
	Shared Book Reading Video Data	Pre-service Teacher Interviews	Critical Conversations Journey Maps	Child Interviews	Mentor Teacher Interviews
1. How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct identities about ability and race during shared-book readings?	P				
2. How do pre-service teachers' social identities and professional experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?		P	P		S
3. How does pre-service teacher and research co-analyses of discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?	P	P	P	S	

*Note.* P = primary data sources, S = secondary data source.

Because pre-service teachers were my focal participants, the primary data sources were data directly from the pre-service teachers themselves. Secondary sources helped me to contextualize

pre-service teachers' identities, experiences, and practices. In the sections that follow, I discuss these methodological tools in greater detail.

**Critical Discourse Analysis of video data.** Of significant importance to this study was the sociocultural notion that language, a symbolic tool used in context, mediates learning (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, the ways that children learn to talk about disability and race in early childhood settings are important to their learning about these socially constructed differences (Berry, 2006; Park, 2011). This includes the language that is modeled for children by teachers and books in their classroom environments. As pre-service teachers and children chose genres and discourses to carry out talk about ability and race during shared-book reading, they both consumed and produced discourses (Rogers, 2011). Employing sociocultural and DisCrit theories for this study required that the unit of analysis include not only pre-service teachers or children as individuals, but the discursive practices that occurred between children, pre-service teachers, and the books that were read, with attention to the ways language mediates these interactions. Video data was essential to answering Research Question #1 (i.e., RQ1; How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct identities about ability and race during shared-book readings?).

To capture these discursive practices, I video recorded as pre-service teacher teachers and children read and talked about books. I then conducted Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to understand the ways pre-service teachers and children used language to construct, resist, and/or reproduce oppressive and liberatory ideologies through their interactions during shared book reading (Alim & Reyes, 2011; Gee, 2014; Rogers, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2014). To answer RQ1 (i.e., “How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct identities about disability and race during shared-book readings?”), conversations between pre-service teachers

and a small group of children during shared-book reading were video-recorded in phases, four times per case (see Appendix B). During Phase #1 of shared book reading, video data was collected twice, as pre-service teachers and children read and discussed *The Amazing Erik* (Huber, 2014) and *Bein' with You This Way* (Nikola-Lisa, 1994). During Phase #2 of shared book reading, video data was collected twice as pre-service teachers and children re-visited the books. The video files provided raw data of communication behaviors. Video data was also used to examine on-record speech, as well as to identify speakers and document non-verbal behavior (e.g., hand raising, gaze, etc.). These shared book readings were scheduled during pre-service teacher fieldwork hours, and took place in regularly used small group spaces both within and outside the classroom (i.e., cubby area, breakout space in library). Of the 16 shared book readings I video recorded, shared book reading time ranged from 4 minutes and 42 seconds to 13 minutes and 22 seconds.

**Phenomenological interviewing.** In-depth phenomenological interviewing (Siedman, 2013) combines life-history interviewing techniques with in-depth interviewing through iterative semi-structured interviews that emphasize making meaning of participants' experiences. Taking a humanizing stance (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014; Paris, 2011), I sought to recognize the person-centered nature of pre-service teachers' experiences. Phenomenological interviewing, when employed with my theoretical commitments to sociocultural theory and DisCrit, supported a humanizing investigation, in that it helped me resist exploitation and colonization by centering the voices of my participants. For this reason, I utilized phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 2013). Pre-service teachers' ability and race talk with children was influenced by larger institutional structures and discourses that pre-service teachers had encountered throughout their lives. By understanding how pre-service teachers made sense of their own

identities and previous experiences talking about ability and race, how they explained their experience facilitating conversations about ability and race with young children, how they interpreted shared book reading as an activity, and how they reflected on talking about ability and race in the classroom, I gained a fuller understanding of how these micro-interactions related to macro-level ideologies (Erickson, 2004).

I followed the structure for in-depth phenomenological interviewing (Cook, 2009; Granot & Greene, 2015; Seidman, 2013), which includes a series of three focused interviews: (1) focused life history; (2) details of the experience; and (3) reflection on the meaning of their participation in the study. Interviewing pre-service teachers in this iterative way afforded me insight into how pre-service teachers' experiences talking about ability and race with young children related to the particular contexts of their lives. Pre-service Teacher Interview #1 and Pre-service Teacher Interview #2 addressed Research Question #2 (RQ2; i.e., How do pre-service teachers' social and professional identities mediate the ways they talk about disability and race with young children?). The third interview addressed Research Question #3 (RQ3; i.e., How does pre-service teacher and research co-analysis of discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?; see interview guide for pre-service teachers in Appendix M).

Pre-service teacher interviews took place during their fieldwork hours at their practicum sites in private spaces (i.e., conference room, empty classroom). The 12 pre-service interviews I conducted ranged in time from 43 minutes to 1 hour and 17 minutes in duration. Seidman (2013) noted that researchers may adjust the three-part phenomenological interview structure to allow participants to reflect on and make meaning of their situated experiences. While I adhered to the basic principles of the phenomenological interview structure, I slightly modified this structure by

embedding mapping and reflexive video analysis into the interview process. In the next sections, I describe my rationale for these modifications to the interview structure.

***Interview #1: Focused life history and Critical Conversation Mapping.*** During the first phenomenological interview, the researcher's primary responsibility is to understand as much as possible about the participant's history in relation to the phenomenon being studied (O'Connor, 2008; Seidman, 2013). My aim for the first interview with pre-service teachers was to understand relevant background knowledge and contextual information with regards to pre-service teachers' perspectives on shared book reading and their multifaceted selves. I began the first interview with a mapping task, which I describe in detail below.

Mapping, in combination with the first phenomenological interview, allowed pre-service teachers to visually narrate the relationship between their shifting identities and their experiences talking about ability and race in school settings. Identity scholars have explicated the fluid, multidimensional, and situated nature of identity (Annamma et al., 2013; Artiles, 2015; Holland et al., 1998; Howard, 2000). Identities are not static attributes of individuals, but can be viewed as continuously constructed and reconstructed (Norton & Toohey, 2011; Norton-Peirce, 1995). Further, identities and social contexts are interdependent – identity construction is situated in social interactions (Holland et al., 1998) as well as broader systems of power and privilege (Annamma et al., 2013; Artiles, 2015). Individuals may identify across multiple identity categories, and the salience of these identities may shift depending on social context. To understand the role of pre-service teachers' identities in talking about race and ability across sociocultural and historical contexts, mapping provided participants an open-ended space in which to narrate this complexity.

According to Futch and Fine (2013), visual identity maps allow participants to document the shifting and contradictory aspects of their identities over time and space. In this study, mapping allowed pre-service teachers to document the multiple spaces (e.g., internal, social, physical) that afforded or constrained conversations about ability and race. Further, mapping has been used as a way to re-center authority on the participant (Annamma, 2016; Futch, 2014; Futch & Fine, 2013; Katsiaficas, Alcantar, Hernandez, Samayoa, Gutierrez, Taxis, & Williams, 2016; Ruglis, 2011; Sirin & Fine, 2007). Thus, utilizing mapping techniques is consistent with a humanizing stance, in that participants were able to manipulate visual material in order to represent their multifaceted selves on their own terms.

To begin the first phenomenological interview, I invited my pre-service teacher participants to create Critical Conversations Journey Maps. The concept and prompt for this mapping technique was adapted from Sirin and Fine's (2007) Identity Mapping and Annamma's (2016) Education Journey Maps. Utilizing Critical Conversations Journey Maps, I asked pre-service teachers to visually narrate their experiences discussing ability and race in educational spaces. The Critical Conversations Journey Maps were meant to capture conversational trajectories throughout the pre-service teachers' educational experiences. The prompt (below) was written to allow each pre-service teacher to visually narrate shifts in time, space, and identity:

Map any conversations about ability and race you have experienced in your education journey from when you started school as a young child to now. Include people, places, classroom materials, obstacles, and opportunities on the way. Using the materials provided, draw the relationship between these conversations and your own social, academic, and professional identities. You can include what felt comfortable and/or what

didn't. You can use different colors to show different feelings, use symbols like lines and arrows, or label with words. These are just suggestions. Be as creative as you like and, if you don't want to draw, you can make more of a flow-chart or other visual representation.

Afterwards, you will get a chance to explain it to me.

Materials for creating the maps included an array of drawing tools: markers, colored pencils, crayons, rulers, and paper. As pre-service teachers created their maps, I visually displayed the prompt. At pre-service teacher participants' request, I re-read the prompt aloud, providing any needed clarification. For instance, when one participant, Maddie, first heard the prompt, I could tell by her facial expression that she was perplexed with how to begin. When I asked her if she understood the prompt, she took a moment to re-read the prompt and then mentioned that she was not a very good artist. I reinforced that the point was to communicate her experience, not to create a masterpiece, and that there was no right way to do so. This seemed to reassure her, as she set to work. In the end, her map consisted of several color-coded lists with connecting arrows.

Following Annamma (2016), each time a pre-service teacher created her Critical Conversations Journey map, I created my own Critical Conversations Journey map as well. To avoid influencing what pre-service teachers chose to visually include in their maps, I occupied myself by creating my own map and waited to share my map until after pre-service teachers had completed theirs. I also recognized that pre-service teachers were aware of my presence during their map creation. By focusing my gaze on my map as opposed to watching them create theirs, I attempted to send a message to pre-service teachers that I was not there to assess their maps-in-progress.

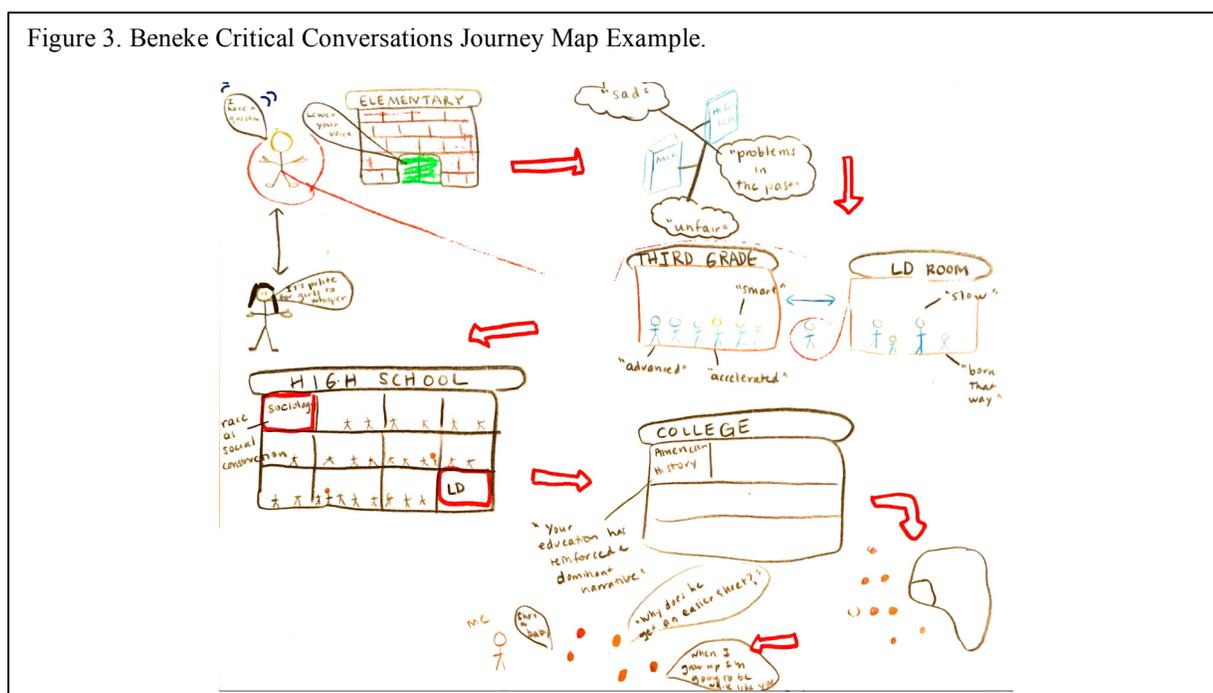
Once pre-service teachers had completed their maps, I asked if they would like to share their maps first. In each interview, pre-service teacher participants elected to share and discuss their maps before I shared mine. While I intended to share my map, I was careful to keep my focus on learning from pre-service teachers during Interview #1 (Paris, 2011). Using the maps as a guide for the focused life history interview illuminated ways in which participants navigated and constructed racial, abled, gendered, and political boundaries (Powell, 2010). After visually representing their critical conversations journeys through maps, I asked participants to give voice to these narratives. By asking “How?” I invited pre-service teachers to reconstruct any educational experiences talking about ability and race, and how these related to their social and professional identities. In doing so, I positioned my participants as experts on the topic (Annamma, 2016; Sirin & Fine, 2007), and engaged them in discussing ways in which they have experienced discursive boundaries around politically charged topics such as race and ability, relative to their various contexts and identities.

At the same time, I recognized that asking pre-service teachers to share their identities and experiences talking about race and ability in school contexts, in the context of the researcher-participant power relationship, might feel quite uncomfortable for pre-service teacher participants. As Paris (2011) writes, while it is important to be cautious of what researchers disclose in conversation with participants, given the potential to condition participants’ responses, participants might also choose *not* to say something because a researcher does not disclose details about themselves that assure participants they are trustworthy and deserving of information. By creating and sharing my own map, I attempted to build trust and transparency with my pre-service teacher participants as I explained my own discomforts and successes talking about race and ability in school spaces. Additionally, in sharing my map I humanized the

interview process, allowing pre-service teachers to ask me questions about my own history with conversations about ability and race, just as I did about theirs (Paris, 2011). This transparency was important in helping pre-service teachers to relate to and trust me in the research process.

Further, discussing my map with pre-service teacher participants provided opportunities for pre-service teacher participants to recall additional aspects of their own educational journeys that they did not include in their maps. For instance, after I shared about my experience talking about race in a high school sociology class and how it connected to conversations I had with children, Sydney remembered her own experiences talking about the idea of race in high school psychology. Moreover, after I discussed coming to terms with the negative messages I received at school about mental health while my father was experiencing depression, Cora described her own family's challenges with mental health stigma. In these ways, I used my map to describe the complicated relationships between my own identities and experiences, particularly times when I have struggled to navigate discussions with both children and adults about race and ability as a White, able-bodied adult who imagines herself as a social justice educator. Figure 3 provides an example of one of the Critical Conversations Journey Maps I created.

Figure 3. Beneke Critical Conversations Journey Map Example.



In this Critical Conversations Journey Map, I included significant conversations and experiences related to ability and race in my schooling, including my experience being pulled out for special education speech and language services in second grade, the conversations my teachers had during Black History Month in a predominately White elementary school, the language used to describe students placed in the “Learning Disabled” classroom in relation to students in the “accelerated classroom,” learning about race as a social construction in high school and college, being in situations where my Whiteness was not centered, becoming a teacher in a racially diverse, inclusive classroom, and hearing children’s comments related to ability and race.

***Interview #2: The details of the experience and reflexive video analysis.*** The purpose of the second phenomenological interview was to understand details surrounding participants’ present lived experiences (O’Connor, 2008; Seidman, 2013). For this second interview, I focused on pre-service teacher participants’ lived experiences discussing ability and race with young children during shared book readings in their fieldwork sites. To begin these conversations, I first inquired about pre-service teachers’ understandings about shared book reading in relation to what they had learned through coursework, observations of mentor teachers, the early learning standards, and their own interactions with children.

Following our conversation about shared-book reading, I drew on the video footage from Phase #1 of shared-book reading in which pre-service teachers and children read and discussed *The Amazing Erik* (Huber, 2014) and *Bein’ with You This Way* (Nikola-Lisa, 1994). According to Tochon (2007) videos can be used as a reflexive tool, allowing pre-service teacher participants to recall past thoughts, prompt metacognition by viewing and examining their practice, and reflect on plans for the future. Moreover, video can be used as a tool for teachers to research their own practices (Roth, 2007), which is beneficial, because it allows teachers to engage in meaningful,

relevant inquiry to improve their teaching. Viewing the video footage allowed pre-service teachers to reconstruct the experience of a complex activity – reading books about ability and race with young children – in detail, call into question the decisions they made, and talk with me about how they might revisit the books. As we reviewed and co-analyzed the video data, pre-service teachers reflected on aspects of their teaching they wanted to adjust during Phase #2. Further, pre-service teacher participants saw video as a powerful tool to support their own practice, which I discuss further in Chapter 4.

In addition to video footage, I brought excerpts from child interview transcripts, as well as my initial analysis of the video to this interview. Using the video data and reviewing selected transcripts helped to elicit pre-service teachers' thinking and reflections about their teaching interactions during shared-book reading. I shared my interpretation of the shared-book reading events with the pre-service teachers, and reflections on what the focal children may have understood about the book topics. This created an opportunity to member-check my initial interpretations, and allowed me to collect data about my participants' perspectives on the discursive interactions for further analysis (Koelsch, 2013). Additionally, by viewing and discussing the video and interview transcripts *with* pre-service teachers, I promoted opportunities for them to contribute to and engage as researchers, in an attempt to re-distribute the power relationship between researcher and participants.

***Interview #3: Reflection on meaning.*** According to Seidman (2013), in the third phenomenological interview, participants are invited to reflect on the meaning of their experience. During this interview, I invited pre-service teacher participants to reflect on how they understood their shifting identities in relation to their discursive practices through the process of the study. To do so, I began by sharing video data from Phase #2 of shared book reading to

stimulate memory of their thoughts, prompt them to ask questions about practice, and reflect on how they might facilitate talk about ability and race with young children in the future. After viewing each clip, I invited pre-service teacher participants to share any initial reactions and we discussed the extent to which they felt they addressed challenges they initially faced in talking about ability and race during Phase #1.

Following this video de-brief, I invited pre-service teacher participants to revisit the Critical Conversations Journey Maps they created during Interview #1. Revisiting the Critical Conversations Journey Maps was meant to capture any transformations that pre-service teacher participants felt occurred in their conversations about ability and race during the course of the study; therefore, the prompt (below) was written to allow each pre-service teacher to visually narrate shifts in time, space, experience, and identity:

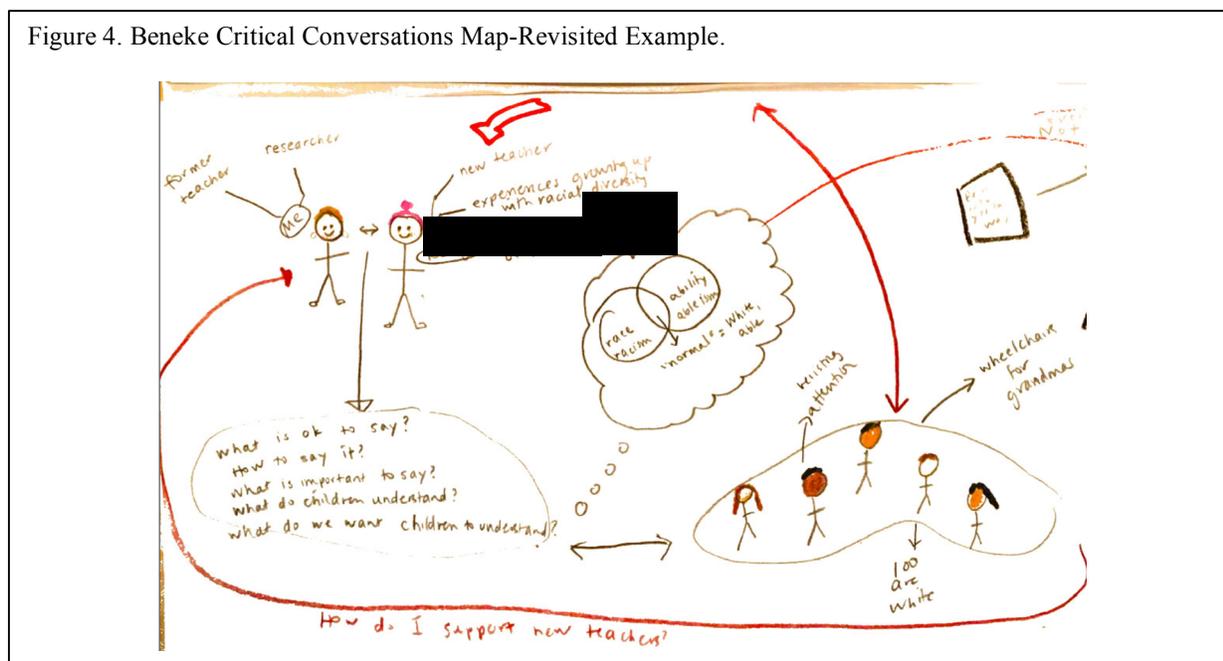
When you first created your map, I asked you to represent conversations you have had about ability and race in your educational journey, and your own identities. Based on your participation in the study, would you like to add anything to your map? You can add conversations you have facilitated with children or conversations with me. You can draw relationships between these conversations and your own identities. You can include what felt comfortable and/or what didn't. You can use different colors to show different feelings, use symbols like lines and arrows, or label with words. These are just suggestions. Be as creative as you like and, if you don't want to draw, you can make more of a flow-chart, timeline, or other visual representation. Afterwards, you will get a chance to explain it to me.

Materials for creating the maps included an array of drawing tools: markers, colored pencils, crayons, rulers, and paper. As pre-service teachers added to their maps, I visually

displayed the prompt. At pre-service teacher participants' request, I re-read the prompt aloud, providing any needed clarification. As pre-service teachers added to their maps, I also revisited mine. This allowed me to make visible how I had also been changed by my participation in the research process, and to represent my analysis in relation to my own identities and experiences. Once pre-service teachers had completed their additions to the maps, I asked if they would like to share their maps first. Similar to Interview #1, pre-service teacher participants elected to share and discuss their maps before I shared mine. Using the maps as a guide for this interview illuminated ways in which participants understood shifts in their identities and experiences in relation to their participation in the study. After visually representing transformations in their critical conversations journeys through maps, I asked participants to give voice to these narratives. By asking "How?", I invited pre-service teachers to reflect on the relationship between their educational experiences talking about ability and race, their experiences talking with children and talking with me during the study, and how these related to their social and professional identities. The maps were used as a tool to facilitate dialogue and reflection with pre-service teachers about the meaning they were making regarding talking about ability and race, their discursive practices with young children, and their future identities as early educators.

After pre-service teachers shared their maps, I also shared mine. Discussing my map with pre-service teacher participants further humanized the research process, as it provided opportunities for me to make transparent the ways our conversations had affected me as a teacher educator. Further, it created an opportunity for me to member-check emerging themes with each pre-service teacher. Figure 4 provides an example of one of the Critical Conversations Journey Maps I added to.

Figure 4. Beneke Critical Conversations Map-Revisited Example.



In the above example, I included significant conversations and experiences related to reflecting on conversations about ability and race throughout the study, including my conversations with Sydney, conversations children in her mentor teacher's classroom were having, the relationship between conversations in the study and conversations I had as a teacher, the intersections between ableism and racism I saw in these conversations, and implications for my identity and practice as a teacher educator.

After sharing my map, I asked pre-service teachers to reflect on the process of being interviewed, invited them to ask any questions they still wanted to ask me, and encouraged them to share anything else they wanted me to know. In these conversations, it was evident that we had built researcher-participant relationships grounded in mutual respect and care as they shared family pictures with me, asked questions regarding my future dissertation defense and job search, and shared hopes for our continued connection once the study was completed. I told pre-

service teacher participants that they could continue to contact me as they continued to navigate conversations about ability and race with children.

**Modified clinical interviewing.** Using a modified version of the clinical interviewing technique (Ginsburg, 1997), I interviewed focal children to gain understanding surrounding the meaning children made during shared book reading during the study. Child interviews served as a secondary data source, as I used child interview transcripts to understand the context of pre-service teacher participants' practice. Further, child interviews served as a mediating tool to help pre-service teachers reflect on their practice, as I answered RQ3 (i.e., How does pre-service teacher and research co-analyses of discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?). Child interviews took place immediately following the shared book reading during Phase #1 (see child interview protocol in Appendix O) in the same area where children had read the story with the pre-service teacher participant. After obtaining child assent, I followed Park's (2011) modified clinical interviewing, using the book as a guide and invited children to tell me what they knew about the topic in the book. I asked child participants a series of questions that are developed in advance about the topics of ability and race in relation to the book, choosing follow-up questions based on the children's responses. The interview protocol was designed to allow children to talk about ability and race from the position of expert guiding a novice through the books they read with the pre-service teacher. Because these interviews took place during the course of classroom activities, children were sometimes eager to return to activities such as center time or free choice. At other times, child interviews were interrupted because of a child's need for a bathroom break. I followed each child's lead, and was flexible with the interview format. At times, children asked me to read sections of the books aloud to them so they could recall names of book characters or particular words the author had

used. Of the 22 child interviews I conducted, child interview times ranged from 1 minute and 24 seconds to 9 minutes and 55 seconds.

**Semi-structured interviews.** Mentor teacher semi-structured interviews provided an additional secondary data source in answering RQ2 (i.e., How do pre-service teachers' social identities and professional experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?). Given my theoretical commitment to sociocultural theory, it was important to interview mentor teachers to understand how pre-service teachers' shared-book reading practices were mediated by what they were learning through their apprenticeship in mentor teachers' classrooms. Mentor teacher interviews were semi-structured, in that I asked a mix of both unstructured (i.e., open-ended, exploratory questions) and structured questions (i.e., pre-determined questions designed to obtain specific information), while remaining flexible so I could respond to the worldviews of mentor teachers (Merriam, 2009). In interviews with each mentor teacher we explored issues related to teaching philosophy, approach to addressing early childhood standards, shared book reading practice, and discussions about ability and race with young children (see Appendix P for mentor teacher interview guide). Mentor teacher interviews took place in private rooms at each fieldwork site (i.e., empty teacher's lounge, unused classroom). I conducted a total of six mentor teacher interviews, ranging in time from 19 minutes and 5 seconds to 35 minutes and 34 seconds.

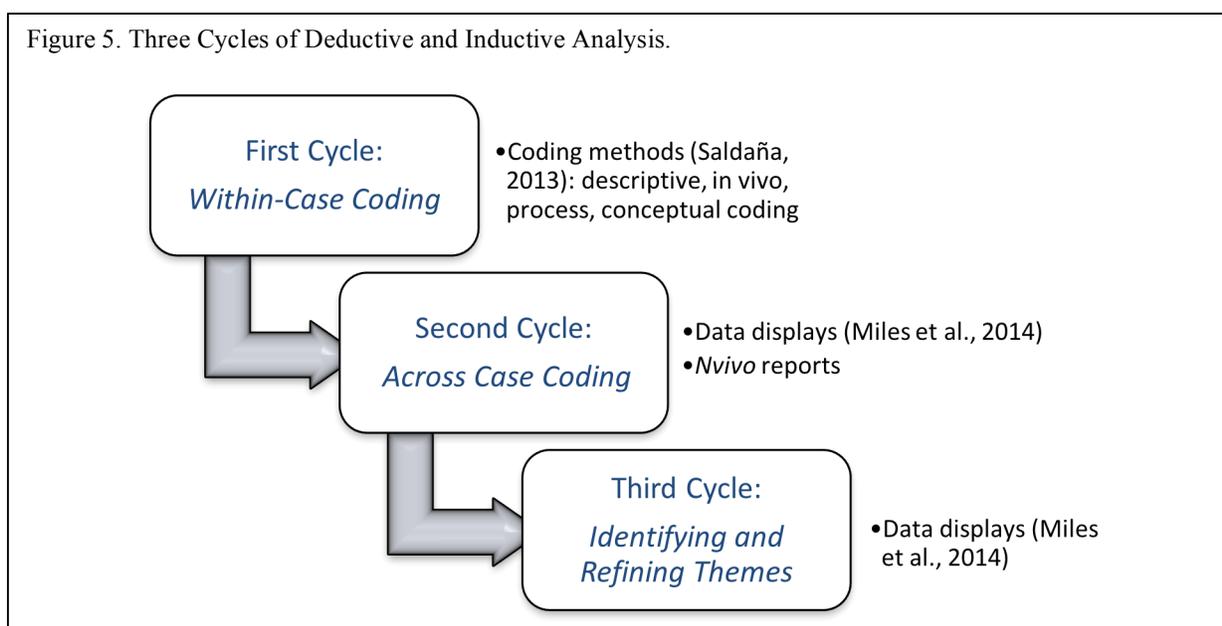
**Data collection summary.** Guided by my conceptual framework and research questions, I employed the following methodological tools: video data, phenomenological interviewing, mapping, reflexive video analysis, modified clinical interviewing, and semi-structured interviewing. Through this process, I gathered data sources from multiple sources for each case (see Table 6 for number of data sources across cases).

Table 6

<i>Number of Data Sources by Case</i>					
	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Total
Pre-service Teacher Interviews	3	3	3	3	12
Pre-service Teacher Maps	2	2	2	2	8
Shared-book Reading Video Data	4	4	4	4	16
Child Interviews	7	6	4	5	22
Mentor Teacher Interviews	2	2	1	1	6

### Data Analysis: Reflexive, Ongoing, and Iterative

Data analysis for this study was not an isolated stage that followed data collection chronologically. Instead, I searched for patterns through reflexive, ongoing, and iterative data analysis during and following data collection (Erickson, 1996; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). Data was analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Seidman, 2013) following an iterative process that included three cycles of deductive and inductive analysis: (1) establishing within-case codes; (2) revising and ordering codes across cases; and (3) identifying and refining themes across cases (see Figure 5).



These processes are consistent with Miles et al.'s (2014) description of qualitative data analysis as involving three “concurrent flows of activity: (1) data condensation; (2) data display; and (3) conclusion drawing/verification” (p. 12). Further, the qualitative research strategies of iterative coding, memoing, and creating data matrices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) were applied to each phase of the analysis. Taking a humanizing stance, member checking was also iterative. When possible, I engaged the pre-service teacher participants in this iterative process. Through multiple rounds, I shared and discussed emerging hunches and “rough drafts” of my analyses with my pre-service teacher participants to refine themes and surface new ones.

While data analysis was ongoing and iterative, following Interview #3, I further refined and synthesized results, following Smith's (1997) approach to data integration and analysis. All data was uploaded into *NVivo* qualitative coding software. The sections below provide an overview of the data analysis approach used to answer each research question, as well as details of the processes used within each cycle of analysis. However, given the distinct analytic approach required to address the study's first research question, I describe that analysis separately in a later section.

**First cycle: Establishing within-case codes.** Coding for this study occurred both deductively and inductively, using my conceptual framework as a guide (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). To maintain trustworthiness in data analysis, each data source was first independently analyzed prior to synthesizing across data sources. Further, in accordance with case study analysis, I coded all data sources within each case prior to synthesizing across cases (Merriam, 2009; see next section regarding across-case coding). The first cycle of coding began with three initial code categories based on my conceptual framework: language in use, mediating tools, and

socio-political context. Following Erickson (1996), I began by deductively identifying patterns in the data, drawing on ideas the literature and my own pilot study (described above). I then approached data within each case from a “bottom up” approach (Erickson, 1996), remaining open to ideas in the data and looking to identify representative instances that did not appear in the literature but that were constructed as I engaged with the data, as well as instances that contradicted these codes. Coding both inductively and deductively allowed me to continually adjust my analytic frame as I began to understand the data in terms of both pattern and nuance.

Throughout the coding process, all data sources (i.e., pre-service teacher interview transcripts, Critical Conversations Journey Maps, transcripts of shared-book reading, child interview transcripts, mentor teacher interview transcripts,) were coded eclectically (Saldaña, 2013), meaning I purposefully combined several coding methods (i.e., descriptive, in vivo, process, and conceptual coding) with the understanding that these would be refined and synthesized when I coded across cases in a future coding cycle. Drawing on multiple coding methods allowed me to analyze the complexity of the data from multiple perspectives. According to Saldaña (2013), descriptive coding is appropriate for exploring a data set with multiple types of data sources. My descriptive codes were short summaries (i.e., a word or short phrase) of the topic within a particular data segment. In vivo coding prioritizes participants’ voices by using words or short phrases from participant’s own language in the data as codes (Saldaña, 2013). *In vivo* codes helped me to uphold participants’ meanings of their knowledge, beliefs, and practices in the coding itself (Charmaz, 2014). Further, a process coding approach was used to indicate action in the data (Saldaña, 2013). In my study, I developed process codes to capture observable activity (e.g., “talking about differences”) as well as conceptual action (e.g., “raising awareness”). Finally, concept codes were used in this first cycle of analysis. Concept codes

assign macro level meaning to data based on broader ideas (Saldaña, 2013). I used concept coding both inductively and deductively to connote liberatory and oppressive ideologies (i.e., ableism, resistance), curricular approaches (i.e., developmentally appropriate practice), and events (i.e., presidential election) in pre-service teachers' sociopolitical contexts. Concept coding allowed me to explain emergent ideas in relation to theory and other relevant scholarship (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Within-case codes were generated for all data sources pertaining to that case. For example, when I developed codes for Case 1, I analyzed pre-service teacher interviews with Cora (3), Cora's Critical Conversations Journey Maps (2), video data from shared-book reading with Cora's small group (4), child interviews from Cora's small group (7), and interviews with Cora's mentor teachers (2). However, different data sources were prioritized in answering each of the research questions (see Table 5). For the first research question investigating classroom talk during shared book reading, the primary data source was video data. To answer the second research question, which focused on the tools that mediated pre-service teachers practice, pre-service teacher interviews and maps served as primary data sources, with mentor teacher interviews as secondary sources for data triangulation. To answer my third research question, which focused on changes in pre-service teachers' identities and practices, video data, pre-service teacher interviews, and maps served as primary data sources, with child interviews as secondary sources for data triangulation. To code Critical Conversation Journey Maps, memos were created to synthesize and catalogue the content and meaning of each map (Saldaña, 2013). These memos were then coded using the same codebook used for interviews and video data. As new ideas from memos emerged, codes were added and code definitions changed.

*Analysis of classroom talk.* The first research question initially required a distinct analytic approach, and is thus treated separately here. To answer RQ1 (i.e., “How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct identities about disability and race during shared book readings?”) I utilized Critical Discourse Analysis (Alim & Reyes, 2011; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Gee, 2014; Rogers, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2015). I first examined each case to analyze pre-service teachers’ and children’s communication behaviors (including conversational turns, topic negotiation, content, activity, and frequency counts) during Phase #1 and Phase #2 of shared book reading (see Appendix B). Deductively, I began coding based on the literature and my own pilot study (e.g., linguistic behavior, participation structures, conversational turns, nonverbal behavior). Analysis included attention to ways that conversations between pre-service teachers and children were structured (see Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), how conversational behavior functions (see Heritage & Clayman, 2010), and the sociopolitical consequences of these micro-interactions, with respect to issues of inclusivity and oppressive narratives (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Rogers, 2011).

I created utterance-by-utterance transcripts of the shared-book readings, attending to pauses, adjacent speech, overlapping talk, and other salient conversational characteristics (Ochs, 1999). Using tonal markers (i.e., final intonation, non-final intonation, question intonation) helped me to identify the ways speakers signaled that they completed their “turn,” completed a thought, or asked a question (Gee, 2014). After transcription, I counted utterances, which I defined as completed words, partial words (e.g., “fa-”, “ki-”), and on-record backchannel responses (e.g., “Mm-hm,” “uh-huh”). I then compared the number of utterances spoken by teachers to children across transcripts using descriptive statistics (i.e., means; see Appendix Q for frequency counts). This helped me to understand the frequency of participants’ verbal

contributions during shared-book readings. Following Gee (2014), I used these numbers to inform my CDA. I then organized the transcripts into lines, determined based on speakers' intonation. I attend to final intonation, question intonation, as well as any on record speaking that was interrupted by another speaker. I segmented the lines into stanzas (i.e., set of connected lines about a topic) (e.g., Gee, 2010; Marsh & Lammers, 2011). Presenting the data in stanzas allowed me to sequentially highlight units of speech. Furthermore, stanzas provided a way to draw attention to topic initiation and subsequent talk on that topic. Finally, video was used to incorporate non-verbal behavior (i.e., gaze, hand raising, shifts in body position) into transcripts.

To understand how conversations about ability and race were structured during shared-book readings, I studied each idea unit of the classroom talk to locate density of language practices, such as turn sequences and topic negotiation (i.e., when a speaker introduces a markedly different topic to the one discussed in the prior turn and thus are obvious topic changes) (Erickson, 1996; Gan, Davison, & Hamp-Lyons, 2009; Michaels, 1981), looking for overall structural organization in the talk (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). I then carefully examined each of turn sequence to identify what linguistic devices pre-service teachers and children used to negotiate topics. Based on the literature and the results of my pilot study, I also focused on those segments of data that represented ways in which pre-service teacher participants used the text (a mediational tool) to negotiate conversational topics.

Moreover, I created landscapes, which are hand-drawn visual charts of major activities according to the real time sequence within a video recorded event (Gutiérrez, 2016; see example in Appendix Q). Landscapes can be helpful in closely examining the dialogic interrelationship between the diachronic dimensions of social practice (i.e., moment to moment constitution of activity) and synchronic dimensions of social practice (i.e., social, spatial, and temporal

organization of shared cultural phenomena) (Gutiérrez & Stone, 2000). Creating landscapes allowed me to explore tensions between the official “script” (i.e., dominant forms of knowledge and participation that are socially sanctioned and made legitimate through interaction) and unofficial “counterscript” (i.e., alternate forms of knowledge and participation that may be marginalized or silenced), which pre-service teacher participants and children engage in during shared-book readings (Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995). Following Potter and Wetherell (1987), I attended to atypical instances of participation to understand the boundaries of participants’ discourse patterns. Additionally, I examined contextual cues of verbal and nonverbal prosody (Erickson, 1996) at key moments when pre-service teachers and young children shifted topics during the shared-book readings. Seeking instances of child resistance in the data allowed me to understand how the “script” and “counterscript” were created and defined.

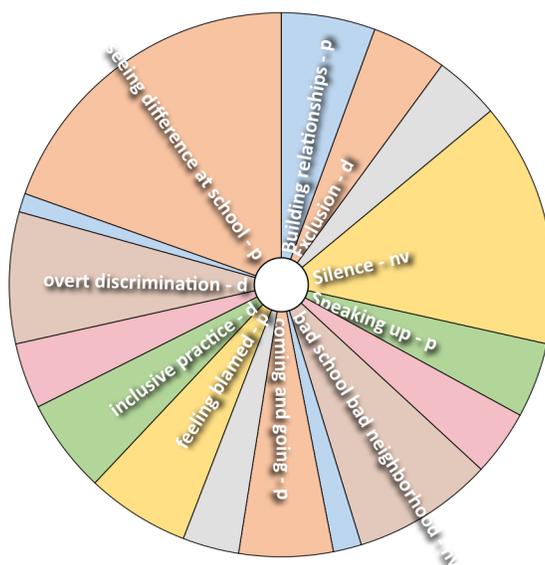
**Second cycle: Ordering and refining codes across cases.** Once all data sources had been coded within each case during this first cycle, I then coded data across cases by research question. Data displays (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Miles et al., 2014) were used to cluster and condense data into coherent units. This was done to further understand the data corpus, as I explored commonalities and differences in codes across cases. Clustering data according to aspects of my conceptual framework was useful to track whether and the extent to which specific similarities and/or differences were evident within or across cases. An example of an initial, partially-ordered matrix is included in Appendix R.

Coding of all data sources was cyclical. As I coded across cases, additional codes were created as they arose and existing code definitions were revised; however, fewer codes were added as the process continued, indicating that the codes were indeed appropriate to apply across cases. As new codes arose through the exploration of a new data source, previous data sources

were re-examined for instances of the new code. For example, in Case 4, Sydney spoke about a process she observed in high school in which her peers with disabilities and peers of color were in and out of the classroom, sometimes roaming, which sparked the creation the “coming and going” code. As I coded across cases, I revisited data from interviews with other pre-service teachers as well as their maps, finding similar instances in data sources from Cases 1 (Cora) and 3 (Maddie).

*NVivo* was used to create reports of all source data relevant to a particular research question. For example, to answer the second research question, a report was created containing all data segments that had been coded “mediating tools→educational experiences” (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. *NVivo* Report: Educational Experiences by Number of Coding References.



These reports were used as a starting point for deeper analysis and were instrumental in ordering data and revising codes during the second cycle of analysis. *NVivo* reports allowed me to examine density of sub-coding and to pull up across-case examples to analyze more closely.

Through an iterative process, I continued to deductively and inductively construct my analysis until I found a reciprocal relationship between my analytic framework and the data itself (see Appendix S for final code book).

**Third cycle: Identifying and refining themes across cases.** With all data coded and organized, across-case thematic analysis was conducted. Themes were established by using the data matrices to look for both convergence and divergence across cases. Through further reflection and discussion with my dissertation chair, we worked to consensus (Ritchie et al., 2013; Wasser & Bresler, 1996), revisiting themes and data examples selected for inclusion in the write up of the results (Chapter 4). Throughout the identification of themes, work with matrices was interspersed with analytic memoing about emerging themes and patterns in the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Maxwell, 2012) and biweekly peer debriefing sessions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2012). After several iterations, a set of preliminary themes was identified that best described the nature of the data in response to each research question.

After repeated readings of the data, I then generated a set of final themes. Erickson (1986) stated that the researcher must systematically look through data for segments that support, confirm, or contradict themes. Thus, data segments (e.g., passages from interview transcripts, excerpts from participants' identity maps, frequency counts from shared-book reading transcripts) were identified that supported and/or disconfirmed my final themes. Using *NVivo*, I organized and indexed these data segments, paying particular attention to confirming instances generated by more than one data collection method (e.g., interviews, mapping, video data). Contradictory data segments were used to adjust themes, as well as to recognize and bracket

instances in which individual case differences did not fit within themes. A detailed table of the themes and data condensation process can be found in Appendix T.

### **Trustworthiness**

To enhance the trustworthiness of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), I drew upon the following strategies throughout data collection and analysis: (a) analytic memoing; (b) ongoing member checking; (c) peer debriefing; and (d) seeking both convergence and divergence.

### **Memoing**

After each data collection activity, I wrote memos in my researcher journal to document my impressions and reactions such as reflections on readings, observations during data collection, methodological decisions, ideas to develop further, my own assumptions and experiential knowledge, and working hypotheses. Memoing provided a record that I could review throughout the study as a means of checking my own biases within the research. I wrote memos after each data collection activity and biweekly throughout analysis.

This strategy offered an ongoing chance for reflection throughout the study (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Through the memoing process, I became aware of specific ways in which my insider knowledge of the early childhood undergraduate program expanded my understandings of my pre-service teachers' experiences. For example, early in the coding process, I found that at times I would positively code pre-service teachers' verbal agreement with my comments regarding ability and race. Regular analytic memoing, in combination with discussion with my chair, enabled me to see this as confirmation bias and take measures to ensure a balanced treatment of the data.

### **Ongoing Member Checking**

As mentioned above, member checking (Glesne, 2010; Yin, 2009) was used throughout data collection and during the data analysis process to provide pre-service teacher participants with opportunities to offer feedback on developing findings. Because I took a humanizing approach (Paris, 2011), I designed my study to include embedded member checks with pre-service teachers at specific points of data collection and analysis. For instance, the second pre-service teacher interview provided for a member check of the video analysis. The third pre-service teacher interview, in which they revisited their maps, allowed them to reflect back on the previous two interviews and provided insight into the teachers' shifting knowledge, beliefs, and practices across the study.

### **Peer Debriefing**

As a third strategy for supporting trustworthiness of this study, throughout analysis I engaged in weekly peer debriefing sessions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2012). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), during peer debriefing, a researcher and an impartial peer plan and engage in extensive discussions about ongoing study findings and research progress. Throughout this study, I met regularly with two peers trained in qualitative research to engage in discussions related to analysis, including plans for iterative data collection and next methodological steps. My peers regularly asked questions to help me understand how my personal perspectives and values affected the findings. For instance, following the first phase of shared book reading in my study, I was surprised by how pre-service teacher participants relied on the texts, and was critical of the few opportunities they took to engage children in talk. During peer debriefing, we had in-depth discussions regarding the timing, manner, and extent to which I should share my analysis of pre-service teacher participants' practice given my critical

conceptual framing and humanizing stance. Peer debriefing contributed to study trustworthiness in that it supported the confirmation that my findings and the interpretations were both worthy and honest.

### **Seeking Convergence and Divergence**

A fourth strategy to enhance study trustworthiness was seeking both convergence and divergence within the data (Greene, 2006; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006). As I coordinated multiple data sources and multiple types of data, I actively sought disconfirming evidence to challenge my thematic findings. This allowed me to checking my understanding of the social processes I sought to explain (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). Additionally, looking for inconsistent and contradictory results, led me to in-depth analysis for substantiating such inconsistency.

### **Conclusion**

This was an in-depth qualitative study, yielding a large and robust data set that required analysis over many months. The richness of the data set and the interconnectedness of the data across cases was well worth pursuing in concert. In the following chapter, I present thematic results representing all cases in the study, organized by research question.

## Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, thematic results are presented by research question. In each section I first discuss themes that cut across cases, followed by results that are unique to particular cases. The first section describes results related to how pre-service teachers and young children co-constructed identities while reading books about ability and race. The second section includes results about how pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediated ways they talked about ability and race with young children. The chapter concludes with an analysis of how pre-service teacher and researcher co-analyses of discursive interactions impacted how pre-service teachers reflected on and transformed their practices.

### **Classroom Talk about Ability and Race during Shared Book Reading**

The first set of results pertains to the first research question: *How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct ability and race during shared-book readings?* In answering this question, I identified two themes: (a) Talk Management: Participation and Response; and (b) The Naming of Difference and Neutralizing Identities. These two themes are based on my Critical Discourse Analysis of 16 video recordings of classroom talk. These themes demonstrate similarities in both participation structure and content of talk. In other words, pre-service teachers and children across cases engaged in similar talk management strategies and topics as they read books about ability and race. Yet some interesting features unique to individual cases were also found and are discussed following each theme. Throughout this set of results, I present transcript excerpts from shared book readings. Transcription conventions (adapted for use from Gee, 2014) can be found below in Table 7.

Table 7

*Transcription Conventions*

Code	Meaning
//	Final tone, like a period in speech
/	A non-final tone, like a comma in speech
?	A rise in pitch, like a question in speech
<i>copper and tan</i>	Italicized words represent text read from picture book
<i>(GRACE turns page)</i>	Italicized words in parentheses represent non-verbal behavior

*Note.* Transcription conventions adapted for use from Gee (2014).

### **Talk Management: Participation and Response (Theme #1)**

Across cases, the organization of talk during shared-book reading contributed to how pre-service teachers and children co-constructed meanings about ability and race. The way talk was managed can be understood in terms of the amount of talk, overall structure for participation, and children's strategies of resistance.

**Amount of talk.** Utterance counts (see Table 8) demonstrated the extent to which pre-service teacher and children talked during shared-book readings. Across cases, pre-service participants repeatedly contributed the majority of talk during shared book readings throughout the study. Specifically, pre-service teacher talk constituted 60% - 98% of the talk, while children's talk (combined) ranged from 2% - 40% of talk. As a result, across cases, as pre-service teachers and young children co-constructed meaning about ability and race during shared-book reading, children's voices were underrepresented in the amount of classroom talk.

Table 8

*Utterance Counts by Participant during Shared Book Reading*

Phase #1		Phase #2	
<i>The Amazing Erik</i>	<i>Bein' with You This Way</i>	<i>The Amazing Erik</i>	<i>Bein' with You This Way</i>
Cora = 523 (77%) Children = 153 (23%)	Cora = 535 (69%) Children = 235 (31%)	Cora = 821 (65%) Children = 446 (35%)	Cora = 580 (60%) Children = 391 (40%)
Grace = 593 (98%) Children = 11 (2%)	Grace = 372 (91%) Children = 35 (9%)	Grace = 583 (85%) Children = 106 (15%)	Grace = 459 (91%) Child <sup>a</sup> = 44 (9%)
Maddie = 1219 (85%) Children = 208 (15%)	Maddie = 1197 (78%) Children = 340 (22%)	Maddie = 884 (65%) Children = 480 (35%)	Maddie = 1135 (58%) Children = 720 (41%)
Sydney = 753 (85%) Children = 129 (15%)	Sydney = 656 (86%) Children = 107 (14%)	Sydney = 1178 (79%) Children = 307 (21%)	Sydney = 728 (68%) Children = 347 (32%)

*Note.* Utterance counts based on pre-service teacher and child utterances during shared book reading.

<sup>a</sup>Due to child absences and late child arrivals, only one child participated in shared book reading.

However, there were some marked changes in the amount of talk across the current study. From Phase #1 to Phase #2 of shared book reading, across cases and books, pre-service teacher talk decreased while child verbal contributions increased (see Table 9).

Table 9

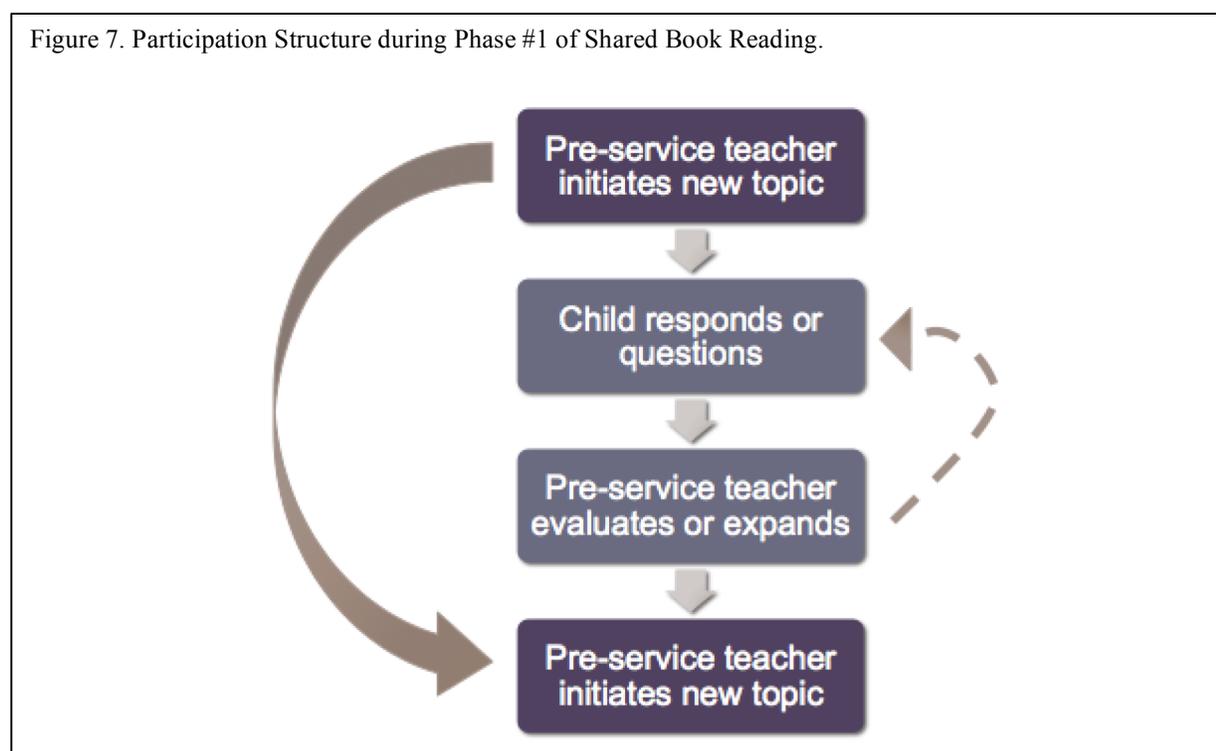
*Changes in Utterance Counts from Study Phase #1 to Phase #2 by Book*

Case	<i>The Amazing Erik</i>	<i>Bein' with You This Way</i>
1	Cora = -12% Children = +12%	Cora = -9% Children = +9%
2	Grace = -13% Children = +13%	Grace = 0% Children = 0%
3	Maddie = -20% Children = +20%	Maddie = -20% Children = +20%
4	Sydney = -6% Children = +6%	Sydney = -18% Children = +18%

*Note.* Utterance counts based on pre-service teacher and child utterances during shared book reading.

One of the greatest shifts in amount of talk occurred in Case 3, as the amount of pre-service teacher talk decreased and children's talk increased as Maddie revisited both books. Yet even when the change was not as drastic as it was with Case 3, for all other cases, the amount of talk shifted from pre-service teachers to children from Phase #1 to Phase #2 of the study while reading *The Amazing Erik*. A similar shift occurred from Phase #1 to Phase #2 as pre-service teachers and children read *Bein' with You This Way*. In fact, the only case where there was no change from Phase #1 to Phase #2 was when Grace read *Bein' with You This Way*. However, this case is somewhat unique in that only one child participated during the second shared-book reading. In subsequent sections (i.e., Case differences). I further discuss the unique aspects of the participation structure between Grace and young children in Case 2.

**Overall structure of talk: Phase #1.** A diagram of the Phase #1 participation structure identified in the data is presented in Figure 7.



Across cases, during Phase #1, shared book reading routines typically began with pre-service teachers reading a page from a book to initiate a topic. Children were expected to sit and face the pre-service teacher. Overwhelmingly, in this first phase of shared book reading, after reading a page, pre-service teachers provided very few opportunities for children to contribute to the topic, let alone initiate a topic for discussion. Instead, pre-service teachers frequently turned the page to read the next section of the book. When children did take an opportunity to speak during Phase #1 shared book reading, it was typically signaled by the pre-service teacher pausing or asking a display question, which is a bid to children for a “known answer” (Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Mehan, 1998). Individual children would then compete for a conversational turn to respond. After one child responded, the pre-service teacher evaluated the child’s response by affirming or clarifying based on the answer she expected. At this point, the participation structure was closed as pre-service teachers then initiated a new topic.

Below, I present selected illustrations from the larger corpus of data in which this pattern occurred during Phase #1. In most instances, pre-service teachers read from the books without signaling an opportunity for children to talk. Further, pre-service teachers frequently used the text as a tool to control these opportunities by turning the page. For example, in the following transcript excerpt, Maddie read a page of *Bein’ with You This Way* (Nikola-Lisa, 1994), and followed by turning the page.

1. MADDIE: *Now isn’t it terrific / simply exquisite / bein’ with you this way? Her skin is light / his skin is dark / how perfectly remarkably strange //*
  - a. (MADDIE turns page)

Similarly, in the transcript excerpt below, Grace read a page from *The Amazing Erik* (Huber, 2014), and followed up by turning the page. Children did not speak after the page was read or the page was turned.

2. GRACE: *Erik sniffed back his tears and said / “You really made the floor wet” // He slid out of his chair and began to dry the floor // He wiped his rag back and forth / and it soaked up some of the water // “Like magic” / Erik thought //*
  - a. (GRACE turns page)

These two transcript excerpts demonstrate the most prevalent pattern in the talk during Phase #1, in that the talk routines were managed and controlled by the pre-service teachers, and that children had few opportunities to participate. Pre-service teachers continually introduced a topic with the book, turned the page, and initiated a new topic with the subsequent page.

Across cases during Phase #1, there were frequently times that children attempted to respond to the topic initiated by the pre-service teacher. Yet pre-service teachers largely ignored these attempts, by turning the page of the book to manage the talk. For instance, in the transcript excerpt below, after Cora read a page from *Bein’ with You This Way*, CHILD19 responded by using the language in the text (i.e., “Not bein’ with me this way” in line 2.a.). Instead of recognizing or building on CHILD19’s contribution by responding to him, Cora turned the page to read the next section of the book.

3. CORA: *Light skin / dark skin / long legs / short legs / thick arms / thin arms / brown eyes / blue eyes / big nose / little nose / straight hair / curly hair / different / mm-hmm / but the same / ah-ha! Now isn’t it delightful / simply out-of-sightful / bein’ with you this way?*
  - a. CHILD19: *Not bein’ with me this way / not bein’ with me this way /*
  - b. (CORA turns page)

Similarly, as Sydney read a page from *The Amazing Erik* (i.e., “so Erik began to cry” in line 4), CHILD9 responded to the section of the narrative she had read with concern (i.e. “Uh-oh” in line 4.a.) and CHILD7 pointed out another character on the page (i.e., “That’s not Erik” in line 4.b.). However, Sydney did not follow-up on their responses, but turned the page to continue reading.

4. SYDNEY: *And now his sleeve was soaked so Erik began to cry //*
  - a. CHILD9: Uh-oh //
  - b. CHILD7: That’s not Erik //
  - c. (SYDNEY turns page)

While the majority of talk during Phase #1 followed the pattern just described with pre-service teachers reading from the text and turning the pages, there were some instances when pre-service teachers invited children to talk (i.e., by pausing or asking display questions) and acknowledged their responses. For instance, in the transcript excerpt below, Cora signaled an opportunity for children to comment on the “*the four things that made Erik cry*” (line 5.) by pausing and pointing to the page (line 5.a.). CHILD19 took the opportunity to respond, listing the four things that made Erik cry (i.e., “balloons pop / scary dreams / shoes are wet / sleeves are wet” in line 5.b.). Cora then positively evaluates CHILD19’s response (i.e., “Good job” in line 5.c.), communicating that his response had indeed met her expectations, before turning the page.

5. CORA: *Regina stepped away and Erik began to calm down // Then he saw that his shoe was wet too // Now there were four things that made Erik cry /*
  - a. (CORA pauses and points to the page)
  - b. CHILD19: Yeah // See / balloons pop / scary dreams / shoes are wet / sleeves are wet //
  - c. CORA: Good job, CHILD19 //

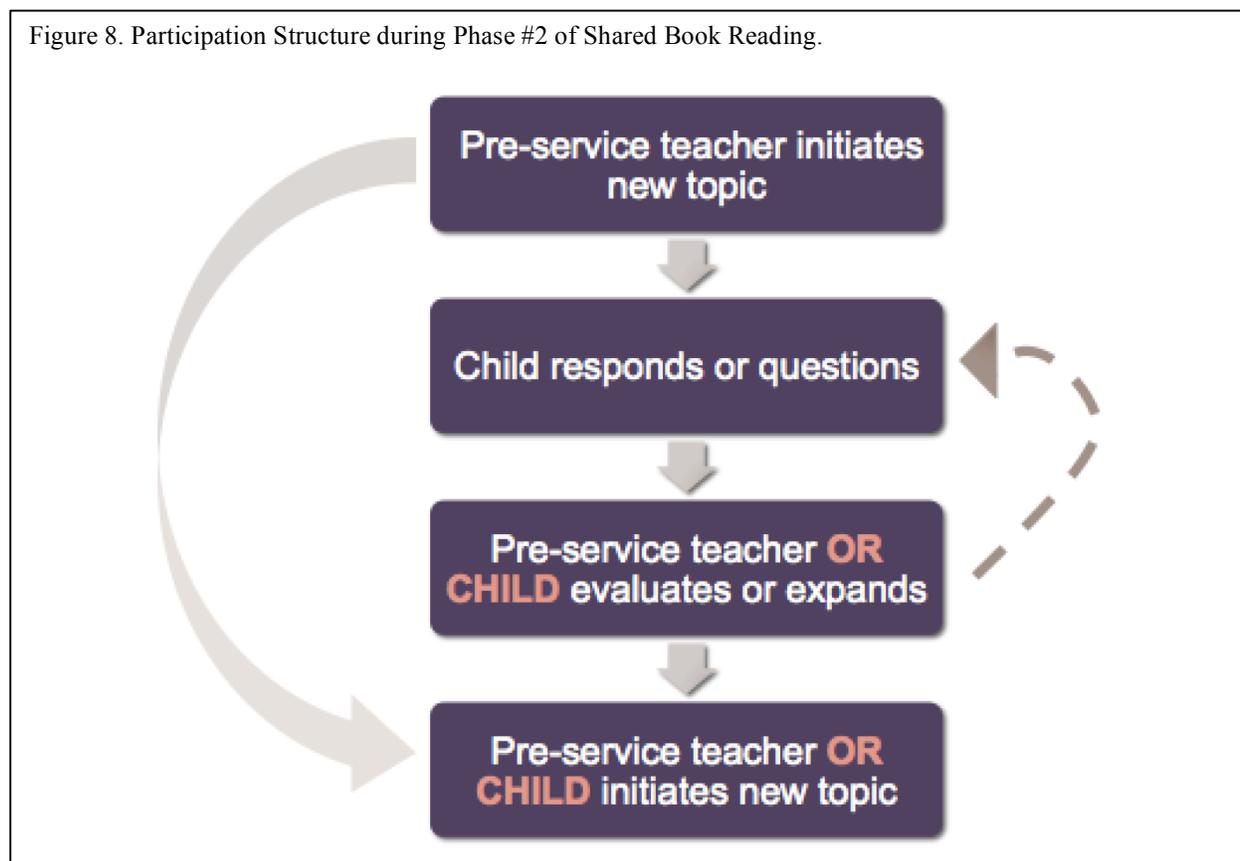
d. (*CORA turns page*)

Pre-service teachers did not ask children many questions during Phase #1 of shared book reading. However, when a question was asked, it was typically a single display questions (i.e., a bid for a pre-service teacher's "known" answer). In response, children competed for a conversational turn. The pre-service teacher then evaluated a child's response by affirming or clarifying based on the answer she expected. For instance, in the transcript excerpt below, after reading *Bein' with You This Way*, Sydney asked children whether they thought the book was, "saying things that are alike or different" (line 6.). While CHILD8 responded with, "Nope" (line 6.a.), Sydney did not verbally acknowledge his comment. Sydney did, however, follow up on CHILD10's response (i.e., "different" in line 6.b.), repeating her answer and confirming that this was "right" (line 6.c.) and the answer she was looking for. Thus, through this talk, CHILD10 demonstrated that she knew the answer Sydney was seeking.

6. SYDNEY: But what did you think about all the friends? And what about the parts when they're like / *long legs short legs* / are they saying things that are alike or different?
- a. CHILD8: Nope //
- b. CHILD10: Different //
- c. SYDNEY: Different / right? Just like all of us and our friends / we're all different  
//

Throughout Phase #1, when pre-service teachers asked children questions, they used single display questions to manage the talk.

**Overall structure of talk: Phase #2.** Across cases, during Phase #2 of the shared book reading, the participation structure between pre-service teachers and children changed (see Figure 8). I use exemplars from the larger corpus of data to illustrate changes in participation in this section of the dissertation.



While pre-service teachers typically initiated discussion topics during Phase #2, they relied less on the books to manage and control the talk, and drew on a new questioning technique (i.e., multiple display questions) to invite discussion. By doing so, across cases, children had and took more opportunities to respond and ask questions. Further, during Phase #2, after a child commented, conversation included more back-and-forth talk between speakers before a new topic was initiated. Additionally, pre-service teachers were not solely responsible for providing

follow-up responses (i.e., evaluating or expanding on a previous comment). Instead, children had and took opportunities to comment on each other's responses and, in some instances, to initiate new topics for discussion. Despite these changes, pre-service teachers still regularly initiated topics, controlling the agenda for the talk.

An increase in opportunities for child talk can be seen in the following transcript excerpt, as Grace revisited *The Amazing Erik* with children. In this example, Grace initiated conversation about Rita and Erik by reading a page from the book, and then holding up the page and pausing (line 7.a.). CHILD12 then commented on Rita's skirt (line 7.b.), and both Grace and CHILD13 followed-up by confirming CHILD12's observation (lines 7.c. and 7.d.). Grace invited children to expand on the topic by asking follow-up questions (i.e., "what's on her skirt?" in line 7.e.; "does she seem sad?" in line 7.g.; "How does Erik seem?" in line 7.j.), to which CHILD12 and CHILD13 each responded (lines 7.f., 7.h., 7.i., 7.k., 7.l.). Similar to the pattern seen in Phase #1, Grace's follow-up questions were display questions (i.e., "known answer" questions). However, instead of asking a single display question and then closing down discussion (as seen in Phase #1), in Phase #2 pre-service teachers often typically asked multiple display questions to expand on a topic, and increased opportunities for children to talk.

7. GRACE: *There were many things that made Erik laugh / and Rita was at the top of the list // He started giggling // Rita giggled too // Soon they were laughing loudly together /*
  - a. *(Grace holds book up and pauses)*
  - b. CHILD12: *She's holding her skirt!*
  - c. GRACE: *Yeah /*
  - d. CHILD13: *Yeah / she's holding her skirt //*
  - e. GRACE: *What's on her skirt there?*

- f. CHILD12: Wet stuff //
- g. GRACE: Does she seem sad about it?
- h. CHILD13: No /
- i. CHILD12: No /
- j. GRACE: No / and how does Erik seem like he feels now?
- k. CHILD12: Happy //
- l. CHILD13: Happy //
- m. GRACE: Pretty happy now // (*GRACE nods head*)
- n. (*GRACE turns page*)

Another example of pre-service teachers asking multiple display questions to elicit child talk can be seen in the excerpt below. In this example, Sydney used multiple display questions to engage children in talk about differences in hair color. Prior to this transcript excerpt Sydney had just read a page in *Bein' with You This Way* that included the line “*straight hair, curly hair, different, mm-hmm, but the same, ah ha!*” Sydney initiated conversation about different hair colors by asking a display question (i.e., “what color is my hair?” in line 8.). CHILD10 and CHILD8 both respond “purple” (lines 8.a. and 8.b.), and Sydney confirmed this was the expected response in line 8.c. by nodding her head “yes” and smiling. She then followed up with several additional display questions to continue discussion on the topic of different hair color (i.e., “What color is your hair?” in line 8.c.; “Is your hair kinda black or brown?” in line 8.e., and “Is our hair color different?” in line 8.h.).

- 8. SYDNEY: I have a / I have an idea // We're different because what color is my hair?
  - a. CHILD10: Purple //
  - b. CHILD8: Purple //

- c. SYDNEY: (*nodding her head yes*) What color is your hair CHILD6?
- d. (*CHILD6 looks up and bites lip*)
- e. SYDNEY: Is your hair kinda black or brown?
- f. (*CHILD6 nods head*)
- g. CHILD7: (*points to page*) Hey! Her neck is purple //
- h. SYDNEY: Her neck is purple // So if our / is our hair color different?
- i. (*CHILD6 nods head yes*)
- j. CHILD10: Yeah //
- k. SYDNEY: Mm-hmm //

Again, in the example above, Sydney's use of multiple display questions to follow up on the topic she initiated provided an increase in children's opportunities to talk during shared book reading.

Finally, in Phase #2, after pre-service teachers initiated a topic, children (as opposed to pre-service teachers) sometimes found the opportunity to initiate subsequent topics. For instance, in following transcript excerpt, after reading *Bein' with You This Way*, Cora initiated a topic about different skin colors by asking a display question (i.e., "Are all of our skins the exact same color?" in line 9.). CHILD17 responded on this question by saying, "some skin is brown" (line 9.e.), which Cora saw as the "correct answer," as demonstrated through her follow-up evaluation (i.e., "that's right" in line 9.f.). CHILD18 also responded to the question saying, "my skin is black" (line 9.g.), which Cora questioned (i.e., "Is it?" in line 9.h.), demonstrating that this was not the answer she expected. Cora then modified CHILD18's response, with a non-final tone, saying, "Your hair is dark / " (line 9.i.). CHILD18 also responded with a non-final tone (i.e., "my hair is / " (line 9.j.), which provided an opportunity for another speaker to talk. In this moment,

CHILD16 initiated a new topic (eye color; “check out my eyes” in line 9.), to which multiple children responded (e.g., “like mine” in line 9.8.; “I got brown eyes” in line 9.c.; “Maggie’s eyes are blue” in line 9.f.). Cora also contributed to the discussion of eye color by validating CHILD15’s comment about my eyes (“that’s right” in line 9.g.).

9. CORA: So is / but are all of our skins the exact same color?

- a. CHILD15: No //
- b. CORA: They’re all a little bit different / right?
- c. CHILD17: Yeah / some /
- d. CHILD18: But I got skin on my skull //
- e. CHILD17: And some skin is brown /
- f. CORA: Yeah / that’s right //
- g. CHILD18: My / my skin is black //
- h. CORA: Is it?
- i. CHILD18: Yeah / look it’s black //
- j. CORA: Your hair is dark /
- k. CHILD16: Yeah / my hair is /

10. CHILD16: Check out my eyes // They’re brown / and CHILD17’s are blue //

- a. CHILD18: Just like mine //
- b. CHILD16: And CHILD15’s too //
- c. CHILD18: I got brown eyes //
- d. CHILD17: What color is my hair?
- e. CORA: Your hair is kind of like brown //
- f. CHILD15: Maggie’s eyes are blue / and your eyes are brown //

g. CORA: Maggie's eyes are blue / that's right //

In Phase #2, pre-service teachers still primarily set the agenda for talk by initiating topics for discussion. However, across multiple cases, at times children also were able to initiate topics. This change in participation structure allowed children to share responsibility in determining what to talk about. However, because pre-service teachers still largely set the agenda, they regulated the content of ability and race talk, which I discuss further in next theme.

**Children's strategies of resistance.** Throughout the study and across cases, children regularly followed the participation structure and talk routines set by pre-service teachers during shared book reading. However, there were also moments when children demonstrated resistance to this participation structure. Children's strategies of resistance were predominately physical and non-verbal. For example, in the transcript excerpt below, after reading *The Amazing Erik*, Maddie initiated talk about how children could play with Erik if he was in their classroom (line 11.). CHILD14 engaged in an alternative activity by turning away from Maddie (line 11.a.), and then rolling on her back (line 11.d.). Eventually, Maddie signaled that this form of participation was not expected by saying CHILD4's name (line 11.f.), at which point, CHILD4 assumed the expected participation style by sitting and facing Maddie (line 11.g.).

11. MADDIE: So if we had Erik in our classroom how would we play with him? We could

do sand with him / or water /

a. (*CHILD4 faces away from MADDIE and rubs wall*)

b. CHILD2: Or / or / we could play toys /

c. MADDIE: He could play toys / so what / did you notice anything different about Erik?

d. (*CHILD2 rolls back on her back with feet up in the air*)

- e. CHILD5: He can play toys and do music //
- f. MADDIE: He can do music / CHILD4 /
- g. (*CHILD4 turns around and sits facing MADDIE*)

In another example, after reading about *Bein' with You This Way*, Cora attempted to open conversation about what children learned from the book reading (i.e., “what is something you can take away?” in line 12.). While CHILD15 responded with a question requesting clarification (i.e., “take away what?” in line 12.b.) both CHILD18 and CHILD16 signaled their resistance to the shared book reading participation structure through physical, nonverbal behavior (i.e., crab walking in line 12.a. and laying down in line 12.c.). Like Maddie, Cora called CHILD18 and CHILD16 by name (line 12.d.) to draw attention to the need for them to engage in the participation routine at hand.

12. CORA: Okay / okay / so what is something / did you guys learn anything from this? Or what is something you can take away?
- a. (*CHILD18 crab walking*)
  - b. CHILD15: Take away what?
  - c. (*CHILD16 lays down*)
  - d. CORA: CHILD16 / like an idea / an idea you can take away // What did we talk about today? CHILD18?

Across cases, children drew on a range of non-verbal physical movements (i.e., laying down, rolling, pretending to be animals, waving to peers) to resist engagement in the participation structure<sup>1</sup>.

**Case differences.** While the patterns previously described cut across cases, in Case 2, Grace had the fewest children in her small group for every shared book reading. This was due to child absences and child late arrivals. For each shared book reading Grace led, the small number of child participants (particularly in Phase #2) contributed, in part, to the low percentage of child utterances. Further, although the participation structure changed in Case 2, in Phase #2 Grace relied heavily on the text to manage talk and asked few questions. This pattern will be further explained when I discuss the extent to which pre-service teachers reflected on and/or transformed their practice through co-analyses of discursive interactions.

Further, while children across cases drew on non-verbal, physical movements to resist the participation structure, CHILD8's resistance to talking about *The Amazing Erik* with Sydney was related to topic. CHILD8 shares the same first name as the main character in the book. During Phase #1, after Sydney first read the title of the book, she pointed out Erik and CHILD8 shared a name (i.e., "Hey wait / you're CHILD8!"). This connection to CHILD8 came up again when Sydney and children revisited the book in Phase #2. In the transcript excerpt below, Sydney made the connection to CHILD8 by pointing to him, at which point he put his head on the floor

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<sup>1</sup> While children's strategies of resistance were notable throughout my critical discourse analysis of the data, this result was further corroborated by pre-service teacher interviews. In reflecting on video data, pre-service teachers noted that these behaviors were unexpected. For instance, during Interview #3, Cora explained, "[before watching the video] I thought that went well, but now looking at it, I'm like, they were all over the place."

(line 20.c.). CHILD7 followed Sydney's lead, pointing to CHILD8 and noting the shared name (i.e., "CHILD8 and Erik" in line 13.g.). At this point, CHILD8 sat quietly and did not respond.

13. SYDNEY: Does anyone remember what it's called?

- a. CHILD9: Erik!
- b. SYDNEY: It does have to do with Erik //
- c. (*SYDNEY points at CHILD8 who puts head down on floor*)
- d. SYDNEY: *The Amazing Erik* //
- e. CHILD7: Hey (*points to CHILD8*) CHILD8 / Erik!
- f. SYDNEY: Right / *The Amazing Erik* //
- g. CHILD7: (*points to CHILD8*) CHILD8 and Erik //

However, when Sydney and the children pointed out the connection between CHILD8 and Erik during Phase #2, CHILD8's response was different. As Sydney and the children took a "picture walk" through *The Amazing Erik* to retell the story, CHILD8 signaled his resistance to the use of the character's name through verbal and nonverbal activity. For instance, after Sydney asked the children questions about Erik (i.e., "do you remember what made Erik feel better?"; "Do you remember her name? This is Erik's friend") CHILD8 continually put his head down on the floor, covered his head, hit the floor, and made loud exclamations (i.e., "Aw man!"; "Eh!"). In practice, Sydney regularly ignored CHILD8's responses, as they did not contribute to the topics she set out for discussion<sup>2</sup>. However, this pattern of resistance likely demonstrated CHILD8's attempts at counteracting his name being spoken in the context of discussion about ability.

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<sup>2</sup> Sydney further demonstrated her belief that CHILD8 was resisting engagement in shared book reading. During Interviews #2 and #3, Sydney noted that CHILD8's behavior during these shared book reading events was out of

**Summary.** In response to the first research question (i.e., *How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct ability and race during shared-book readings?*), in this theme I described results demonstrating the participation structure pre-service teachers initiated to manage and control discursive interactions when reading books about ability and race, including turn sequences and topic shifts. Across cases and throughout the study, pre-service teachers contributed the majority of talk during shared-book reading. However, children's contributions to talk increased from Phase #1 and Phase #2. This shift can be understood in terms of the change in participation structure. While pre-service teachers initially controlled talk by asking single display questions and relying on the books to set the agenda and shift topics, during Phase #2 pre-service teachers utilized multiple display questions and were less reliant on the books to guide conversation. By asking children more follow-up questions, pre-service teachers devoted more time to talking about topics with children, and created more opportunities for children to contribute. Yet by repeatedly asking display questions, children's contributions to talk were highly regulated.

Despite the variation in participation from Phase #1 to Phase #2, the majority of verbal activity was still comprised of pre-service teacher talk in Phase #2. The pre-service teachers, as adults in the classroom, had access to different rights (e.g., holding the book, leading the shared-book reading) and discursive resources (e.g., reading the print, asking display questions) than the children. By setting the conversational agenda, asking children display questions, and validating

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character, when she mentioned, "CHILD8 he just acts out and I'm like, 'You were a good kid. What are you doing?'"

children's on-topic talk, pre-service teachers reconstituted their power over the talk, controlling the kinds of contributions to talk children could make.

### **The Naming of Difference and Neutralizing Identities (Theme #2)**

As pre-service teachers initiated topics through the previously described participation structures, pre-service teachers and young children co-constructed meanings about identity markers (i.e., ability, race) during shared-book reading. In this theme, I discuss ways in which pre-service teachers guided talk about ability and race, and the ideological consequences of these discursive interactions. Across cases, talk about ability and race was characterized by missed opportunities, a focus on individual physical differences, and an emphasis on universal sameness in identities. Through their talk, pre-service teachers signaled their engagement in a Discourse (Gee, 2014) of teacher expertise, constraining the extent to which children could share their own knowledge, experiences, or questions regarding ability and race.

**Page turns and missed opportunities.** As they facilitated talk during Phase #1 of shared book reading, pre-service teachers did not initially name identity markers, and relied on the textual descriptions in the books to communicate meanings of ability and race. Indeed, the books themselves were the “agenda” for talk. However, the books do not directly define ability or race (see book summaries in Appendix L). In *The Amazing Erik* (Huber, 2014), the main character, Erik, sits in a wheelchair for the majority of the book. The narrative does not discuss Erik's identity as a person with a disability, and the only time his wheelchair is mentioned in print is toward the end of the story when Erik, “slid out of his chair” to help dry the floor (p. 21). In *Bein' with You This Way* (Nikola-Lisa, 1994), racial identities are described in terms of skin color. Skin color is mentioned (i.e., “Her skin is light, his skin is dark, how perfectly remarkably strange”; p. 18) through sing-song verse, in the context of many different physical differences

(e.g., hair texture, leg length, arm thickness, eye color) a child notices among her playmates on a playground. These two books were recommended and included in the study, because they are considered developmentally appropriate for preschoolers, and held promise as a starting point for conversation about ability and race. However, during Phase #1, pre-service teachers did little to engage children in talk about these topics.

As pre-service teachers read these two books during Phase #1, they rarely asked questions beyond the text. By staying close to the texts, pre-service teachers missed opportunities to talk with children about the meanings of identity markers (i.e., ability, race). For instance, in the following transcript excerpt, as Cora read *The Amazing Erik* and got to the moment when Erik slid out of his wheelchair (line 14.), she made no additional comment about him being in or out of the wheelchair. While CHILD19 and CHILD18 made comments based on the pictures (lines 14.a. and 14.b.), Cora quickly affirmed their comments (“mm-hmm” in line 14.c) before turning the page and initiating a new topic. Further, this was a potential opportunity for Cora to pause and invite children to share ideas about wheelchairs or their own abilities. Instead, by turning the page, Cora did not directly address the topic of ability, leaving children to draw their own conclusions about the meaning of Erik’s wheelchair. This moment in *The Amazing Erik* represents the many missed opportunities to talk about ability across during Phase #1.

14. CORA: *Erik sniffed back his tears and said / “You really made the floor wet” // He slid out of his chair and began to dry the floor // He wiped his rag back and forth / and it soaked up some of the water // “Like magic” / Erik thought //*

- a. CHILD19: There’s his wet sleeve /
- b. CHILD18: He made a mess //
- c. CORA: Mm-hmm //

d. (*CORA turns page*)

Pre-service teachers also missed opportunities to talk about race with children, because they relied on text from *Bein' with You This Way* to guide conversation. In the following example, Grace introduced a page of this book in which “skin color” is discussed in terms of lightness and darkness. While this was a potential opportunity for children to share ideas about skin color and their own racial identities, Grace simply turned the page to initiate a new topic. Reading from the text and turning the page left children on their own to interpret the meaning and value of skin colors mentioned in the text.

15. GRACE: *Now isn't it terrific / simply exquisite / bein' with you this way // Her skin is light / his skin is dark / how perfectly remarkably strange / uh-huh!*

a. (*GRACE turns page*)

These two transcript examples represent a pattern that cut across Phase #1 data. By reading from the text and turning the page, pre-service teachers missed important opportunities to engage young children in dialogue about ability and race as identity markers. Further, relying on the texts to communicate meanings of ability and race in combination with page turns, conveyed that children's ideas about ability and race, including their own identities in relation to these identity markers, were not important.

**Focus on labeling individual physical differences.** During Phase #2, pre-service teachers extended conversation and more directly addressed the topics of ability and race compared to Phase #1. The majority of this talk focused on pointing out and labeling individual physical aspects of difference. Through their talk about identities (i.e., ability, race) in terms of individual physical differences, pre-service teachers constructed themselves as knowledgeable and engaged in a Discourse of teacher expertise. Further, their talk seemed to perpetuate a

narrative that ability and race are neutral identity markers, an ideology that maintains a White, able-bodied center in schools.

An example of this pattern can be seen in the transcript below. As Maddie revisited *The Amazing Erik* with children, she directly brought up Erik's disability, and defined his disability in terms of an inability to walk. She stated, "So he has a disability so he may not be able to walk" in line 15 and "so he may not be able to use his legs" in line 15.b. CHILD2 agreed and added on (i.e., "Yeah because it's slippery" in line 15.c.). While CHILD2 may have been referencing the water spilled, Maddie signaled that this was not the response she was looking for when she asked, "Cuz it's slippery?" (line 15.d.). Maddie explained that Erik's legs "don't work like ours so he has to use a wheelchair to walk" (line 15.d.), to which CHILD2 agreed (i.e., "Yeah" in line 15.e.).

16. MADDIE: So he has a disability so he may not be able to walk /

a. CHILD5: Yeah //

b. MADDIE: So he may not be able to use his legs /

c. CHILD2: Yeah because it's slippery //

d. MADDIE: Cuz it's slippery? Maybe / so maybe his legs don't work like ours so he has to use a wheelchair to walk //

e. CHILD2: Yeah //

By questioning CHILD2's response and providing her own explanation for why Erik could not use his legs, Maddie constructed herself as a knowledgeable expert on the topic of disability, limiting children's capacities to contribute their own knowledge or ideas. Further, Maddie's emphasis on Erik's individual physical differences in relation to an able-bodied norm (i.e., "his

legs don't work like ours so he has to use a wheelchair" in line 15.d.) framed disability in terms of impairments of an individual's body as opposed to a socially constructed identity marker.

Pre-service teachers' talk about race also focused on individual physical differences in Phase #2 of the study. This pattern is illustrated in the example below, in which Sydney revisited *Bein' with You This Way* with children. Sydney first pointed out several physical differences that were named in the text (i.e., "curly hair and straight hair") before directly asking children, "Is their skin color different?" (line 15.). Children responded in agreement (i.e., "Yeah" in line 15.a., "Yeah / brown //" in line 15.b.). Sydney followed-up, confirming children's responses were correct and modeling how to label the differences ("i.e., They have brown skin" in line 16.d.). CHILD9 and CHILD10 picked up on Sydney's focus on labeling skin color differences, and followed her lead (i.e., "And that one" in line 16.f.; "And pink skin" in line 16.h.). CHILD8, an African-American boy, made an attempt to enter the conversation, which was potentially an effort to talk about his own racial identity (i.e., "I'm right here" in line 16.e.), but Sydney did not acknowledge or build on his comment. Instead, Sydney showed children that listing and labeling the skin color differences was her expectation and the correct way of responding by adding "and light skin" (line 16.g.) and "tan skin" (line 16.i.).

17. SYDNEY: I want you all to look / come here CHILD10 / come look // And / so we were talking about hair color / and we were talking about eye color / and we were talking about curly hair and straight hair / and big arms and little arms / and big nose and little nose / but what else is different about all these friends? Is their skin color different?

- a. CHILD8: Yeah //
- b. CHILD10: Yeah / brown //
- c. CHILD9: It's this one /

- d. SYDNEY: They have brown skin /
- e. CHILD8: I'm right here //
- f. CHILD9: And that one //
- g. SYDNEY: And light skin /
- h. CHILD10: And pink skin /
- i. SYDNEY: And tan skin //

By demonstrating how to label individual physical differences (i.e., skin color) and validating when children followed her lead, Sydney constructed herself as knowledgeable about the topic of race. This approach to race talk made it difficult for children to share their own knowledge or ideas about racial identities. Further, through her emphasis on labeling skin colors, Sydney talked about race as skin color without discussing “race” as a socially constructed identity marker in sociopolitical contexts. This talk conveyed that various skin colors carry equal, neutral status.

As both examples above illustrate, when pre-service teachers revisited the texts during Phase #2, they were more apt to bring up topics beyond the textual description of ability and race in the books. Moreover, as they modeled engagement with the books and posed display questions, they enacted a Discourse of teacher expertise. Through their instructional emphases on individual physical differences, pre-service teachers conveyed a narrative that young children learn best through labeling with concrete examples and simple explanations, which they, as experts, could provide. Simultaneously, by shifting topics and positioning themselves as experts, pre-service teachers' focus on individual physical differences left little space for children to share their own experiences or expertise.

As pre-service teachers managed ability and race talk during Phase #2 they did not discuss power or inequity, instead framing difference in terms of individual physical difference

(i.e., physical impairment, skin color). Thus, in naming physical differences, pre-service teachers did not acknowledge ways that disability and race are socially constructed as identity markers, gaining meaning through social processes that center able-bodied, White people. As novice teachers who were attempting to facilitate talk about two politically charged topics (i.e., ability, race) while being challenged to manage a small group of young children, pre-service teacher participants may have dominated talk and constructed themselves as experts in performative attempts to enact “being a teacher.” Yet by constructing themselves as experts, pre-service teachers’ focus on labeling individual physical differences without talk about issues of power likely perpetuated for children an ideology that identity markers of ability and race are neutral, and consequently, do not matter.

**Emphasizing universal sameness.** After talking with children about individual physical differences, pre-service teachers overwhelmingly closed conversations in Phase #2 with statements of universal sameness. For instance, the transcript excerpt below is emblematic of the way pre-service teachers closed conversations about individual skin color differences. After Cora revisited *Bein’ with You This Way*, she first asked the display question (i.e., “if we all have different color skin / does that mean that anyone is better or worse than anyone else?” in line 17.). While talking about fairness and racial identities could have been a valuable conversation to have with children, by asking a display question, Cora signaled that she was not opening this topic up for discussion. Instead, her expectation was that children agree with her, which they did (“no” in line 17.a.; “nope, nope” in line 17.c.). Cora provided feedback on their responses, confirming they answered correctly as she expected by saying, “No, right?” (line 17.d.). She then closed the conversation with a final display question: “Because we’re all the same // We might look differently / but we’re all the same right?” (see lines 17.d.-17.f. below).

18. CORA: Okay / so if we all have different color skin / does that mean that anyone is better or worse than anyone else?

- a. CHILD18, CHILD15: No /
- b. CORA: No //
- c. CHILD17: Nope / nope /
- d. CORA: No / right? Because we're all the same // We all might look differently /
- e. CHILD17: Yep /
- f. CORA: But we're all the same right?
- g. CHILD17: Yeah //

Similarly, after discussing *The Amazing Erik* during Phase #2, Sydney closed the conversation by asking a series of display questions (i.e., line 18., line 18.c., line 18.f.), drawing attention to the things Erik could do (i.e., “playing at centers,” “playing in the water table,” “making magic”) despite being in a wheelchair. After children responded in agreement (i.e., lines 18.a.—18.b., lines 18.d.—18.e., lines 18.g.—18.h.), Sydney asked a final display question (i.e., “Do you think but do you think that he could be in our classroom and do everything that we do?” in line 18.i.), to which CHILD8 responded, “yep” (line 18.h.).

19. SYDNEY: Now just ‘cause he’s in a wheelchair does this mean he’s super different than everyone? Was he still playing at centers?

- a. CHILD8: Yep //
- b. (*CHILD10 nods head yes*)
- c. SYDNEY: Was he still playing at a water table like you guys play at water tables?
- d. CHILD8: Yep //
- e. (*CHILD9 nods head yes*)

- f. SYDNEY: Was he still making magic like you guys do sometimes?
- g. CHILD8: Yep //
- h. (*CHILD9 nods head yes*)
- i. SYDNEY: Right? So it's / it's not the way you and I walk around / but do you think that he could be in our classroom and do everything that we do?
- h. CHILD8: Yep //

As the above transcript excerpts illustrate, across cases pre-service teachers closed conversations about ability and race by asking a series of display questions which highlighted the importance of seeing everyone as the same. Yet by emphasizing an ideology of universalism, pre-service teachers disregarded the significance of ableism and racism. Further, suggesting that Erik could “do everything that we do” (line 18.i.), may have perpetuated inaccurate information both in terms of the physical limitations of Erik’s body in an able-bodied world, and the notion that all able-bodied people are able to do the same activities. In sum, through their talk and discursive construction of themselves as experts, pre-service teachers repeatedly endorsed the view of ability and race as neutral.

**Case differences.** While the patterns previously described represent all cases, pre-service teachers approached the discussion of ability and race in distinct ways during Phase #2. In fact, Grace was the only pre-service teacher participant who entirely read each of the books and she focused questions only on the texts. The three other pre-service teacher participants (Cora, Sydney, and Maddie) revisited sections of the books and then extended conversation to topics beyond the text. For instance, when Cora revisited *Bein’ with You This Way*, she showed children a photo in which she (a White woman) and two friends of color were pictured together. After Cora pointed out different skin colors in the book, she asked children to notice and point out the

different skin colors in the photo she brought (i.e., “I’m going to show you a picture of two of my friends and I want you to tell me about what is either similar or different”). While the talk still focused on naming individual physical differences (i.e., “one of your friends have black hair but not the other”; “her skin looks darker and her skin looks / um / lighter”), bringing a photo demonstrated Cora’s attempts to make a personal connection to the text, and to promote further discussion with children about skin color.

When Maddie revisited *Bein’ with You This Way* with children, she first read select pages from the book about different hair textures. She then introduced a coloring activity, in which she invited children to color a pre-printed outline of a girl with crayons. While the conversation she and children had while re-reading *Bein’ with You This Way* focused on naming physical differences (i.e., hair texture), her directions for the coloring activity (i.e., “So we’re gonna color it however you want // It doesn’t have to look like you or anyone you know but we’re just gonna color it”) suggested that children could use any colors. Maddie colored alongside the children, and talk during this activity focused on naming colors children and Maddie were using (i.e., “I’m doing their lips green”; “Look! I found a sparkly one [crayon]!”). As the coloring activity concluded, Maddie invited children to name the colors they had used (i.e., “CHILD4, what colors did you use for your person?”). Children’s responses (i.e., “blue, purple, green”) revealed their use of fantastic colors (i.e., blue hair, purple eyes). In this instance, talk moved away from a focus on realistic physical characteristics to naming the crayon colors children used.

In another example, as she revisited *The Amazing Erik* in Phase #2, Sydney also brought printed photos to promote discussion with children. The photos featured images of different individuals in wheelchairs (i.e., an elderly woman, a person playing basketball, a young girl dressed as a princess). After taking a “picture walk,” through *The Amazing Erik* and briefly

retelling the story, Sydney introduced the photos, and asked children to name what they saw people doing in these photos, highlighting how playing basketball and dressing up were activities that children could do too. The talk about these photos focused on finding similarities between children in Sydney's small group and people in the photos (i.e., "These friends are in a wheelchair and they're still playing basketball just like you are"; "See and she's just / she looks kinda like your age / doesn't she?"), contributing to the notion of universal sameness. However, by bringing images of different people in wheelchairs, Sydney attempted to raise children's awareness of a range of people who use wheelchairs.

Lastly, when Sydney revisited *Bein' with You This Way* with children, the conversation closed in a unique way. Prior to the transcript excerpt below, Sydney asked children to look around at all of the skin colors of their classmates. One child pointed out, "CHILD8 has brown skin," at which point CHILD7 asserted, "actually one hundred people have just white skin." This comment seemed to take Sydney by surprise, because she asked, "One hundred people, CHILD7? Where'd you get that number?" CHILD7's response to Sydney's question was that he got the number, "from CHILD8." Sydney then allowed conversational space to explore this statement further, which she showed by re-stating CHILD7's comment (i.e., "So one hundred people have white skin" in line 19.). Children then began naming big numbers (i.e., "three hundred" in line 19.c., "nine thousand" in line 19.e., "ten hundred" in line 19.h., "a thousand hundred" in line 19.i.). Sydney tried to understand what the numbers represented (i.e., "Nine thousand what?" in line 19.f.), to which CHILD clarified, "white skin" in line 19.g.

20. SYDNEY: So one hundred people have white skin /

a. (*CHILD6 pats CHILD8's back*)

b. SYDNEY: CHILD6 //

- c. CHILD10: Three hundred //
- d. SYDNEY: But what's /
- e. CHILD8: No like nine thousand //
- f. SYDNEY: Nine thousand what?
- g. CHILD8: Uh white skin //
- h. CHILD7: Or ten hundred //
- i. CHILD10: Or a thousand hundred //

Children in this small group continued listing big numbers until Sydney finally looked up at me and frustratingly said, “I just don’t know where to go from here.” At this point, she ended the conversation by asking children to transition to a new activity. Across the shared book reading data, this was the only example when children completely derailed the pre-service teacher’s agenda. It is difficult to interpret what children meant by this talk. However, this instance could have been an opportunity for Sydney to build on children’s comments in terms of topics such as racial demographics and equitable representation. In a later interview, Sydney and I speculated that through this talk, the children may have centered Whiteness, potentially co-constructing the idea that there are large amounts of White people.

**Summary.** In response to the first research question (i.e., *How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct ability and race during shared-book readings?*), in this theme I described results demonstrating ways in which pre-service teachers guided talk about ability and race, and the ideological consequences of these discursive interactions. Across cases, talk about ability and race was characterized by missed opportunities, a focus on naming individual physical differences, and an emphasis on universal sameness. While pre-service teachers initially relied on the texts to bring up discussion about ability and race during Phase #1,

they more often invited talk about ability and race beyond the text during Phase #2. However, by constructing themselves as experts, focusing on naming physical differences, and emphasizing universal sameness, pre-service teachers conveyed the notion that individual differences of ability and race are neutral. In doing so, they did not discuss ability and race in realistic ways (i.e., consequences of these identity markers in children's lives). Moreover, such talk eschewed issues of power, fairness, or reasons teachers and children might need to talk about difference in the first place.

### **Identities and Experiences Mediating Talk**

The next set of results pertains to the second research question in this study: *How do pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?* In answering this question I identified two themes, which are based on my analysis of pre-service teacher interviews, Critical Conversations Journey Maps, and mentor teacher interviews. These themes demonstrate similarities in terms of the relationship between pre-service teachers' identities, educational experiences talking and learning about identity markers (i.e., ability and race) as children, and learning in their undergraduate teacher preparation program. Silence about ability and race in their educational experiences cut across these aspects of their lives, mediating their shared book reading practice with young children. However, there were also individual case differences, which I discuss following each theme.

#### **Mapping the Silence: Early Lessons in Drawing Your Own Conclusions (Theme #3)**

Across cases, pre-service teachers recalled the silence they experienced in their P-12 educations about both ability and race. At the same time, pre-service teachers shared memories of how spatial boundaries (e.g., school layout, school geographic location) contributed to differential treatment of peers based on ability and race in schools. In the transcript excerpt

below, as Sydney reflected on her trajectory talking about ability and race, she pointed out an experience that all pre-service teacher participants shared.

SYDNEY: I don't think there ever were conversations really ... no, there was never ...

MAGGIE: So a lot of it was just picking up messages from what you observed?

SYDNEY: Yes. I feel like that's why some people dealt with Tyrell [student of color with a disability in Sydney's class] better than other people dealt with Tyrell, just 'cause no one really knew ... I don't know, it was never brought up, race or ability, there's nothing.

Nothing was ever ... (Interview #1).

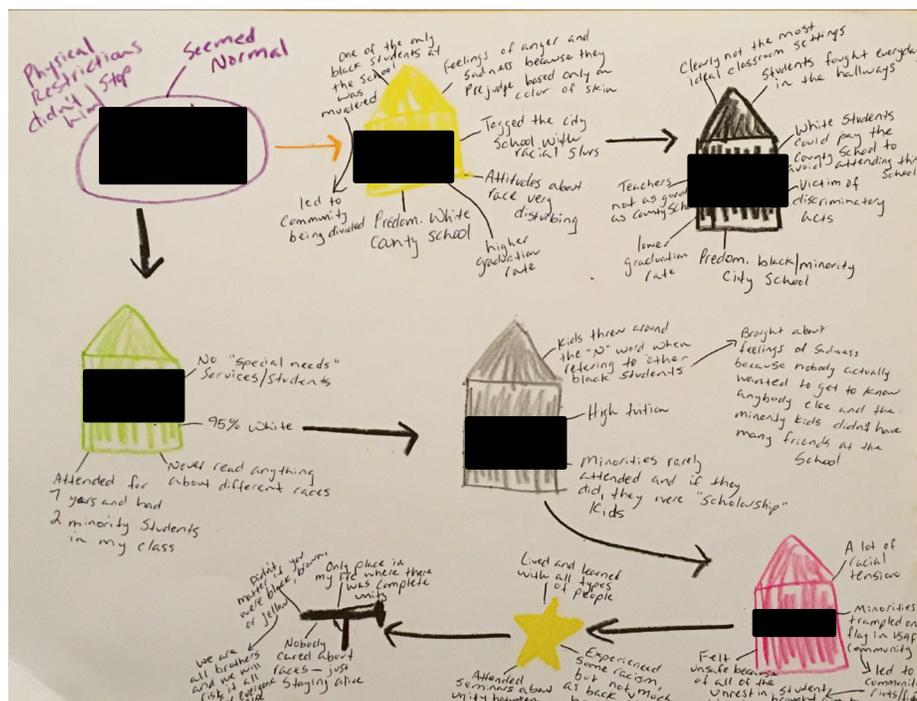
As Sydney demonstrated in the above transcript excerpt, through their early school experiences, pre-service teachers were left to draw their own conclusions about ability and race. In the following section, I discuss these results in further depth to illustrate how pre-service teachers' early school experiences mediated their talk about ability and race during shared book reading.

**Silence in school.** Overall, pre-service teacher participants recalled very few conversations with adults about ability or race in school prior to college. In fact, most of their understandings of ability and race were connected to observations that pre-service teacher participants made about peers. In some instances, pre-service teachers spoke about learning alongside students with disabilities in their classrooms, but had no conversations about ability with educators. For instance, when Grace shared her Critical Conversations Journey Map during our first interview (see Figure 9<sup>3</sup>), she began with her earliest memory of learning about ability in school.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: All blackened rectangles on Critical Conversations Journey Maps are to maintain confidentiality.

Figure 9. Grace's Critical Conversations Journey Map, Interview #1.



Grace explained:

[it] wasn't explicit instruction; it was more just observations. I had a guy in my 2nd grade class in a wheelchair. He's the only person that I was ever in school with that had any sort of a physical or mental disability. But he had some sort of bone disease, so he wasn't always in a wheelchair; just when he would fall and break something, and then they would put him in a wheelchair, but the rest of time he was just like any other kid.

Grace's quote demonstrates not only the silence she experienced in school around the topic of ability through what she described as a lack of "explicit instruction" (Interview #1), but also the few educational experiences she had with individuals with disabilities. In the absence of talk about ability in school, as a second-grader, Grace was left to construct meaning on her own.

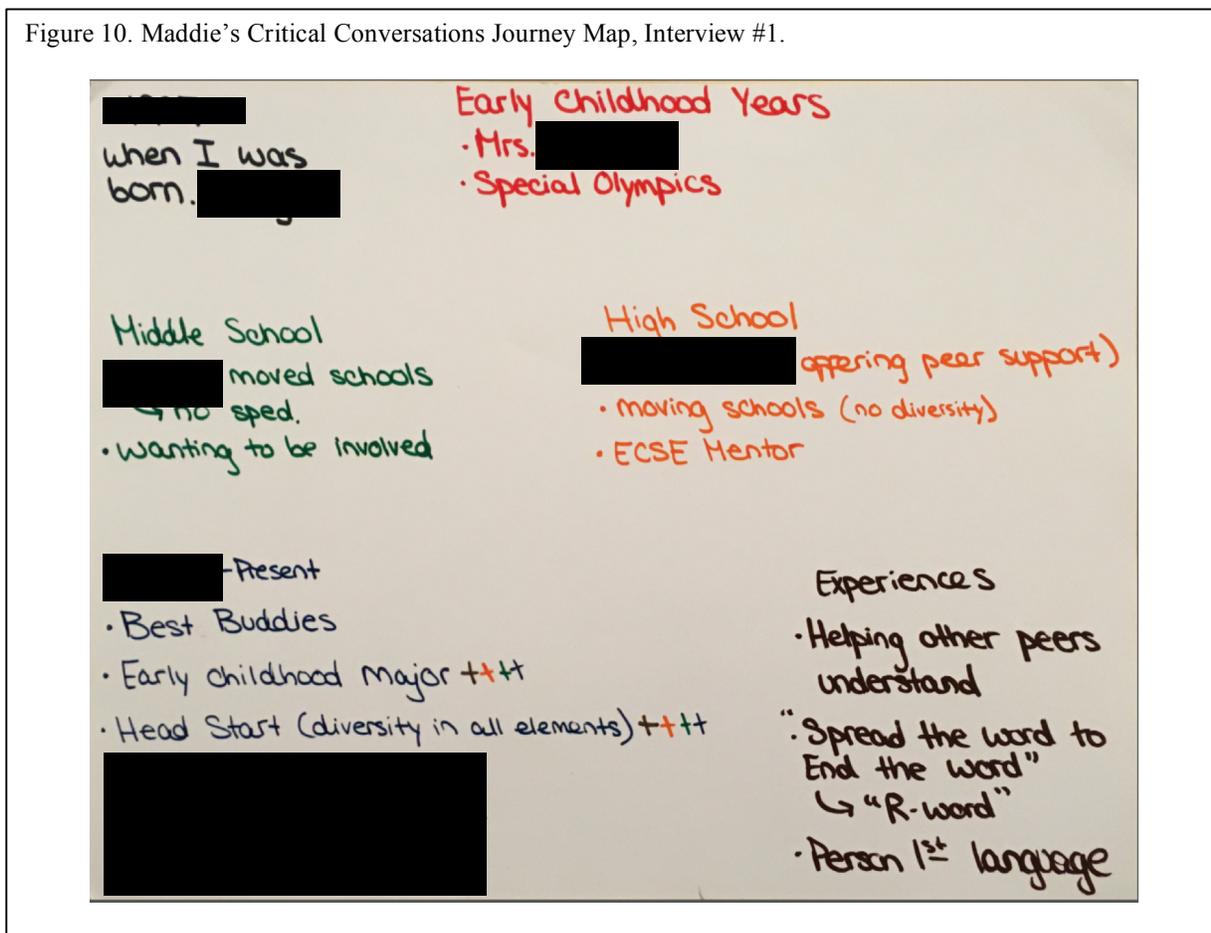
While most of the time she saw him as "just like any other kid," Grace understood his disability

in terms of bodily disease and wheelchair use. In her map, Grace included two ideas she took away from this experience: (a) “physical restrictions didn’t stop him”; and (b) “[he] seemed normal” (Grace, Interview #1). In this case, silence around the meaning Grace made seemed to be grounded in a notion of ability that equates being a normal second-grade student with being able-bodied. Further, her map suggested a belief that disability (as defined by physical restrictions) is something that can be overcome. Finally, Grace’s note that her peer’s “physical restrictions didn’t stop him” implied that despite his disability, he could still do what everyone else did.

As Cora looked back on her grade school experiences, she also discussed early school experiences with educators’ silence about ability. Cora described attending an inclusive elementary school, and recalled learning alongside a peer with Down Syndrome for several years. However, like Grace, Cora had no recollection of talking about ability. As Cora explained, “It was never really brought up. It was never like, ‘This is who she is.’ It was just like, we grew up with her so it wasn’t necessary to address it” (Interview #1). In Cora’s case, educators’ silence about ability in an inclusive setting sent the message that talking about ability differences was not needed, perhaps because students would learn about ability through their daily interactions.

Silence about ability was also perpetuated through pre-service teachers’ experiences participating in volunteer programs at school. All of the pre-service teacher participants described involvement in school volunteer work with individuals with disabilities prior to college, and silence about ability in these experiences. When Maddie shared her Critical Conversations Journey Map (see Figure 10), she talked about volunteering with a mentor teacher in an Early Childhood Special Education classroom her senior year of high school.

Figure 10. Maddie's Critical Conversations Journey Map, Interview #1.



Maddie explained the silence about ability during her volunteer experience like this:

When I was in the Early Childhood Special Ed classroom my senior year, it was just a very different environment, because we didn't have to talk to kids about it. They already knew, 'She is different from me because she has Down Syndrome,' or whatever. I don't know ... but it wasn't a problem where we had to address it (Interview #1).

In Maddie's volunteer experience, her mentor teacher seemed to send the message that talking about ability was not necessary because children learned about ability through their daily interactions. In addition, the message that Maddie took away was that her mentor teacher did not have to discuss ability unless there was some sort of a social problem among children.

Similarly, Sydney's volunteer experience in a high school buddy program, in which typically developing students were assigned peers with disabilities as buddies, also perpetuated silence about ability. Sydney described the educators' silence about ability in the program this way: "You knew you were there to be that student's buddy but it was never spoken about, never talked about" (Interview #1). When I asked Sydney if educators leading the program ever talked about why someone might need a buddy, Sydney explained, "They just talked about them [students with disabilities] wanting a friend, and just wanting someone who was regular." Through Sydney's volunteer experiences in this buddy program, silence about ability, combined with the notion that students with disabilities wanted a "regular" friend, constructed students with disabilities as abnormal in comparison to able-bodied students. Further, this rhetoric bolstered the idea that students with disabilities had problems making friends and needed help.

Pre-service teachers also described educators' silence about race in schools prior to college. For instance, Grace explained her experience as an elementary student in a school with few students of color. When I asked about her experience talking about race in this school, she responded, "We didn't read any books about different races, we didn't talk about it" (Interview #1). While Cora attended a more racially diverse elementary school, she also experienced silence about race. In fact, when I asked Cora if her teachers talked ever about race, she shared, "Not that I remember, really. I don't think so ... Yeah, it never seemed like, 'Oh, we need to address this'" (Interview #1). Across cases, pre-service teachers cited the paucity of conversations they had about race with educators. Cora explained her perspective on this experience, "So [at my school there] was a lot of different races and a lot of ... And I never even thought about that. I went from kindergarten through 8th grade with those kids, so it was nothing I really ever saw as strange. I feel like everyone saw eye to eye" (Cora, Interview #1). Like Cora, through silence

about race in elementary school, pre-service teachers received the message that talking about race in school did not matter.

While race talk was mostly silenced in pre-service teachers' educational trajectories, when I shared my own experiences talking about the civil rights movements in high school history class, pre-service teacher participants remembered a few lessons about race in terms of history. Cora shared a similar experience talking about race in terms of history, "We did learn about Martin Luther King ... those topics were brought up ... more in terms of history" (Interview #1). Yet, as Maddie pointed out in the following quote, these history lessons did not always make an impact: "I don't remember in any history classes talking about [race]... I mean, obviously, we talked about civil rights some time, but I can't pinpoint it. It was never obviously that big of a ... They didn't emphasize it as much" (Interview #1). Further, educators' silence about race in schools in combination with instruction about racism as history made it difficult for pre-service teachers to understand racial tension. For example, during Interview #1, Sydney explained her difficulty in understanding the anger an African-American peer felt about historical racism:

I remember talking about it in history, like the African-American kid would be like "Man that's messed up, screw your ancestors, blah-blah-blah," [and] would make comments to me. I'm like, "Hello, it's literally 2014. What do I look like?"... Those kind of comments would be made, and they would just be disregarded... in the moment I would just be like, "Yeah. Ha. Whatever."... But it's just the fact that they [African American students] felt the need to even say that to people. I would never be like, "Ha! You were a slave." Why would that ever be brought up? I don't know. I just don't get it. I don't know.

In this interview, Sydney expressed feeling like she was being blamed for racism “in 2014” because she was White. Based on an understanding of racism as history, Sydney felt confused that a peer might express such strong emotions about racism in the present day.

Across cases, pre-service teachers experienced little talk from educators about ability and race in schools. This silence perpetuated the notion that talking about ability and race did not matter. Furthermore, prior to college, pre-service teachers had no conversations in schools in which they engaged in talk about the social processes that perpetuate ableism and racism, or even what these terms mean.

**Spatial boundaries.** While silence about ability and race pervaded pre-service teacher participants’ early educational experiences, their observations related to spatial boundaries (e.g., school layout, school geographic location) contributed to their learning about these topics. One spatial boundary pre-service teacher participants perceived was related to a racial divide across schools. For instance, during Interview #1, as Cora described the transition from elementary school to high school, she mentioned the racial differences she noticed:

I went to kindergarten through eighth grade with a very diverse group of kids in a more dangerous neighborhood than I lived in ... But then I got to high school and it was like five girls were Black in the school of 600 ... I was like, “This is different.”

As demonstrated by this quote, based on school location, Cora perceived differences in terms of racial demographics, in combination with a feeling that a more diverse neighborhood was more dangerous, and potentially, less desirable. Similarly, as Grace explained her Critical Conversations Journey Map (Figure 9) during Interview #1, she elucidated what she had drawn regarding spatial boundaries and race in terms of school zoning:

There's a racial divide in the city [I grew up in]. And the city school is about 95% [racial] minority, and the county school is about 95% White. And I put on there that if you're in the zoning area, for the city school, a lot of White families would pay to send their kids to the county schools so they didn't have to go to the city school. And [kids from] the county school, multiple times tagged, graffiti-ed, the side of the city school, with racial slurs.

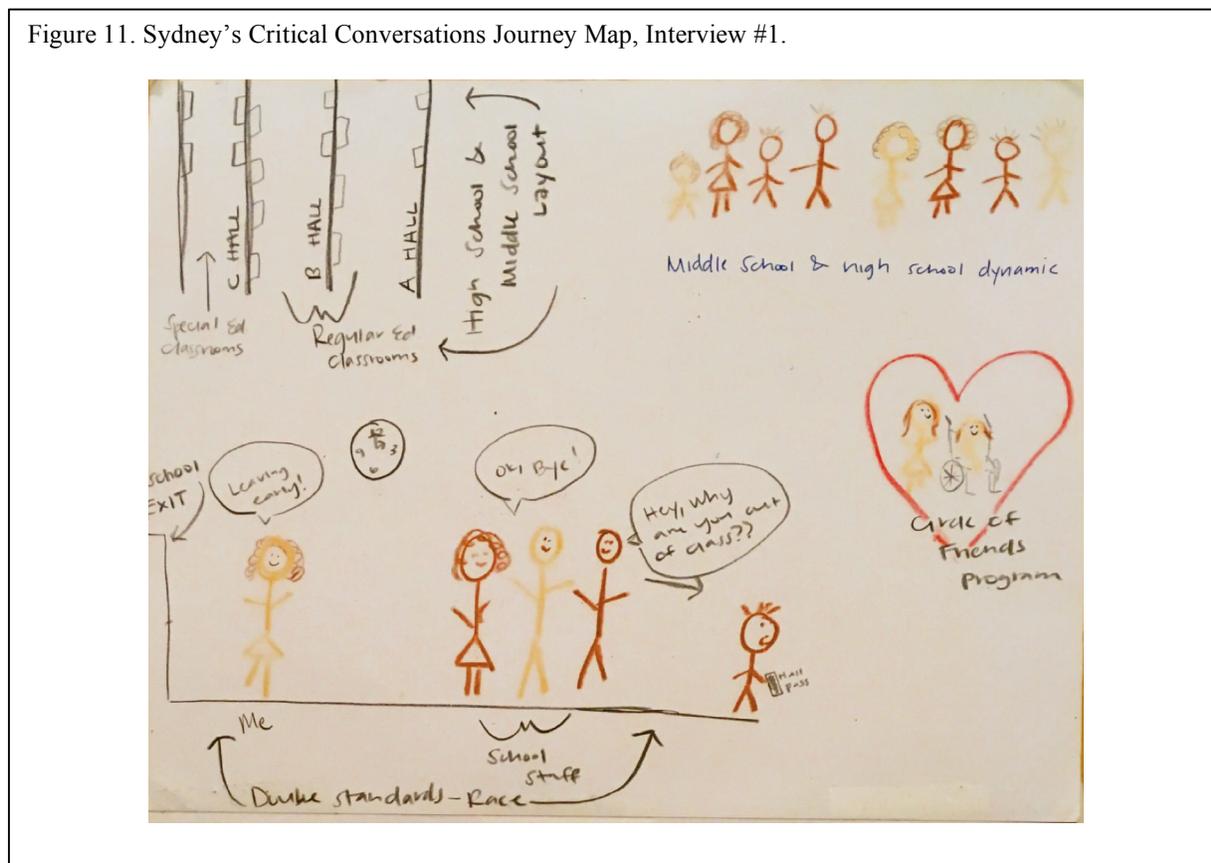
There were a lot of fights at the city [school]. So I went to the city school just for a year before I was like, "I'm a private school kid, I can't."

Thus, as a high school student, Grace saw racial divisions across schools as a result of school zoning, and viewed the "city school" in which she was in the racial minority, from a deficit lens. As a White student, Grace was able to remove herself from the city school in order to get her high school education in a better, Whiter private school.

In addition to perceiving racial boundaries in terms of schools and neighborhoods, pre-service teachers saw racial lines within schools as well. For example, when Sydney created her Critical Conversations Journey Map (Figure 11) during Interview #1, she depicted a scene that she labeled, "double standards – race." When I asked Sydney to expand on what she had drawn, she explained how school authorities had different expectations for traversing school spaces based on race:

The principal, security guards were like, "Oh, hey," if they saw me in the hallway during class. I could leave, I could walk out the building. I didn't have to have a pass...But then there's someone who does have a pass, but maybe they're not a White teenage girl, and they would instantly get questioned... Yeah, I definitely think African-American males were the most heavily watched, I guess you could say, or patrolled (Interview #1).

Figure 11. Sydney's Critical Conversations Journey Map, Interview #1.



Indeed, in her high school, Sydney perceived discrepancies in expectations for navigating spatial boundaries based on race, and was aware of advantages afforded to her as a White student. All in all, throughout their early education, pre-service teachers observed divisions in educational spaces based on race.

Additionally, as they chronicled their educational experiences, pre-service teachers regularly referred to spatial boundaries in terms of ability and special education. As Maddie explained, “So my school, they just didn't have a special ed. program for the high school, so they would bus them [students with disabilities] to a different school, which is probably like 20 miles away” (Interview #1). Further, pre-service teachers discussed peers with disabilities who went back and forth between school spaces. In my first interview with Cora, she explained her

experience attending school with a peer with a disability, “She had to have a para with her and then get pulled out for part of the day to go to the resource room or wherever ... it was just like a special ed. room where kids would go and, I don't know, I think they just worked on little things.” Cora reported that while she experienced no talk about ability in school, she observed peers labeled with disabilities leaving the classroom, which seemed to signal to Cora that they could not work on the same kind of academic tasks as children who stayed in the classroom. Moreover, as Sydney and I talked about her Critical Conversations Journey Map (Figure 11), in which she had drawn the layout of her school hallways based on “special ed” and “regular ed” classroom, we discussed the within-school spatial boundaries she perceived based on ability. She explained her drawing like this:

So, it would be like A, B, C, and C hall would be all the classrooms where they had kids with disabilities, it was in the back corner. You understand they need to be all by each other, but it literally ... People would just call it, “the special ed hall,” and I just think they [students with disabilities] were segregated. They were in their own little pod in the back of the school (Interview #1).

Across cases, in their educational experiences, pre-service teachers articulated observations of geographic markers that worked to exclude peers with disabilities. For pre-service teachers, not only did they report that P-12 educators’ silence reinforce the notion that talking about ability and race did not matter, spatial boundaries seemed to perpetuate deficit views of students with disabilities and students of color. Further, spatial boundaries limited these White, able-bodied pre-service teachers’ contact with students (i.e., students with disabilities, students of color) who may have challenged deficit perspectives. Thus, in their early school experiences, pre-service teachers had few tools to critically examine ability and race.

**Case differences.** While all pre-service teachers articulated early experiences with educators’ silence and spatial boundaries that mediated their learning about ability and race, pre-service teachers also had specific and important experiences that contributed to this learning. For Cora and Maddie, being a sibling of a person with a disability was an identity that mediated their ideas about ability, as well as their practices. During our first interview, Cora explained how growing up with an older brother, Kole, with autism was central to her experiences learning about ability. In the Critical Conversations Journey Map she created during Interview #1 (see Figure 12), Cora depicted her family, and explained how, in addition to happiness, love, and learning, her brother, whom she characterized as “mentally about one,” brought “discussion opportunity” to her family.

Figure 12. Cora’s Critical Conversation Journey Map, Interview #1.



When I asked her to describe this more in detail, Cora shared her experiences educating peers about her brother’s disability:

Seriously, people would be like ... Just randomly like, "So when Kole does this," blah, blah blah. It's just funny 'cause it's like, "Oh yeah, you've never had any experience with anyone with a disability." So something that's so day-to-day for me is like ... [hard for people to imagine] One of my parents has to shower with him and ... I don't know if this is inappropriate, but ... I have a friend who was like, "Oh, I thought you meant your dad showered with him!" And I was like, "Yeah, that *is* what I mean."

While Cora experienced educators' silence and spatial boundaries related to ability in school, growing up with Kole was also central to her learning about ability. This included her understanding of Kole's abilities, her parents' advocacy for inclusion, the day-to-day reality of living with a disability, and awareness that many of her peers did not have similar experiences.

Similarly, Maddie talked about the salience of growing up with an older sibling with a disability. Maddie's sister, Paige, was born with Down Syndrome, and during our first interview, Maddie described going with Paige to school activities and Special Olympics events from a young age. Maddie talked about how growing up with Paige taught her to help her friends accept people with disabilities, which she tried to communicate with her peers through language such as, "This is my sister, we don't talk mean about her, we're nice to her, just how it is" (Interview #1). Moreover, when Maddie shared her Critical Conversations Journey Map, (Figure 10) she talked about how growing up with Paige impacted her commitments to advocating for person-first language and "Spread the Word to End the Word" (a movement to end the use of the "r-word"). For Maddie, although she characterized her educational experiences in terms of educators' silence and spatial boundaries, her experiences with Paige supported her passion for advocacy and fair language in relation to ability.

Beyond the spatial boundaries and silence from educators surrounding race, both Grace and Sydney described peers using racial slurs. At Grace's majority White, private high school, she witnessed White students using derogatory speech toward students of color: "They would call the Mexican kids '[racial slur],' they would call the black kids '[racial slur]' ... in school to their faces, on social media" (Interview #1). At Sydney's majority African-American high school, she also talked about her peers' use of racial slurs: "the N-word was said all the time, but ... not that I would ever call someone the N-word, but they [peers of color] could call me a cracker and ... say things about me being a White girl and prissy and ... it was really frustrating" (Interview #1). Both Grace and Sydney reported being upset by peers regularly using racially derogatory language in their educational environments.

Further, Grace shared some impactful experiences with explicit racism that mediated her ideas about racial inequity. During Interview #1, Grace and I spent much time discussing a racially-charged murder case that occurred in her school community, in which she felt justice was not being served due to racism and White privilege. As she reflected on this murder case, she shared:

MAGGIE: How does that make you feel ... You can share whatever you feel comfortable.

GRACE: I feel angry that stuff like that still goes on, and that it is really all around you. If you walk into this town, it is everywhere, and it's not hard to ... You go to the mall and just sit down for an hour and you'll see it. And it's kind of scary that people still have attitudes like that to this day.

In addition to the racism in her community, as a teenager, Grace also came out as gay and described being kicked out of several private schools based on her sexuality. During Interview #1, Grace explained being expelled from school this way:

I was really good at sports, and it was softball season. And I was doing really well that year. And the principal called me into the office, and sat down, and started out with the whole, "You're really good at softball," speech. And then, went on to the, "But, we don't ... " I can't remember his exact words, but something along the lines of, "We don't want this in our school. It makes the other students uncomfortable." And by the "other students," he meant the students whose parents donate a lot of money to the school.

Further, Grace talked about how her experiences of exclusion related to her feelings about injustice, "I've always been told that life is not fair, but it's basic human rights; it's not a fair or unfair thing. It's an everyone should have it thing ... I can make my little difference every day by just being a good person myself, and showing other people they have somebody in their corner" (Grace, Interview #1). For Grace, educational experiences with witnessing overt racism and experiencing exclusion herself solidified her beliefs related to fairness for groups being marginalized by identity markers.

**Summary.** In examining how pre-service teachers talked with young children about ability and race throughout this study, based on my conceptual framing, a look at their experiences and identities was necessary. Across cases, pre-service teachers had few educational experiences talking about ability and race prior to college. While pre-service teachers recognized individual differences among peers, and observed incidents of unfairness, they had few means by which to understand social processes that perpetuate ableism and racism. As a result, pre-service teachers were left on their own to draw conclusions. As Cora explained, "It was never ... I don't

think I was ever really aware of, ‘Oh, I’m more fortunate than someone else,’ or ... I don’t know. I guess just because I’d never really thought [about it]” (Interview #1). Sydney concurred, “It’s just interesting because your whole life, you’re just like, ‘Oh, people are different but it’s no big [deal] ...’ I feel like when I was going through school, I never really thought twice about it” (Interview #1). Educators’ silence sent the message that talking about identity markers, including White, able-bodied identities, was not important. This silence gave pre-service teachers no mechanism to understand fairness related to ability and race. Furthermore, while pre-service teachers were aware of spatial boundaries, they had few critical tools to question these socially constructed divisions based on ability and race.

#### **Developing Inclusive Educators or Not (Theme #4)**

In their undergraduate programs of study, pre-service teachers navigated notions of ability, race, and literacy through their coursework and fieldwork experiences. While pre-service teachers discussed the importance of learning about inclusion in their blended EC/ECSE teacher preparation program, from their perspective, discourse about ability and race was limited. In the following sections, I discuss these results in further depth to illustrate how pre-service teachers’ undergraduate courses, fieldwork experiences, and identities mediated their talk with children about ability and race during shared book reading.

**Coursework.** Pre-service teacher participants reported encounters with new ideas about race, ability, and literacy practice through coursework in their undergraduate programs.

**Coursework and race.** By and large, pre-service teachers described conversations about race that took place in single, stand-alone courses outside of their early childhood courses. For instance, Cora described learning about race through a college Anthropology course: “[We learned that] race is a social construct and doesn’t exist really, and then, in years to come, it won’t

because we're all mating basically with different races, which was something I hadn't really thought about before" (Interview #1). Maddie also received a similar message, "I took Anthropology last semester, and we talked about how race is pretty much arbitrary...for me that was very eye opening" (Interview #1). In their Anthropology course, pre-service teachers explained how they were introduced to the concept of race as a socially constructed identity marker. However, pre-service teachers interpreted this idea to mean that race should be seen as insignificant and could be easily dismissed.

Added to this, across cases, pre-service teachers explained that race was not talked about in their early childhood courses, and was only addressed in their preparation through a separate required course in their teacher preparation program. Indeed, when I asked specifically if race was discussed in their teacher licensure program, Grace responded, "The only time I actually had a conversation about it in school was in my Multicultural Ed class" (Interview #3). Yet pre-service teachers shared frustration regarding their learning about race in this stand-alone Multicultural Education course, which left pre-service teachers feeling uncomfortable and confused. From Cora's perspective, "It felt like [the instructor] was preaching that Whites targeted every other race...and it wasn't as much like she was wrong, it was just a very...there was a lot of tension" (Interview #1). As Sydney put it, "I honestly felt like [the instructor] didn't focus on how to go about [teaching]. She was just like, 'African-Americans are seen as less'...It wasn't a positive class at all" (Interview #2). Moreover, Grace explained her perspective on the course this way: "I think real world situations would have helped 'cause I can read 10 articles about something and draw my own conclusions, but solid something would be nice to see" (Interview #2).

Pre-service teacher participants described their Multicultural Education course as the first and only course experience in which they encountered the idea that racism is systemic. Given the limited time pre-service teachers felt they had to wrestle with this idea and think about equitable teaching practices, pre-service expressed apprehension about the course content, and seemed perplexed about the applicability of the content in these courses to their future roles as early childhood educators. Besides their dissatisfaction with course relevance, pre-service teachers discussed the mixed-messages they had received about race as a concept, which added to their confusion and frustration. As Cora put it, “If race is a social construction, then why are we talking about it?” Even as pre-service teacher participants were explicitly learning about racial inequity in this course, their previous educational experiences rarely challenged their racial understandings and predominantly reinforced race-neutral ideologies, making it difficult to think about changes in their knowledge, beliefs, or future teaching practices in a single semester.

***Coursework and ability.*** At the same time, pre-service teachers discussed their lack of experiences learning to talk about ability in their blended EC/ECSE teacher licensure program. As Maddie shared, “I honestly don't think I've had a class yet where we have specifically tried, or gone over how to talk about [ability]” (Interview #2). Pre-service teachers explained that the content of their teacher preparation courses focused on the importance of including children with disabilities, finding instructional entry points for all children, adapting practices for individual children with disabilities, and supporting children's positive behavior. As Sydney shared, “It's more like ... think of all the students, have all students in mind. And now we're doing like IEPs ... and we're getting into how to adjust things. But I don't think we've ever talked about how to discuss it [disability] with everyone” (Interview #2). Cora interpreted the focus of EC/ECSE coursework like this: “I feel like we talk about encouraging [children's positive] behaviors, not

discouraging [children's negative behaviors], but I can't think of a time when I was [learning about] talking about abilities with children specifically" (Interview #2).

As developing teachers in a blended early childhood licensure program, pre-service teachers described learning about important practices to support children in inclusive classrooms, yet they did not feel they were learning to talk about ability with young children. As Sydney reflected on her coursework, she explained, "cause even now when I'm in college, I'm not even talking about the elephant in the room that there's different students and how do I talk about it?" (Interview #2). As college students, pre-service teachers shared a lack of prior experiences in which they questioned the social construction of disability or the social processes that perpetuate ableism. Across cases, as pre-service teachers described their inclusive teacher preparation program, they expressed feeling underprepared to talk to talk or think about disability as an identity marker, let alone engage in these conversations with children.

***Coursework and shared book reading.*** Pre-service teachers' understandings about shared book reading from coursework also mediated how they talked about ability and race with young children. As they discussed what they understood about shared book reading based on course instruction, pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of planning out questions and promoting comprehension while reading books to children. To illustrate, when I asked Maddie what she understood about reading books with children, she described it this way:

I've never read to kids until last semester. I had a literacy class and so, we actually had to go into the classroom and read to kids. And so, I know the whole, you want to go over the title and the author and then do a picture walk and always have stuff planned to stop on a page and ask questions (Interview #2).

As she discussed what she learned about shared book reading, Sydney also highlighted the importance of planning and asking questions to promote student engagement, “[use] post its, kind of have a plan, know when you're gonna ask questions. Make sure the students are engaged” (Interview #2). Across cases, pre-service teachers described the utility of asking questions to promote children’s story comprehension. As Cora explained, she had learned that shared book reading involves, “being aware of what [children] are taking in and trying to make [sure] they're understanding the best they can by prompting them” (Interview #2). Through coursework, what pre-service teachers had come to understand about shared book reading was the importance of asking pre-planned questions to check for children’s understanding.

At this point in their teacher preparation program, pre-service teachers had developed some working knowledge about shared book reading through coursework, yet had not fully fleshed out the possibilities for teacher and child talk that might happen during shared book reading. Based on their belief that sticking to pre-planned questions was important to promote story comprehension, pre-service teachers had learned few tools to promote a dialogue with children during shared book reading. Further, pre-service teachers described having no course instruction on integrating topics of ability or race into shared book reading.

**Fieldwork.** Pre-service teacher participants’ fieldwork experiences also mediated how they talked about ability and race during shared book reading. At both Children’s Campus and Midwest Head Start fieldwork sites, pre-service teachers experienced few conversations with children about ability or race. Additionally, shared book reading across classrooms was used to promote literacy skills. I provide details about pre-service teachers’ fieldwork experiences in the sections that follow.

*Concrete conversations about ability and race.* Across cases, mentor teachers reported having few conversations with children about ability and race in their classrooms, including mentor teachers of color (i.e., MENTOR2 and MENTOR3). When conversations occurred, they focused mostly on concrete, physical differences. For instance, MENTOR2 explained a single, concrete conversation she had about skin color initiated by a child in her class:

The only time I have ever heard anything was them comparing color, not to each other, but to objects. And so there was one time a little boy in our classroom was standing next to the tree ... and he said, "Look, the tree bark is the same color as me." I was just kind of like, "Wow, you're so observant!" (Mentor Teacher Interview).

In this example, MENTOR2 listened in to a child's observation about skin color and positively affirmed what he noticed, but did not extend the conversation. In other cases, mentor teachers described explicitly bringing up skin color with children and focusing on concrete physical differences. For instance, MENTOR5 discussed a self-portrait activity that she had introduced earlier in the year, "And the skin tone paint was what we used. So, we're just matter of fact about that. And then we talk a lot about different eye color, and we'll count who's got brown eyes or blue eyes, or those kinds of things. And that our hair feels different, all of those kinds of things" (Mentor Teacher Interview). In other words, MENTOR5 felt as though using skin tone paint was a concrete way to invite talk about skin color with children, and extended the conversation in the context of other physical differences.

MENTOR1 shared a similar approach with using skin tone materials as provocation for conversation, noting, "They really act like they don't notice any differences amongst themselves ... we have the different skin tone paints, and we have the different skin tone clays, but it's honestly ... this group really hasn't brought [skin color differences] up ..." (Mentor Teacher

Interview). Moreover, MENTOR6 explained her focus on physical differences in her guidance in talking about skin color with children:

We'll put our arms together and I'll say, "Well, does my hand look the same as your hand?" and they may say, "Your hand is bigger than my hand" I'll say "Yeah, my hand is bigger than you hand. What else is different?" and somebody else will say, "My skin is brown," and I'll say, "Yeah, you have brown skin" and it just begins from there. You don't really have to do a whole lot more than that... (Mentor Teacher Interview).

Through these examples, mentor teachers conveyed the belief that conversations about race with young children should focus on concrete, physical differences in relation to skin color.

Although the above examples describe mentor teachers' approach to race talk, conversations about skin color were still rare in fieldwork classrooms, as demonstrated by the following exchange I had with Cora during Interview #2:

MAGGIE: Do your mentor teachers talk about race in the classroom at all? Have you observed any conversations that have come up with children?

CORA: I have never heard a conversation come up about it.

Maddie shared a similar experience about race talk in her fieldwork classroom, "Since I've been there, not anything [has been said] about skin color" (Interview #2). Even more, Grace compared the lack of conversations about racial inequity in her fieldwork classroom to wider social dialogue about race and racism, "And then we don't talk about [racism] here [in fieldwork site], so there's not a whole lot of it being talked about. There's a lot of it going on in the world, but there's not a lot of conversation about it." Taken together, conversations about race in pre-service teachers' fieldwork sites were limited. When conversations occurred, mentor teachers focused on skin color and its different physical attributes.

By the same token, conversations about ability were also uncommon in pre-service teachers' fieldwork classrooms. Mentor teachers explained that the topic had not come up, and rationalized that children were oblivious to ability differences they did not see. As MENTOR6 stated, "As far as abilities go, I would say they're less aware. Now, if we had a kiddo in the class who was in a wheelchair, they would [notice]" (Mentor Teacher Interview). MENTOR1 shared this sentiment, "We have some [children with] developmental differences [in our classroom], and even those I don't think are really perceived by [the other children]" (Mentor Teacher Interview). When conversations about ability came up in fieldwork classrooms, children initiated them. For instance, MENTOR3 talked about concrete conversation she has had with regards to a child's autoimmune disease:

Well ... [with] children it's usually a direct comment. "You don't have hair!" ... They're just very direct. And so, we acknowledge it. We said, "Oh, you're right." And [the child with the autoimmune disease] didn't like talking about it but we knew what was going on, and so we would just talk about it. "Everybody's body is a little bit different, and this person doesn't have hair, but that's awesome because it looks great on him. And he has this cool hat that he carries around (Mentor Teacher Interview).

When children initiated conversations about ability in fieldwork classrooms, mentor teachers focused conversation on concrete physical differences, as discussed in the transcript excerpt above. Pre-service teachers confirmed that conversations about ability in the classroom were seldom. For instance, when I asked Grace if she could recall any conversations her mentor teachers had with children about ability, she responded, "Not really. We don't really have a lot of ability, disability conversations" (Interview #3). As Cora explained, "With Dana, for example,

who has astigmatism, just something visibly...different [i.e., wearing eyeglasses], I've never heard anyone say anything about it, and kids play with her normally” (Interview #2).

In short, pre-service and mentor teachers both reported few discussions of ability or race with children in fieldwork classrooms. When conversations occurred in their classrooms, mentor teachers depicted the focus of talk on concrete physical differences. Consequently, as pre-service teachers read books about ability and race with young children, they had few examples in their classrooms to draw from, and no modeling from mentor teachers around extending the conversation beyond talk about physical differences.

***Promoting literacy skills.*** Mentor teachers’ shared book reading practice also mediated pre-service teachers’ talk about ability and race during shared book reading. Overall, mentor teachers construed their shared book reading practice as targeting specific literacy skills. Specifically, MENTOR1 stressed her focus on vocabulary during shared book reading, “I always pause for any words they don't know or I'll even just define them and say synonyms” (Mentor Teacher Interview). In addition to text purpose, MENTOR5 also indicated that vocabulary was a priority during shared book reading: “So ... modeling how you use a book. But then also that vocabulary, and then continuing to build on vocabulary, making certain that they...by asking questions, checking for understanding” (Mentor Teacher Interview). Further, MENTOR 6 described the importance of using books during shared book reading to introduce vocabulary and for children to practice answering questions, “And that book will have our vocabulary words in it for the day, and that's a good time to do some ‘what’, ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘where’ [questions] ...” (Mentor Teacher Interview). In the same way, MENTOR3 mentioned multiple strategies she draws upon, including pointing out key details and retelling the story during shared book reading:

It depends on the book. I have several different strategies that I mix-up ... sometimes we'll read the book straight through, and we'll revisit it and [I'll ask], "Can you remember facts or parts of this story? Where did that happen at, was that on this page?" ... but we do cover parts of the book, and that goes from characters to talk[ing] about conflict and resolution (Mentor Teacher Interview).

Pre-service teachers reiterated mentor teachers' focus on literacy skills during shared book reading. As Grace put it, "We read a lot of number books or letter books and they focus on that letter, pointing stuff out in the pictures that start with a letter" (Interview #3). Added to this, Cora described how mentor teachers asked questions and taught about different types of texts during shared book reading, "Today, it was like, 'Okay, is this book fiction or nonfiction? Okay, what does that mean?' [My mentor teacher is] like, 'Who can answer my question?' They always raise their hands" (Interview #2). Across cases, mentor teachers described shared book reading time as an opportunity to teach targeted literacy skills (i.e., vocabulary, text purpose, features of print, retelling). Yet mentor teachers did not report viewing shared book reading as an opportunity to engage young children in critical thinking or social consciousness-building. As pre-service teachers read books about ability and race with young children, their mentor teachers' focus on teaching explicit literacy skills during shared book reading mediated their understandings of how shared book reading should be facilitated.

**Mediating identities.** Across cases, pre-service teachers talked about ways in which their identities mediated their shared book reading practice, making talk about ability and race with young children difficult. Specifically, pre-service teachers noted the salience of their identities as developing teachers. For pre-service teacher participants, their identities as future teachers were evolving. To illustrate, when I asked Cora how she thinks about her role as an educator she

responded, “I think my view of that is still developing” (Interview #1). As Maddie talked about creating an inclusive classroom community she explained the difficulty as a developing teacher, “I wanna make it a better environment, but I don't know how to do that. Especially, because I'm not a teacher yet. So, it was just very hard for me” (Interview #1). Across cases, pre-service teachers saw themselves as developing teachers who were still learning about what they believed and how they could translate those beliefs into practice. Their identities as developing teachers meant that they simultaneously felt unprepared and open to learning about teaching.

At the same time, pre-service teachers' White racial identities made talk about race uncomfortable, and pre-service teachers did not know how to engage children in talk about race. For instance, Sydney described the difficulty in talking about race this way, “I am a White woman who hasn't had super unfair experiences ... How can I educate [children] on what's going on when I haven't experienced it firsthand?” (Interview #3). Cora shared a similar sentiment, “Obviously you hear about issues of justice and racism and all that. But it almost seems like a far off thing ... but that could also be because I'm White” (Interview #2). Moreover, Maddie explained, “For me I can't relate to being not White or a different skin color. So and it's just hard for me to know how to talk to little kids about that. I have no idea how to go about that. So yeah, it's just very difficult to know what the right way is” (Interview #2). Across cases, pre-service teachers identified as White women and recognized that conversations about race were difficult. With few previous experiences reflecting on ways Whiteness is centered in schools and society, it was difficult for pre-service teachers to engage in talk about race, and they frequently remarked that they needed to know the correct way to go about these conversations.

**Case differences.** Though all pre-service teacher participants were enrolled in a unified EC/ECSE program, Grace had a specific career goals upon graduation that mediated her practice.

Although Cora's fieldwork placement was in an inclusive classroom, Cora saw herself in the future teaching in a self-contained special education classroom, "I am more drawn toward the special ed. part and this is just a typical preschool classroom...there are a couple kids in the classroom with IEPs, but it's just a different dynamic. It's kind of like...this might not be what I'm doing in the future, but here I am" (Interview #1). For Cora, her future identity as an early childhood special education teacher influenced her focus on disability. This also made it difficult for her to invest in inclusive practices (i.e., talking about ability and race during shared book reading), because she imagined herself working in a segregated setting where such practices might not be relevant. In contrast, Grace, who was double majoring in biology and special education, anticipated pursuing a graduate degree in special education with a focus on Deaf education upon program completion. Grace explained her career goal this way, "I wanna work with gorillas, teaching them sign language" (Interview #1). For Grace, her decision to further her education and hopes to work with gorillas as scientist, mediated her engagement in talk about ability and race with young children during shared book reading, given that she did not anticipate working with children in the future.

In thinking about pre-service teachers' identities and their talk about ability, it is also important to note that across cases, pre-service teachers did not discuss the salience of their own identities as able-bodied individuals. This is likely because they had so few opportunities to think about ability as an identity marker in their lives. However, Maddie discussed how her identity as a sibling of an individual with a disability made it easier to talk about ability with children:

I feel like... it's going to be easier at least for when I'm a teacher and to be able to talk about ability and disability just because I have a sister with Down Syndrome. So for me

it's more of an open conversation rather than me purposefully trying to talk to kids about it just 'cause I talk about Paige with a lot of people (Interview #2).

Being a sibling of an individual with a disability was, for Maddie, important in helping her feel comfortable talking about ability and disability with young children.

**Summary.** Pre-service teachers emphasized how they were learning about inclusive practices in their blended EC/ECSE teacher preparation program but not how to think or talk about ability and race with young children. Through coursework, pre-service teacher participants described few experiences thinking or talking about race or racism. Further, as pre-service teachers depicted their program, they felt courses did not address disability as a social construction or issues of ableism. As the study began, pre-service teachers felt they had some working knowledge of shared book reading, but their understanding of this practice was limited to asking children pre-planned questions to check for understanding. Added to this, pre-service teachers recounted no course instruction on how to integrate topics about ability or race into shared book reading.

While pre-service teachers' fieldwork sites were diverse in terms of both ability and race, mentor teachers rarely engaged in conversations about these identity markers with young children, and when conversations occurred, mentor teachers focused on pointing out physical differences. Furthermore, while mentor teachers' shared book reading practices focused on targeting explicit literacy skills, children's perspectives on texts (i.e., background knowledge and connections, critical perspectives, questions) seemed to have little importance. Given these experiences in coursework and fieldwork, pre-service teachers felt they had very few means by which to enter conversation about ability and race with young children during shared book

reading. Finally, pre-service teachers' identities (i.e., White, developing teachers) added to their discomfort in knowing how to engage children in conversation.

### **Co-Analyzing Discourse as Transformative Tool**

The last set of results relate to the third research question in this study: *How does pre-service teacher and research co-analyses of discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?* Co-analyses occurred during Pre-service Teacher Interview #2 and #3, in which pre-service teachers and I reviewed and reflected on video clips of shared book reading and child interview transcript excerpts. After co-analyses in Interview #2, pre-service teachers' shared book reading practice shifted by increasing children's opportunities to talk during shared book reading. In this section, I detail two themes, which are based on my analysis of pre-service teacher interviews, Critical Conversations Journey Maps, and child interviews. These themes demonstrate the relationship between co-analyzing discourse through the current study and pre-service teachers' transformations in terms of: (a) their beliefs about the need to talk about ability and race with children; and (b) their need to continue learning through practice.

#### **We Need to Talk but I Don't Know How (Theme #5)**

Co-analyses of discursive interactions (i.e., reflecting on video data and child interview transcript excerpts with me) led pre-service teachers to consider young children's conceptualizations of ability and race, and the overwhelming silence regarding ability and race in pre-service teachers' own educational trajectories. Specifically, pre-service teachers demonstrated shifts in thinking about the extent to which young children were actively constructing ideas about ability and race, and the importance of talking about ability and race with children. This included claiming responsibility for this work as future teachers in diverse,

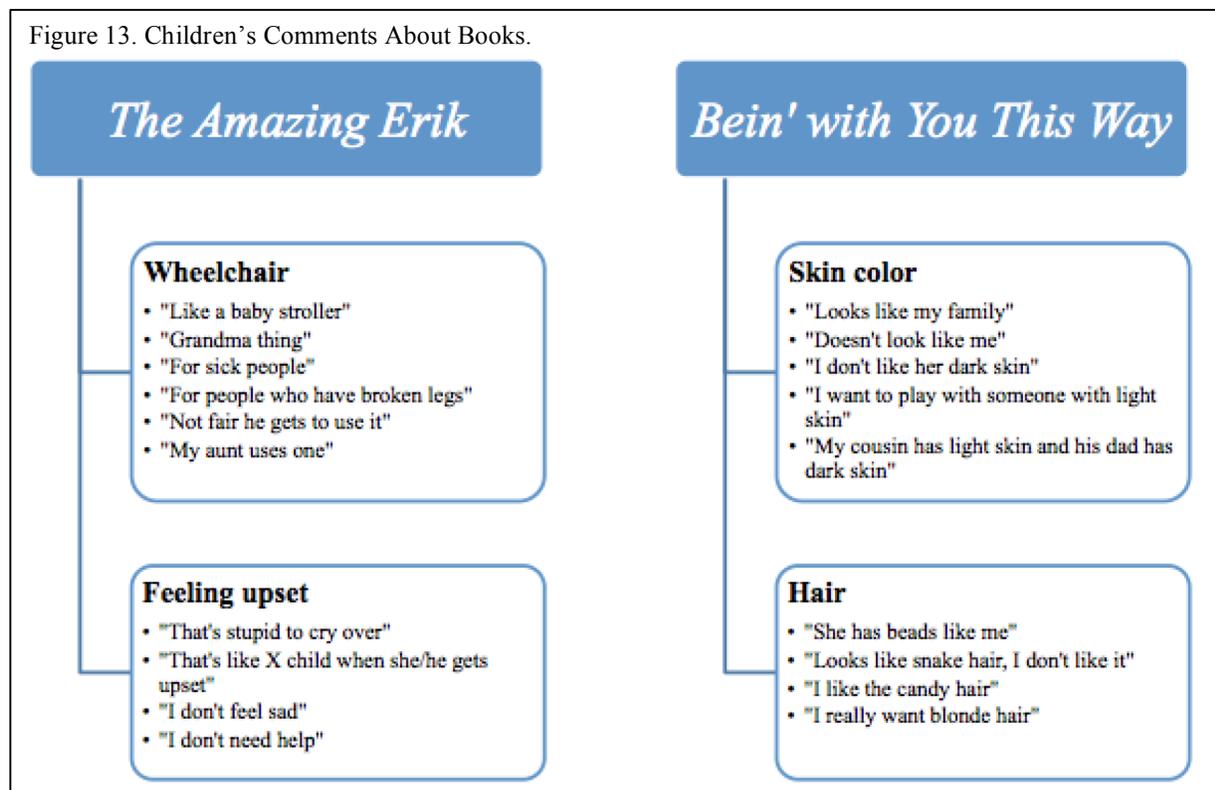
inclusive classrooms. As we analyzed transcripts from child interviews and shared book reading data together, pre-service teachers saw new entry points for talking about ability and race with children and began to think critically about representation in classroom materials and the media. Simultaneously, pre-service teachers discussed how difficult it was to bring up these topics with children, given their educational histories, identities, preparation, and fieldwork placements. Their limited previous experiences talking about ability and race made it difficult for pre-service teachers to engage in talk with children. In the following sections, I describe these results in more detail.

**Children's conceptualizations.** First, through child interviews, children demonstrated the relevance of book topics. In Figure 13 below, I present a summary of children's comments across cases. Child interviews were not meant to evaluate children's conceptualizations, but to bring to light the extent to which children made meaning about books, even when pre-service teachers did not explicitly talk about ability or race during Phase #1 of shared book reading. During Interview #2 with pre-service teachers, I only shared quotes from children in the small group each pre-service teacher had for shared book reading. Co-analyzing these comments from interviews with children in their small group helped pre-service teachers to start thinking about how young children were actively constructing ideas about race and ability.

Pre-service teachers were surprised by what children said, and began to reflect on how children understood these topics. For example, after viewing video footage of shared book reading and reviewing child interview transcripts during Phase #1, Cora remarked:

[I'm] always surprised at what the kids say, how they're like, "Oh, there's light skin and medium skin and dark skin" ... I mean that's like very observant of them ... CHILD18

and CHILD17 don't have the same hair color at all but they recognize that they have same skin color. So I thought that was kind of fascinating (Interview #2).



For Cora, realizing that children recognized similarities and differences in skin color was compelling and unexpected. In examining children's comments about wheelchairs, Sydney noted the importance of talking about ability with young children: "Even the reason for a child needing a wheelchair, [or saying] 'it's a grandma thing,' I don't know, it seems like they've never really had a conversation regarding someone with a disability" (Interview #2). Analyzing children's comments made Sydney consider the extent to which children had talked about disability before the shared book reading, as well as what children understood about wheelchairs. Reviewing child transcripts also prompted Grace to recognize that children were observing differences in terms of ability and race, "They notice [differences]. They definitely do" (Interview #2). Across cases,

reviewing children's interview transcripts raised pre-service teachers' awareness about children's conceptualizations of ability and race.

At times, through our analyses, I questioned pre-service teachers' assumptions about children's understandings. For instance, in the following transcript excerpt from Interview #2, Maddie shared her belief that children in her classroom did not "know anything about" race, because they were immersed in a diverse preschool classroom. I gently challenged Maddie's appraisal of how children were making meaning, reminding Maddie of the child interview in which CHILD1 expressed a desire to have blonde hair:

MADDIE: I feel like they're more accepting because they don't know anything about it, they don't have judgments about it already, because they're already in that situation [racially diverse classroom].

MAGGIE: Except that some of them were saying things about...they still have preferences, right? [I'm] thinking about CHILD1's comments about wishing she had blonde hair....

MADDIE: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. So maybe...

MAGGIE: Just to push back a little bit.

MADDIE: Yeah, maybe they're accepting with each other, but they would rather, like CHILD1, she would rather maybe not look a certain way, but she would prefer that over, I don't know, something else.

MAGGIE: Yeah, it's complicated. Or [maybe the children] recognize that society values a certain way of being.

Throughout our co-analyses, I continued to ground conversations in children's comments from child interviews. Specifically, during Interview #2, Cora and I discussed her perspective on

children's conceptualizations of disability based on *The Amazing Erik*. After reviewing child transcript excerpts, I asked Cora what she thought of children's ideas about different social emotional responses, and she suggested that they do not "think anything of it." I pointed out that many of the children I interviewed had compared Erik's emotional response in the book to another child in their class, Dana (a child in their classroom labeled with a disability). In these conversations, children had also mentioned that getting upset is "not okay" (Child Interview). Cora reflected on this with me, noting that talking about their biases related to getting upset could be an entry point for future discussion:

CORA: If someone's crying, they don't really think anything of it.

MAGGIE: Except that they had all mentioned Dana as somebody who's [crying] ...

CORA: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly. Yeah. Someone who gets upset frequently, I think that [their biases about getting upset would] be a good thing to address (Interview #2).

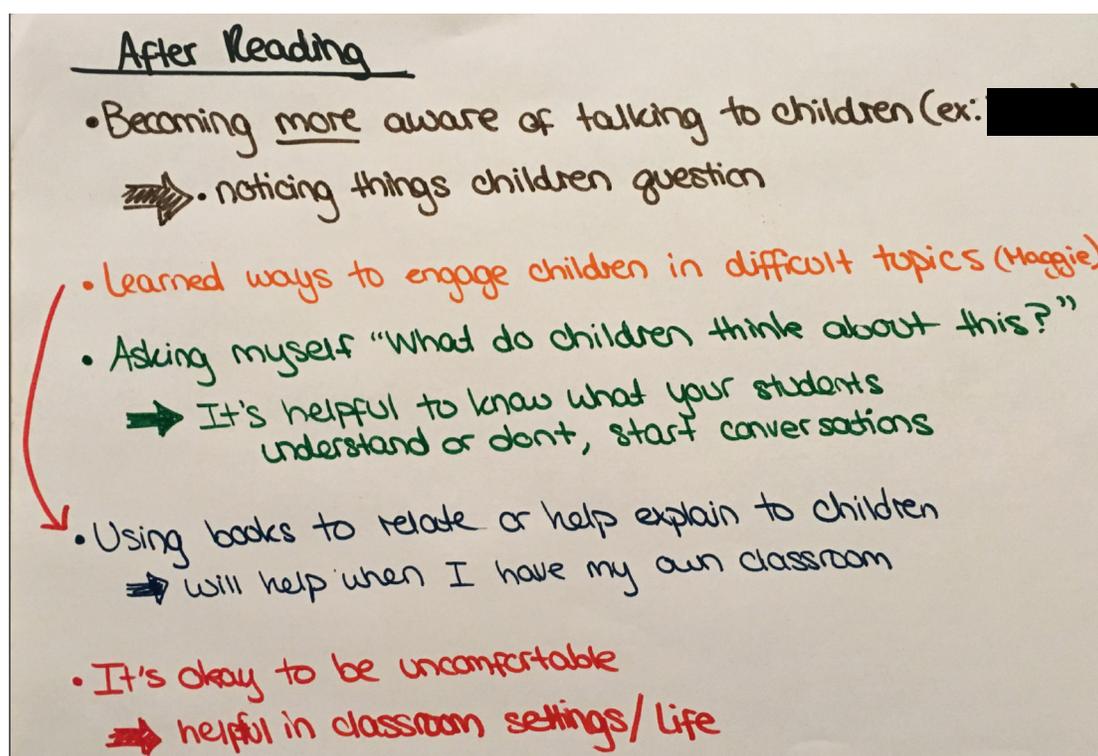
Through our co-analyses of children's comments, pre-service teachers began to recognize the importance of raising specific topics related to ability and race with children.

**Seeing opportunities.** Pre-service teachers also discussed how they were more aware of opportunities to discuss ability and race with children based on participation in the study, as well as the importance of listening to children's comments throughout the day with this focus. For example, Grace shared a conversation she had with CHILD12 about *The Amazing Erik* in the classroom following the shared book reading during Phase #2:

CHILD12 was talking about Erik and the wheelchair and just seemed amazed that he could even get out of the wheelchair ... I just had to explain to her that, just 'cause he's in a wheelchair doesn't mean that he can't get down and play with his friends (Interview #3).

Sydney reflected on her initial comments about children’s awareness of race, and expressed changes in her thinking: “[In our first interview] I was like, ‘No, not really, I haven't noticed anything [children’s conversations about race].’ But now, even now I'm just like I feel like I'm a lot more aware already” (Interview #3). Moreover, as Maddie revisited her Critical Conversations Journey Map in Interview #3, she noted opportunities for ability and race talk with children, noting how she was becoming “more aware of talking to children (ex: Joe)” (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Maddie’s Critical Conversations Journey Map, Interview #3.



I remembered how MENTOR5 had characterized Joe as “a little one has some really significant behavior issues” (Mentor Teacher Interview), and was curious what child interactions Maddie had observed. When I asked Maddie to expand on what she had written, Maddie explained:

So what I've learned is I am becoming more aware of talking to children. Like this morning, Joe, our little friend out there [with a disability]. I saw a lot of the kids were looking at him and not knowing why he was doing what he was doing. So we... me and MENTOR5, we've been saying, "He's still learning. He doesn't come to school everyday, so he can't do all the things that you guys do right now. So that's why he's learning." And so I noticed that I have become more aware of what children are seeing and being able to talk to them about that (Interview #3).

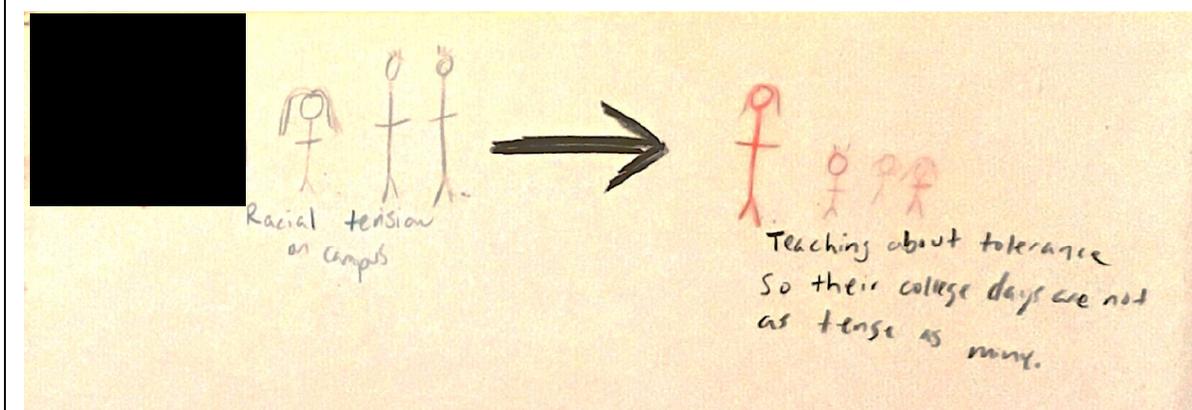
Across cases, pre-service teachers experienced increased awareness of opportunities for talk about ability and race with children.

**Need to talk.** As pre-service teachers recognized children were making meaning of ability and race, and reflected on their own educational experiences with silence about these topics, they articulated the importance of talking with children about ability and race during shared book reading. Specifically, Cora described her obligation to discuss race as she reflected on the silence in on her own educational experiences, "When I was growing up ... I mean yes, we learned about Civil Rights and stuff, but it was more something in the past. And so I think [I'm realizing] the importance of talking about [race] now" (Interview #3). Grace expressed her commitment to talking about ability and race in her future teaching this way: "I definitely want to find a way to incorporate it [ability and race] into the curriculum and lessons...and it's something that I realize needs to be talked about" (Interview #3). Similarly, Maddie shared, "I would say just the fact that it's important to talk about both [ability and race], and even if it's something unfamiliar, even though I've not had a lot of experience, I still need to talk about it. I can't just avoid it and dismiss it" (Interview #3). Sydney also shared Maddie's sentiment, "Some things need to be talked about, even if it is controversial" (Interview #3). Across cases, as pre-

service teachers described their future teaching practice, they saw talking about ability and race with children as an important responsibility.

Further, pre-service teachers' commitment to engaging children in these conversations were grounded in an awareness that ideologies of ableism and racism were circulating in their worlds. For example, when Grace revisited her Critical Conversations Journey Map during Interview #3 she added an arrow from “racial tension on campus” to “teaching about tolerance so their college days are not as tense as mine” (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Grace's Critical Conversations Journey Map, Interview #3.



When I asked her to explain what she meant by “racial tension” she described several racially-charged incidents on her own college campus that involved hate speech as well as student protests in response to these incidents. For Grace, these incidents and the connected ideologies of racism further propelled her commitment to talking about race with children, “I think conversation's important, and I think people sharing their ideas is important. And it's important to get started to get ideas out there” (Interview #3). In a like manner, Maddie talked about how ableism is perpetuated by inequitable representation in the media:

MADDIE: And at least the shows I watch, there's not anyone with a disability or in a wheelchair.

MAGGIE: So do you think that perpetuates a negative message?

MADDIE: Yeah, so [it's important to be] questioning like why don't they use those people that are in wheelchairs or stuff like that? So rather than asking, what do you see? Why don't we see that?

MAGGIE: To what extent do you think it's important for teachers to challenge these negative messages about ability during shared book reading or in conversation with children?

MADDIE: I would say it's very important, just because why wouldn't you? Why would you not want your students to think in different ways? So I think it would be very important.

In reflecting on ideologies perpetuated in the media, Maddie's observations about a lack of disability representation in media reinforced her convictions regarding ability talk with young children. Similarly, Sydney discussed ableism she observed via media in the presidential campaign (i.e., "Donald Trump and his making fun of the reporter [with a disability]"; Interview #2) and the messages that communicated to children (i.e., "do they see that... or if they know how disrespectful it was"; Interview #2). On thinking about how these observations relate to her commitments to talk about ability with young children, she explained, "it's just in the media at least, I feel like it's just ... you can't not talk about it" (Interview #3). Across cases, analyzing children's comments about ability and race, in the context of racist and ableist ideologies, furthered pre-service teachers' commitments to talking about ability and race with children.

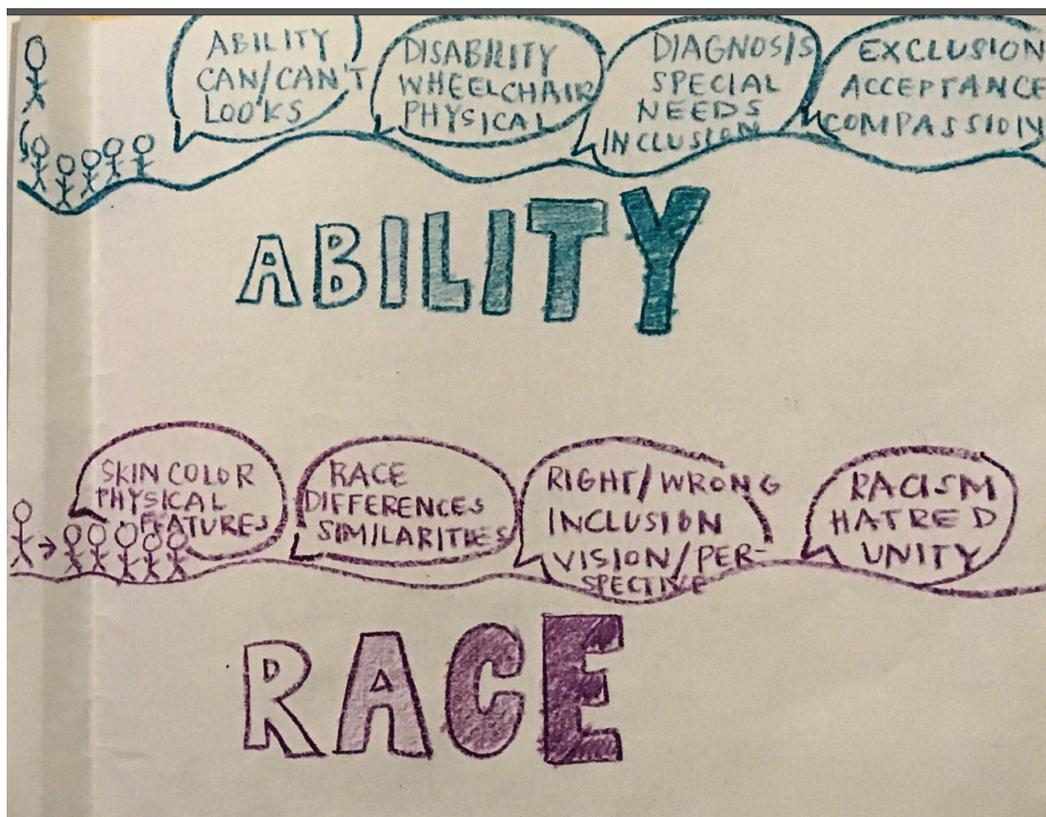
**Hard to talk.** Even as they articulated their beliefs regarding the importance of talking with children about ability and race during shared book reading, pre-service teachers discussed how difficult it was to initiate and continue to discuss these topics with children. In particular, pre-service teachers noted struggles with keeping conversation concrete, managing behavior, responding in the moment, and talking about unfairness.

*Keeping conversation concrete.* Across cases, pre-service teachers described how talking with children about ability and race was complicated, given their young age and developmental levels. As Grace put it, “[it] is difficult because I have all of these things [about ability and race] running through my head, and I know that I'm not anywhere near on the same level as the kids are, and so bringing it all back down and trying to be kid-friendly [is hard]” (Interview #3). Grace felt perplexed by how to translate ideas about ability and race so that young children could comprehend. As Sydney reflected on video footage from shared book reading during Phase #2, she pointed out how keeping conversations about ability and race concrete seemed to prevent the group from engaging in topics at a deeper level, yet she did not know how to facilitate a more in-depth conversation:

They understood that they were all [different] ... They had different hair color and they had different heights, but they all liked blocks, and they all liked center time ... I felt like they understood, the surface level of, "Yeah, we're different," but what it really means to have those differences and what those differences come with, which is my fault. I did not go in-depth, but I just really did not know how to ... (Interview #3).

Additionally, when Cora revisited her Critical Conversations Journey Map, she drew a continuum of concepts, which she imagined gradually addressing through conversation with children (continuum progresses from left to right; see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Cora's Critical Conversations Journey Map, Interview #3.



Cora explained her map this way: “They're at the age where, concepts they can't, feel, or touch are a little bit more difficult to grasp. So starting out with [concrete conversations] and then building upon that as you go throughout school I guess” (Interview #3). From Cora's point of view, talking about abstract concepts like “inclusion” and “acceptance” would be difficult for young children. Thus, based on their interpretation that keeping conversations concrete meant focusing on observable similarities and differences, and that this was best for children's learning, pre-service teachers felt challenged to talk about ability and race with children.

**Managing group behavior.** Besides the dilemma of keeping conversations concrete, pre-service teachers also felt generally inexperienced with managing group behavior, which made it

tough to facilitate conversations about ability and race during shared book reading. When Maddie described her feelings about reading to a group, she shared, “I’m always worried that something is gonna happen. So yeah, [I’m] just working on being comfortable with reading, especially to a big group. I haven’t read to a [group] bigger than five kids” (Interview #3). Maddie was building confidence in managing a group, which made talking about ability and race hard. As Grace reflected on a video clip in which children were “meowing” like cats, she stated, “Well, I think it would have been a lot easier if everyone was being serious about it” (Interview #3). Similarly, Cora explained, “It was challenging to keep their attention” (Interview #3). For pre-service teachers in this study, learning how to manage a small group added to the difficulty of talking with children about ability and race during shared book reading.

***Responding in the moment.*** Another conundrum pre-service teacher participants faced with regards to talking about ability and race during shared book reading was not knowing how to respond to children’s questions and comments in the moment. After reviewing video of her group revisiting *Bein’ with You This Way* during Phase #2 (in which CHILD7 asserted that “100 people have white skin”), Sydney reflected, “I just did not know where to go from there, obviously, which is why I was just like [looking at you as if to say], ‘Okay, a little help?’” (Interview #3). In a similar fashion, Maddie also described feeling at a loss for a way to build on children’s responses. After reviewing video of Maddie reading *The Amazing Erik* during Phase #2, Maddie reflected:

MADDIE: I didn't know how to just say ... Because when CHILD5 mentioned, "I was in a stroller," I was like, I didn't know what to do. I really had no idea.

MAGGIE: Yeah. Can you say more about what made you uncomfortable about her saying that?

MADDIE: Probably because I didn't want her to think that only ... Because she was comparing it to the baby thing. And I didn't know how to ... say pointblank, "He's not a baby, he is just in a wheelchair because he can't use his legs or he can't walk" or whatever. I think that made me most uncomfortable and not confident in what I was gonna say next (Interview #3).

Additionally, pre-service teachers felt overwhelmed by the possibility that they would not know how to answer a child's question. In Grace's words:

"It just all goes back to not knowing the questions they're gonna ask and so not being able to prepare to respond, and that's something that makes me nervous because kids say whatever they wanna say and it's hard to have time to think about a response, and give them a good response without making it look like it's taking too much effort for you to think about something" (Interview #2).

For Grace, not only was she concerned about not knowing how to respond to children's questions, she also did not want children to perceive her as lacking expertise. Across cases, pre-service teacher participants expressed concerns about knowing how to respond to children's questions and comments in the moment, which could explain the limited opportunities they provided children to talk.

***Talking about unfairness.*** Finally, pre-service teachers and I talked about the extent to which unfairness should enter conversations about ability and race with young children during shared book reading. For example, Grace explained her opinion that talking about unfairness could perpetuate stereotypes, "I'm not sure I would talk about it with preschoolers, 'cause I think that just gets a lot of gears turning that you don't necessarily need to be turning at that point ... they can start having ideas that [unfairness based on ability or race] is the way that it is, and

that's the way it should be" (Interview #3). In these conversations, I often offered an alternative perspective, and pre-service teachers vacillated on their opinions. The following transcript excerpt illustrates a conversation Cora and I had about the idea of keeping children innocent:

CORA: I feel like some people argue that they're young, don't burden them with things that they don't need to be exposed to yet, but at the same time, they're gonna have to be exposed to it some time...

MAGGIE: Yeah. And I think that, from my perspective, that message that we should keep children innocent, that's a very privileged position, right? In your family, you knew about disability from the day you were [born]... And children of color are experiencing implicit negative messages about race all the time, so I think again, back to this idea of normalcy and white able-bodied folks...that's a message [saying that] "We wanna keep white able-bodied children innocent", you know what I mean?

CORA: Yeah, yeah. [chuckle]

MAGGIE: And that doesn't seem [right]...

CORA: Yeah, no, I agree with that (Interview #3).

Moreover, as Sydney reflected on her practice, she wondered how to support children's social consciousness while simultaneously affirming their identities. Through our dialogue, she began to see that talking about unfairness could be a way to help children to see themselves as change agents. Sydney and I discussed the challenges of naming unfairness this way:

SYDNEY: Their skin color really shouldn't matter. And I would never want my students to think, "Oh well, my skin's this color and I'm not White, so I can't do this." But there's so many ways to go about it.

MAGGIE: Right. It's like you want to empower students to be able to have the tools to recognize unfairness and that unfairness hurts, and also support them to develop a positive identity.

SYDNEY: Is there a way to talk about it but then also be like, it doesn't have to be unfair? Or is that...

MAGGIE: Yeah. You can say that for sure (Interview #3).

Yet, not all pre-service teachers took Sydney's perspective. As demonstrated by the quotes in this section, across cases, pre-service teacher participants grappled with the extent to which talking about unfairness with children would be constructive.

**Case differences.** While all pre-service teachers mentioned the difficulty of responding to children's comments and questions in the moment during shared book reading, it is worth noting that Grace was especially concerned about answering young children's question, which she reiterated several times during Interview #3 in statements such as "Like I said, kids say whatever is on their mind and so you just have to be prepared for that" and, "The most difficult part is after you talk about it and they have questions and being able to answer those." While I shared strategies I used in my own classroom to handle tough questions (i.e., acknowledge when a child asks an important question, explain that I'm not sure I know the answer and need some time to think about it, ask the other children what they think), these suggestions did not seem to reassure Grace. Interestingly, Grace made very little change in her shared book reading practice from Phase #1 to Phase #2, relying on the book to guide the conversation and asking minimal questions. For Grace, one reason sharing discursive power with children was difficult was due to the possibility that she might not know how to respond to children's questions.

**Summary.** Co-analyses of discursive interactions led pre-service teachers to consider young children's conceptualizations of ability and race. As we analyzed transcripts from child interviews and shared book reading data together, pre-service teachers recognized the need to talk about ability and race with young children. Through this process, pre-service teachers were beginning to reflect on and transform their knowledge and beliefs. At the same time, pre-service teachers discussed how difficult it was to initiate and continue to discuss these topics with children.

### **“Learning Along the Way” (Theme #6)**

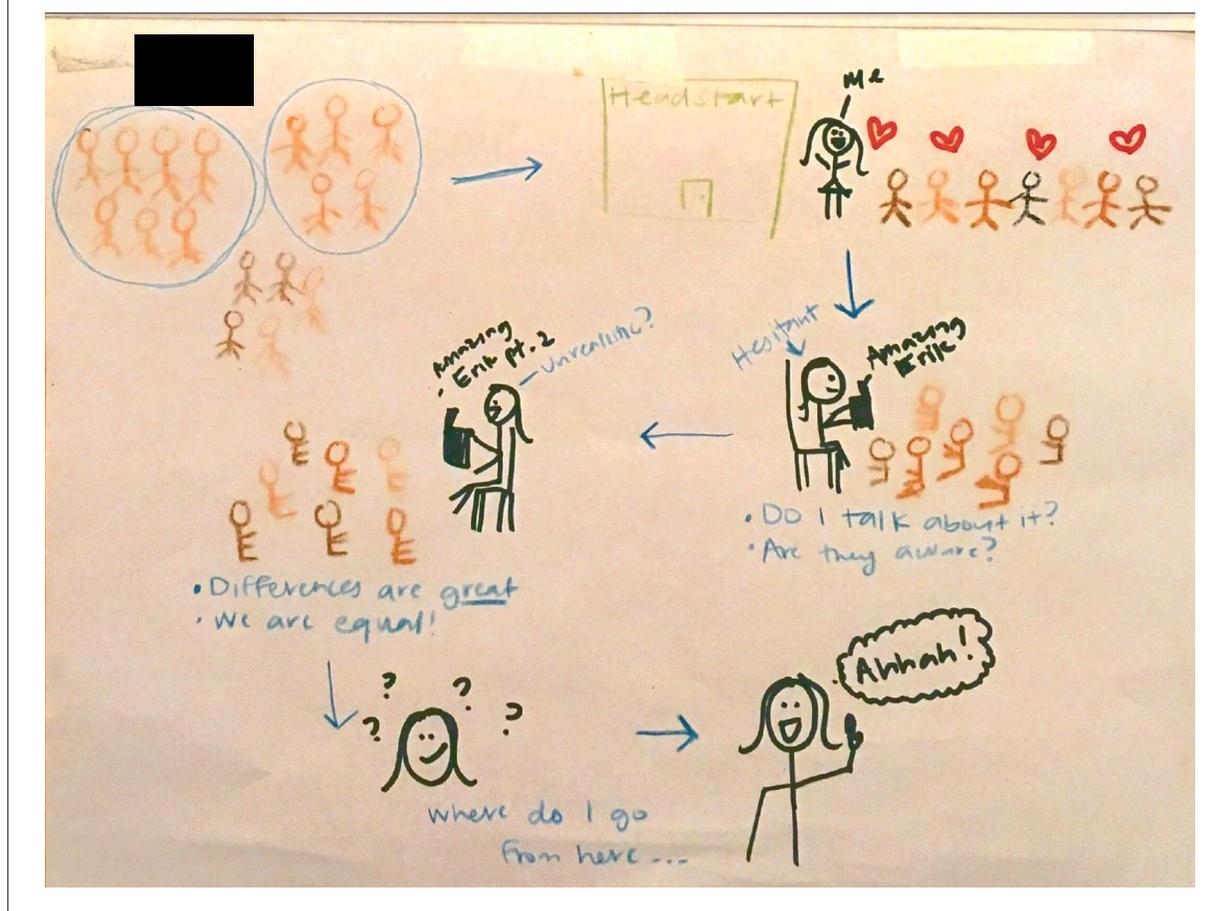
Despite the challenges with engaging in talk about ability and race with young children, as they analyzed discursive interactions preservice teacher participants saw opportunities to continue learning how to talk about ability and race with young children. Indeed, during Interview #3, Maddie explained: “I’m just learning along the way.” For pre-service teacher participants, engaging in the learning process included considering books as a starting point, engaging in ongoing reflection, and having opportunities to practice. In the following sections, I describe these results in more detail.

**Considering books as a starting point.** Across cases, pre-service teachers noted the utility of books as a way to begin conversations with young children about ability and race. As Maddie reflected on her experience participating in the study, she said, “This kind of sounds silly, but I wouldn't have thought to use a book [to talk about ability ad race with children]. So that will be something that I can look out for later on (Interview #3). For Maddie, co-analyzing shared book reading data made her realize that books can be a useful tool to begin conversations with young children about these topics, something she intended to continue in her future practice. Similarly, Grace expressed new awareness about possibilities for conversation with books: “I

think [I'm] just realizing that picture books are a lot more in depth than you might originally think" (Interview #3). By reflecting on her shared book reading practice with me, Grace became more aware of how picture books can be used to complicate superficial definitions of ability and race. Moreover, Cora explained how "starting out [with] the story books" was a useful way to ground conversation, "because that gives them [children] something to go off of" (Interview #3). Sydney also shared this perspective, explaining, "I think books are a really good starting point 'cause...had I not had the book with the character in the wheelchair, I would be like, 'So what do you guys think about wheelchairs?' But I had this visual and this character [instead]" (Interview #3). Indeed, as Sydney explained, the books provided pre-service teachers with a place to begin what they perceived as difficult conversations. Across cases, reflecting on their shared book reading data led pre-service teachers to see books as an important tool for initiating conversations about ability and race with young children.

**Engaging in ongoing reflection.** In general, pre-service teachers felt that reflecting on their discursive practices (e.g., participation structure, content of talk) was important for their practice related to talking about ability and race during shared book reading. For example, when Sydney revisited her Critical Conversations Journey Map in Interview #3, she added her journey through the study, including her process of reflection which can be seen in the questions she wrote in blue: "Do I talk about it?"; "Unrealistic?"; and "Where do I go from here..." (see Figure 17). When I asked Sydney to expand on what she had drawn, she reflected, "I need to take note of like, 'Okay, this worked. This didn't work'...And I will find new ways to talk about it" (Interview #3). Sydney's map and associated discussion illustrate how pre-service teachers were beginning to think about reflection on talk about ability and race as a meaningful way to support their future teaching.

Figure 17. Sydney's Critical Conversations Journey Map, Interview #3.



Maddie shared a similar perspective, noting the importance of questioning herself by, "...Thinking back, 'Oh why did I say that?' Or 'Why didn't I say that? What could I have said the next time?' ...So I can go back and do that" (Interview #3). By asking questions of themselves, pre-service teachers saw opportunities to continue learning how to talk about ability and race with young children. Across cases, pre-service teachers talked about the benefits of using video to engage in critical reflection. As Cora pointed out, without watching the video, "you don't know what it actually sounded like...I think it's very useful" (Interview #3). For pre-service teacher participants, co-analyzing video data (and seeing and hearing their own shared book reading practice) was a helpful metacognitive tool for reflection. Grace reiterated this point,

explaining, “I think [using video] is beneficial, because I can see the points that I’m having trouble with. Or, I can see the look on their faces, so I can see when they start paying attention more to the story, and then maybe try to focus in on that area [in the future]” (Interview #3). Through experiences co-analyzing their discursive interactions, pre-service teachers began to question their own practice, and noted how video is a useful tool to continue to reflexively analyze their practice.

**Having opportunities to practice.** Across cases, pre-service teachers discussed how they needed to get better at talking about ability and race with children, and that they would have to continue to learn through practice in their interactions with children. For instance, when I asked Cora what might help her talk about ability and race with young children she remarked, “I think just continuing to bring it up in conversation with kids through student teaching or different practicums, and just kind of feeling it out for how they [children] respond” (Interview #3). Like Cora, continuing to practice initiating and engaging on ongoing conversations about ability and race with children was a goal all pre-service teacher participants in this study mentioned. Grace discussed how revisiting a book multiple times could be helpful in expanding conversations about ability and race with young children, “I feel like, if I took the book, and did [revisited] it every day for a week, we would get really far” (Interview #3). Across cases, pre-service teachers suggested that the opportunities to practice conversations about ability and race in the study were not enough for them to feel confident. Sydney illuminated this point when she said, “I think experiences are definitely gonna help. Just having conversations with students and seeing how they react to them...it's gonna be as I go” (Interview #3). Thus, to continue learning how to facilitate ability and race talk with young children, pre-service teachers felt that they needed more opportunities to practice.

**Case differences.** In addition to the strategies for learning to talk about ability and race with young children pre-service teachers mentioned above (i.e., using a book as a starting point, reflection, practice), Maddie offered an additional perspective. After co-analyzing talk about ability and race during shared book reading, Maddie added, “It’s okay to be uncomfortable” to her Critical Conversations Journey Map in Interview #3 (see Figure 14). As she explained this section of her map to me, Maddie said, “And [asking myself] if it's uncomfortable, why is it uncomfortable? Because we don't talk about it enough? Or because I don't know enough about it? I don't know. But that's something that I think is a benefit coming from out of this, reading to kids” (Interview #3). Through this comment, Maddie demonstrated a unique perspective on reflection in this study. Not only was Maddie using reflection to question her practice, but she was beginning to question her own knowledge and beliefs by interrogating what was making her uncomfortable.

**Summary.** Co-analyzing discursive interactions led pre-service teachers to see talking about ability and race with young children as an ongoing learning process, and they contemplated strategies that would support them in continuing this process, including considering books as a starting point, engaging in ongoing reflection, and having opportunities to practice. Therefore, even as pre-service teachers felt challenged by the conversations they had with children throughout the study, reflecting on ability and race talk allowed them to see new possibilities for their future practice.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented results in three parts. First, the results addressed how pre-service teachers and young children co-constructed identities while reading books about ability and race were presented in terms of participation structure and topic negotiation. Across cases

and study phases, pre-service teachers contributed much of the talk, and managed participation by asking display questions. By asking more follow-up questions during Phase #2, pre-service teachers created more opportunities for children to contribute to the conversation, although children's comments were still highly regulated. When topics of ability and race were discussed, pre-service teachers constructed themselves as experts, focused on naming physical differences, and emphasized universal sameness. In doing so, pre-service teachers conveyed the notion that individual differences of ability and race are neutral and did not engage in conversations about the consequences of ability and race in children's lives. Some unique features were also noted within these themes, such as the low percentage of child utterances in Grace's case, CHIL8's strategies of resistance in Sydney's case, and the varied ways pre-service teachers extended topics with children during Phase #2.

Next, results about how pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediated ways they talked about ability and race with young children were discussed. Across cases, pre-service teachers had few early educational experiences talking about ability and race, while simultaneously observing spatial boundaries that reinforced differences in terms of ability and race. In their blended EC/ECSE teacher preparation program, pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of a traditional conception of inclusion (i.e., supporting children with and without disabilities in the same classroom). However, through coursework, pre-service teacher participants described few experiences thinking or talking about race with their peers, and no experiences talking about ability as a socially constructed identity marker. Furthermore, mentor teachers rarely engaged in conversations about these identity markers with young children; when conversations occurred they focused on pointing out physical differences. While pre-service teachers had some working knowledge of shared book reading, their understanding of this

practice was limited. At the same time, mentor teachers' shared book reading practices focused on targeting explicit literacy skills. Given what they gleaned from their early educational experiences, experiences in university coursework, and fieldwork, pre-service teachers had few means by which to enter critical conversations about ability and race with young children during shared book reading. Based on the experiences they described with educators' silence about ability and race, pre-service teachers had few critical tools to question these socially constructed divisions.

The chapter concluded with results related to how pre-service teacher and researcher co-analyses of discursive interactions impacted ways pre-service teachers reflected on and transformed their practices. Co-analyses of discursive interactions led pre-service teachers to consider young children's conceptualizations of ability and race, and pre-service teachers recognized the need to talk about ability and race with young children. While pre-service teachers were beginning to reflect on and transform their knowledge and beliefs, they discussed how difficult it was to bring up and sustain talk about these topics with children. Co-analyzing discursive interactions also led pre-service teachers to see talking about ability and race with young children as an ongoing learning process, and they discussed strategies that would support them in continuing this process. Therefore, even as pre-service teachers felt challenged by the conversations they had with children throughout the study, reflecting on ability and race talk allowed them to see new possibilities for their future practice.

In the following and final chapter, these results are placed in conversation with the extant literature on talking with young children about ability and race, and implications for future research and practice are discussed.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to better understand how pre-service teachers constructed identities and transformed their practice as they facilitated dialogue about ability and race with young children during shared-book reading. Grounding the study in a humanizing stance (Paris, 2011), in which researcher-participant relationships were built through dignity, care, and dialogic consciousness-raising, has proven a valuable and respectful model of research for understanding pre-service teachers' discursive practices related to ability and race. By partnering with pre-service teachers, and honoring their knowledge, feelings, and experiences surrounding the complexity of this work, I learned a great deal from future early childhood teachers. Further, conceptualizing this project through sociocultural theory (de Valenzuela, 2013; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978), discourse theory (Alim, 2005; Gee, 2014; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Rogers, 2011), and DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013), allowed me to examine how meaning about ability and race was made during shared-book reading, with attention to how EC/ECSE pre-service teachers influenced, and were influenced by, discursive practices and mediating tools in sociopolitical contexts.

This study was possible only because of collaborative relationships with Early Childhood faculty at Northwestern University, Children's Campus and Head Start programs that participated in the study, the six mentor teachers in these programs, the twenty-two children who allowed me to video-record and ask them questions, and in particular because of extended collaboration with the four pre-service teachers who are learning to become EC/ECSE educators. Spending time in these early childhood classrooms, talking at length with the pre-service and mentor teachers, and learning from the children, has been an honor and a privilege. Readers should keep in mind the affordances and limitations of a study focused so intensely on four cases when reading the

discussion below; although there are certainly implications for other teacher education programs, it is also necessary to keep sight of the specificity of the results and the contexts in which they have been recorded. In this chapter, I first consider results from the study that address my three research questions, placing these results in conversation with the literature reviewed on supporting pre-service teachers to talk with young children about ability and race (Chapter 2). Next, the chapter offers implications for teacher education. The chapter concludes with discussion of strengths and limitations of the current study, as well as directions for future research.

### **Classroom Talk about Ability and Race**

This study began by asking: *How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct identities about ability and race during shared-book readings?* In this study, as pre-service teachers facilitated talk about identity markers (i.e., ability, race) during shared book reading with young children, they controlled participation through the use of display questions, interchangeably invoking ideologies of individualism and universalism. This allowed pre-service teachers to construct themselves as experts about these identity markers (i.e., ability, race), without talking about inherent power or structural inequities. As a result, children had few opportunities to contribute their own ideas about these identity markers, including the extent to which children understood their own identities in terms of ability and race. This result is consistent with prior research and extends existing knowledge in several ways, which I discuss in the following two sections.

#### **Controlling Participation**

Across cases and throughout the study, pre-service teachers led participation structures that controlled the amount of child talk and ways children could contribute to talk. The

participation structure that pre-service teachers carried out (see Figure 7 and Figure 8) was highly consistent with the extant literature on classroom talk routines. When children contributed to the talk, teachers and children typically followed what previous research has described as an “I-R-F” (i.e., Initiate-Response-Follow-up) participation structure. In the existing literature, an I-R-F structure involves a teacher initiating a topic, sometimes as a display question as a bid to children for a “known answer” (Cazden & Beck, 2003; Gratier, Greenfield & Isaac, 2007; Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Heath, 1983; Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Mehan, 1998; Mercer & Dawes, 2014).

In the present study, though children had more opportunities to talk during the second round of shared-book reading, children’s comments were still highly regulated by pre-service teachers’ use of multiple display questions. In other words, pre-service teachers’ display questions regulated children’s responses, which were then evaluated by the pre-service teacher. Through this process, pre-service teachers were socially constructed as expert. Pre-service teachers’ use of display questions to control participation and construct themselves as experts is also consistent with prior research on shared book reading, which demonstrated that teachers initiated rigid participation structures by dominating the talk, limiting children’s opportunities to speak, and emphasizing mechanical aspects of the text (Dombey, 2003). Further, these results are commensurate with prior research on classroom talk which demonstrated how participation structures led to the discursive positioning of teacher as expert (Moje, 1997).

Beyond alignment with literature on participation structures, one contribution of this study is to demonstrate ways pre-service teachers managed talk about ability and race during shared book reading. Scholars suggest using classroom literature to help children develop understanding and appreciation for ability differences (e.g., de Boer, Pijl, Post, & Minnaert,

2013; Meyer & Ostrosky, 2016; Nasatir & Horn, 2003) and racial differences (e.g., Farago et al., 2015; Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007; Xiao, Fu, Quinn, Qin, Tanaka, Pascalis, & Lee, 2014). Yet, few studies have examined ability and race talk during shared book reading with young children (Kuby, 2013a; Labadie et al., 2012; Souto-Manning, 2009). Further, no studies to date have examined ability and race talk during shared book reading between pre-service teachers and young children. The literature base demonstrates the potential for rich and meaningful interactions between teachers and young children during shared book reading (Labadie et al., 2012; Lennox, 2013; Pantaleo, 2007; Pentimonti & Justice, 2010; Massey, 2004; Oyler, 1996; Vasquez et al., 2013; Wiseman, 2011), for example through open-ended questioning, allowing children to test theories about the text, or pausing for children to contribute multiple interpretations of the text. In the current study, while reading books about identity markers (i.e., ability, race), pre-service teachers' use of display questions limited the extent to which children could actively investigate the text through talk, ask questions, initiate conversational topics, or verbally respond to one another. Thus, the current study offers insight into the quality of interactions between pre-service teachers and children during shared book reading, and deepens understanding about classroom talk when book topics focus on identity markers (i.e., ability, race).

### **Invoking Individualism and Universalism**

A second contribution of this study is to illustrate how ideologies of ableism and racism collude through classroom talk. As pre-service teachers facilitated talk about ability and race during Phase #2 of this study, they appealed to concepts of individualism and universalism by focusing on naming individual differences, and emphasizing universal sameness. Centering children's attention on these topics conveyed a perspective that identity markers (i.e., ability,

race) are neutral. In doing so, pre-service teachers circumvented any talk about structural inequity or the consequences of identity construction (i.e., ability, race) in children's lives. This result relates to previous research investigating how ableism and racism are accomplished through discourse. Existing literature demonstrates how disability discourse typically occurs through discussion of "disability-as-individual-problem" to be corrected, in combination with the view of disability identity as ahistorical, apolitical, and asocial (Goodley, 2014; Reid & Knight, 2006; Titchkosky, 2007). Research has also demonstrated how discursive avoidance of direct racial language (Annamma, Jackson, & Morrison, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2010) in combination with rhetorical strategies such as downplaying racial differences and emphasizing sameness (DiAngelo, 2011; Haviland, 2008; Pollock, 2004) has led to power evasiveness (i.e., discursively pacifying inequity by acknowledging difference only when it does not entail acknowledging power; Frankenberg, 1993). While previous research has separately examined the discursive construction of disability or race, this study demonstrates similarities between ability and race talk. In the present study, pre-service teachers' alternating use of individualism and universalism in classroom talk worked in tandem to evade power, and normalize a White, able-bodied experience. DisCrit emphasizes how ableism and racism interconnect as they maintain conceptions of normalcy through neutralized and invisible processes (Annamma et al., 2013). Framed by DisCrit, this study deepens current understandings about the intersections of ableism and racism in the context of classroom talk about ability and race during shared book reading.

### **Pre-service Teachers' Identities and Experiences**

In this section I discuss results of this study's second research question (i.e., *How do pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?*) in relation to existing literature. In this study, pre-service teacher

participants' identities (i.e., White, able-bodied) and experiences (i.e., silence about ability and race in school) reinforced a White, able-bodied norm. Pre-service teachers' identities and experiences mediated their developing practice by providing them with very few critical tools by which to enter conversation about ability and race with young children. As they were learning what it means to be an inclusive EC/ECSE teacher and participating in their first formal experience in a teaching role, pre-service teacher participants were gaining initial experiences organizing learning experiences for young children. Given their role as developing teachers, and without tools to engage in conversation, pre-service teachers felt uncomfortable and did not know how to engage in ability or race talk with young children. This result is consistent with several studies which have demonstrated that pre-service teachers may feel uncomfortable talking about both ability and race (Martin & Williams-Dixon, 1994; Pennington, 2007; Peters & Reid, 2009). This study extends existing literature on pre-service teachers' discomfort with talking about ability and race, documenting how four White, able-bodied EC/ECSE pre-service teachers' educational experiences with silence about ability and race, as well as their understandings of shared book reading practices, added to challenges discussing ability and race in their own practice.

### **Experiences Talking about Ability and Race**

Across cases, pre-service teachers reported having limited early educational experiences talking about ability and race, while simultaneously observing spatial boundaries (e.g., self-contained special education classrooms, school zoning) that normalized unequal treatment of peers based on ability and race. During their early educational experiences, these four pre-service teachers' identities (i.e., White, able-bodied) were centered in schools. Without talk about identity markers in their early educations, pre-service teacher participants' conceptions of ability

and race remained unquestioned. As a result, these pre-service teachers' identities and early educational experiences mediated their practice, contributing to their difficulty engaging in critical dialogue about ability and race with young children in their fieldwork placements. This result is consistent with prior research that has demonstrated how pre-service teachers' interactions with former teachers influenced their beliefs about educational practices (Aldemir & Sezer, 2008; Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Flores & Day, 2006; Luehmann, 2007; Walkington, 2005). In the present study, pre-service teachers described how they learned to avoid critical conversations about identity markers (i.e., ability, race) as P-12 students in schools, which they continued to practice in their fieldwork sites.

As juniors in a blended EC/ECSE teacher preparation program, these four pre-service teachers reported few previous course experiences that they felt challenged their previously learned ideas about ability and race. These results affirm prior research on the influence of teacher preparation programs on pre-service teachers' knowledge and beliefs about educational practices (e.g., Fults & Harry, 2012; Strong-Wilson et al., 2014). Up until the point of the study, pre-service teacher participants stated that a stand-alone multicultural education course was their first and only formal introduction to the idea of systemic racism, the content of which pre-service teachers felt created unnecessary tension and was impractical. This result is similar to course structures in many teacher education programs, in which diversity courses are offered as stand-alone experiences (He & Cooper, 2009; Sleeter, 2001; Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008), a program design which compartmentalizes aspects diversity (i.e., race/ethnicity, ability, language) through an additive model (Correa, Alvarez McHatton, McCray, & Baughan, 2014), and requires pre-service teachers to synthesize and apply ideas about diversity to their practice. Indeed, DiAngelo (2011) indicated that a single required multicultural education course often falls short in the

advancement of social justice and educational equity because, for many White students, this is the first and only time their racial understandings are directly challenged. As a result, pre-service teachers frequently respond to learning about racial inequity with feelings such as anger, withdrawal, defensiveness, or argumentation (Matias, 2014), which impedes their capacity to sustain conscious engagement with race. In the current study, a stand-alone multicultural course was not enough to support these four White pre-service teachers' capacity to engage in conversations about race that could advance social justice. While it is possible that issues of race were addressed in other coursework to some degree, the content of these courses was not memorable for these four pre-service teachers.

In their blended EC/ECSE preparation program, pre-service teachers expressed they were learning important practices to include children with and without disabilities (i.e., positive behavior supports, differentiating instruction, developing IEPs). On the whole, pre-service teachers in this study shared a developing commitment to a traditional definition of inclusion (i.e., supporting all children with and without disabilities in early childhood settings). At the same time, these pre-service teachers reported no course experiences critically discussing the social construction of disability or ideologies of ableism. While it is possible that these topics were embedded in pre-service teachers' previous coursework, these were not mentioned by pre-service teachers. Thus, course instruction also mediated their practice, as these pre-service teachers enacted what they had learned about ability in their conversations with children.

This result adds to the existing research on talk about ability in teacher preparation programs. Existing literature documents how silence in teacher preparation programs about conceptions of normalcy, disability oppression, and ability-based segregation can allow ableism to remain unexamined (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008; Ferri & Bacon, 2011;

Lalvani, Broderick, Fine, Jacobowitz, & Michelli, 2015). Yet helping pre-service teachers see the problems with disability labeling is complicated, as they are simultaneously being prepared to enter a system in which access to services for young children and families is dependent on a disability label. Moreover, programs that challenge the discourses and practices of schooling for students with disability labels may make students feel uncomfortable, particularly based on their own recent P-12 experiences (Ashby, 2011). For pre-service teachers in this study, their assumptions about disability and special education, in combination with their perceptions of limited coursework examining links between inclusive education, democratic schooling, and equitable societies, made talking about ability with young children challenging and uncomfortable.

### **Understandings of Shared Book Reading Practices**

Pre-service teachers' understandings of shared book reading practices also mediated how they engaged in ability and race talk in this study. Pre-service teacher participants reported taking literacy coursework and receiving instruction on shared book reading, and felt that it was important to ask children questions during shared book reading. However, as they entered and continued in their fieldwork experiences, these four pre-service teachers believed questions for shared book reading should be pre-planned to advance story recall. While this can be an effective teaching strategy, so too can a variety of additional teaching and learning interactions during shared book reading (e.g., asking questions to help children make connections, inviting children to share their own background knowledge, encouraging children to question the text, engaging in conversation beyond the text; Cabell et al., 2008; Whitehurst et al., 1994; Wiseman, 2011). Consequently, pre-service teachers controlled child participation and asked display questions that encouraged labeling, recall, and recitation, as opposed to a dialogue with children.

This result is consistent with research on the challenges of supporting teachers to engage in dialogic conversation with children. Through dialogic literacy instruction, teachers and children can act as collaborative co-inquirers, building off one another's comments through reciprocal exchanges and offering multiple interpretations of the text (Aukerman, 2012; Aukerman & Schuldt, 2016; Boyd & Markarian, 2015). Yet true dialogic instruction can be difficult for teachers to facilitate (Alexander, 2008; Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003; Smith, Hardman, Wall, & Mroz, 2004). In fact, despite its potential for supporting children's skills with reasoning, making inferences, and conceptual understanding (e.g., Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Murphy, Soter, Wilkinson, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009; Reznitskaya et al., 2009), teachers often engage in question-answer discussion which limits the extent to which children can engage in deeper conversation and expansive thinking (Nystrand et al., 2003; Reznitskaya, 2013). In the current study, pre-service teacher's understandings of how to enact shared book reading impeded the extent to which they engaged in open, in-depth exchanges with children.

Additionally, in their fieldwork classrooms, mentor teachers' shared book reading practices likely reinforced these ideas. According to mentor teacher and pre-service teacher participants, mentor teachers focused on targeting explicit literacy skills as opposed to engaging in dialogic or critical conversation. In in their fieldwork sites, participants said mentor teachers modeled shared book reading routines that emphasized discrete literacy skill acquisition, and pre-service teachers were apprenticed into this practice. This result is consistent with previous literature highlighting the importance of fieldwork experiences in pre-service teachers' development of diversity-related practices (Correa et al., 2014; Hanline, 2010; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Further, mentor teachers' focus on literacy skills resonates with results from my

pilot study (Beneke & Cheatham, in press) in which an emphasis on literacy skills during shared book reading superseded teachers' facilitation of critical thinking or dialogic meaning-making. In addition, existing literature documents the increased pressures early educators face to ensure children are equipped with language and literacy skills (Brown & Weber, 2016; Lennox, 2013; McGill-Franzen et al., 2002). In a context of accountability, it not surprising that mentor teachers focused on literacy skills during shared book reading.

Given their early educational experiences, experiences in university coursework, and fieldwork, pre-service teachers had few means by which to enter and sustain critical conversation about ability and race with young children during shared book reading. Through their educational journeys, pre-service teacher participants learned that talking about identity markers was not important and they reported having few critical tools to question these socially constructed divisions based on ability and race.

### **The Contribution of Co-Analyzing Discursive Interactions**

In this section, I discuss results and literature relating to the final research question: *How does pre-service teacher and research co-analyses of discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?* In this study, co-analyses of discursive interactions contributed to pre-service teachers' recognition of the need for talk about ability and race with young children, and allowed them to see new possibilities for their future practice. However, as they revisited books with children, pre-service teachers struggled to facilitate critical conversations about ability and race. While pre-service teachers invited more talk about ability and race based on our co-analyses from one phase of book reading to the next, they controlled conversation by constructing themselves as experts, focusing on naming physical

differences, and emphasizing universal sameness. Through this process, pre-service teachers engaged in neutralizing discourses and evaded issues of power related to ability and race.

This result adds to existing literature on the challenges with supporting pre-service teachers to develop practices grounded in equity, inclusion, and social justice. Scholars advocate that teachers introduce young children to ideas of unfairness and bias early on (Barrier-Ferreira, 2008; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Nieto, 2005), and encourage children to wrestle with diversity as they conceptualize what it means to be a citizen and take social action (Araujo & Strasser, 2003; Banks & Banks, 2016). Yet research also demonstrates the complexity involved in supporting pre-service teachers to take this stance (Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, & Sonu, 2010; Borrero, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2011; Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Terrell, Barnatt, & McQuillan, 2009; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Supporting White, able-bodied pre-service teachers to critically interrogate ableism and racism involves ongoing coursework and field experiences to scaffold shifts in their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (e.g., Brown, Vesely, & Dallman, 2016; Chen et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2008; Nganga, 2015; Sauer & Kasa, 2012; Villegas, 2007). In the present study, the limited opportunities (i.e., three interviews) pre-service teachers had to co-analyze their practice with me was simply not enough time to counter the silence they had experienced up until the point of their study participation.

At the same time, by viewing and discussing video data of shared book reading with me, pre-service teachers began to critically reflect on their current practice and conceptualize future action related to talk about ability and race. This result affirms prior research on the utility of using video to analyze discursive interactions and promote teacher reflection (Roth, 2007; Sherin & Van Es, 2005; Tochon, 2007; Tripp & Rich, 2012; Van Es & Sherin, 2002). In EC/ECSE contexts, video-recording teaching practices has been found to be a useful professional

development tool to promote reflection and transform practice (e.g., Cherrington & Loveridge, 2014; Durand, Hopf, & Nunnenmacher, 2016; La Paro, Maynard, Thomason, & Scott-Little, 2012; Pianta et al., 2014). However, only one study was identified documenting the potential of using video to support early childhood pre-service teachers' critical language awareness related to race (Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). Thus, the present study adds to the current literature on using video to support early childhood pre-service teachers' critical language awareness regarding both ability and race.

Importantly, in this study, taking a humanizing approach (Paris, 2011; Paris & Winn, 2014) supported our co-analyses of ability and race talk. Pre-service teachers were able to critically reflect on their knowledge, beliefs, and practices because we built and maintained relationships of mutual trust. A humanizing approach lent itself to incorporating mapping (Annamma, 2017; Futch, 2014; Futch & Fine, 2013; Katsiaficas, Alcantar, Hernandez, Samayoa, Gutierrez, Taxis, & Williams, 2016; Ruglis, 2011; Sirin & Fine, 2007). By including a mapping component in this study, our co-analyses of ability and race talk occurred in the context of a dialogue about our individual histories and identities. The present study adds to the existing literature, deepening understanding about how taking a humanizing approach to co-analyzing video can support pre-service teachers' critical reflection on ability and race talk with children.

Further, co-analyzing child interview transcripts encouraged pre-service teachers to ask new questions about young children's conceptualizations of ability and race as they considered their future practice. Not only did pre-service teachers draw on their own experiences and reflections to plan instruction, they also considered children's comments and ideas. By documenting children's comments and reflecting on them together with me, pre-service teachers became more aware of how children were actively constructing meaning about ability and race.

Listening closely to young children and documenting their understandings to challenge assumptions about their capabilities is an approach that scholars in the field of early childhood have written about at length (Bowne, Cutler, DeBates, Gilkerson, & Stremmel, 2012; Clark & Moss, 2011; Cox Suárez, 2014; Cox Suárez & Kuh, 2014; Given, Kuh, LeeKeenan, Mardell, Redditt, & Twombly, 2009; Krechevsky, Mardell, & Romans, 2014; Krechevsky, Mardell, Rivard, & Wilson, 2013; Moss, 2007). However, there is scant literature on how documenting and reflecting on young children's ideas about ability and race might support practice (Kuh, LeeKeenan, Given, & Beneke, 2016). The present study provides a beginning look at how listening to children's conversations about ability and race can be useful for pre-service teachers in examining their own beliefs about children's capabilities, as well as their future practices.

### **Implications for Teacher Education**

In sum, this study builds on the current literature base by affirming previous research on classroom ability and race talk, the mediating role of pre-service teachers' identities and experiences, and the impact of co-analyzing discursive interactions. Furthermore, the study results indicate the connections between discourse about ability and race, including the silence pre-service teachers reported experiencing in their educational trajectories and the discursive patterns pre-service teachers employed during shared book reading. Based on these results, implications for EC/ECSE teacher education include integration of the following ideas and approaches: (a) expanded definition of inclusive education; (b) critical literacy and language awareness; and (c) university-school partnerships.

### **Expanded Definition of Inclusive Education**

First, an implication from this study is to integrate an expanded definition of inclusive education into blended EC/ECSE teacher preparation programs to support pre-service teachers

with talking about ability and race. As discussed in Chapter 1, the term “inclusion” carries multiple meanings, which add to the complexity of preparing high quality early childhood educators. Drawing on a traditional definition of inclusion (i.e., promoting access, participation, and supports for all young children in early childhood settings; Division for Early Childhood & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009), EC/ECSE programs have been developed to support teacher candidates in learning to gain dual licensure to support children with diverse abilities in classrooms (Pugach, Blanton & Correa, 2011). These programs are important in preparing pre-service teachers to provide children with access to instruction and social opportunities through thoughtful accommodations and supports. At the same time, scholars in the fields of special education and disability studies (e.g., Allen, 2003; Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011; Kozleski & Waitoller, 2010; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013), conceptualize inclusive education as a social movement in response to the exclusion of children viewed as different (e.g., children with disabilities, children of color, children from low SES backgrounds) by educational systems. Taking an expanded inclusive education perspective in EC/ECSE teacher preparation programs means teacher educators can bring to light the underlying and potentially oppressive structures that organize the work of teaching and learning in early childhood. This perspective is also important for teacher education, in that it can support pre-service teachers in challenging their assumptions and practices that perpetuate deficit-based narratives about difference.

An implication from the present study is the opportunity to integrate these conceptions of inclusion into EC/ECSE teacher preparation. Pre-service teacher participants in this study reported learning practices that were grounded in a traditional view of inclusion through their teacher preparation program, with the aim of supporting all children in the classroom. An

expanded definition of inclusion also aims to support all children in the classroom (Ashby, 2011), by asking “Who does not have access and why do we think that is?” In the present study, four pre-service teacher participants had rarely considered their own participation in socially constructing identity markers (i.e., ability, race), or the consequences of this construction in children’s lives. Through their talk, as novice teachers, pre-service teachers limited children’s access to authentic meanings of ability and race (i.e., not addressing issues of inequity or children’s own experiences with ability/race). Such talk conveyed a perspective that identity markers (i.e., ability, race) are neutral, which may allow children to see exclusion of children based on these identity markers as normal and fair. An implication is that EC/ECSE teacher preparation programs can integrate an expanded definition of inclusive education throughout coursework to guide course activities on the social construction of ability and race and the pedagogical consequences in early childhood settings.

Several components of this study may be useful in enacting EC/ECSE teacher preparation grounded in an expanded definition of inclusive education. Critical Conversations Journey Maps (adapted from Annamma, 2017) used in this study allowed pre-service teachers to critically reflect on ways their own educational experiences influenced their understandings of ability and race, as well as their practice. By integrating an expanded definition of inclusive education into EC/ECSE teacher preparation, activities like mapping can allow pre-service teachers to analyze assumptions (i.e., values, perspectives, positions, biases, and limitations) that they have developed through their experiences in schools, family life, with the dominant culture, and with their own cultures. Teacher educators can scaffold conversations about these experiences, which may allow pre-service teachers to interrogate key assumptions about ability and race related to

inclusive practice (Ferri & Bacon, 2011; Kidd, Sanchez, & Thorp, 2008; Oyler, 2011a; Puig & Recchia, 2012), such as definitions of disability, equity, normalcy, and race.

Further, in this study, discussions with pre-service teachers about representations of ability and race in the media allowed for conversations about identity construction in a sociopolitical context. Teacher educators may utilize examples from media (i.e., TV characters, political campaigns, news reports, Twitter conversations) and invite pre-service teachers to discuss ways that children are viewed as different in comparison to an unspoken status quo (e.g., White, Euro-centric, able-bodied, English-speaking, heteronormative). Discussing the consequences of identity politics as they play out in the media can inform how pre-service teachers think about identity politics in the classroom. For instance, reviewing research and case studies regarding the consequences of exclusion in education in relation to identity markers (i.e., placement of children with disabilities in segregated settings, suspension and expulsion rates for young children of color) may support pre-service teachers' commitments to an expanded definition of inclusion.

Additionally, teacher educators integrating an expanded definition of inclusion may want to help pre-service teachers see themselves as practitioners committed to socially just schools and societies. Yet pre-service teachers will likely need practice knowing how to enter a community that does not share their pedagogical viewpoint. In this study, pre-service teachers reported many educational experiences in which ability and race were not discussed in depth: in their own early educational experiences, in coursework, and in their fieldwork sites. Pre-service teachers may need support recognizing that the future colleagues and families they will collaborate with may not share similar commitments to an expanded definition of inclusion. Teacher educators can help pre-service teachers recognize these tensions by collecting and

analyzing interactive discourse in educational settings (Ashby, 2011; Thorius, 2016). For instance, to help them recognize these tensions, pre-service teachers can observe in early childhood programs, with an eye toward the language that educators use to position children and/or families, and ways this language does or does not align with pre-service teachers' own conceptions of inclusion. Further, providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to dialogue with in-service teachers and families who have successfully built classroom communities from an expanded definition of inclusive education could allow pre-service teachers to begin thinking about strategies for navigating these tensions in their future practice.

### **Critical Literacy and Language Awareness**

A second implication from this study is for EC/ECSE teacher education programs to integrate aspects of critical literacy and critical language awareness into coursework. In this study, pre-service teachers struggled to open dialogue about ability and race with children during shared book reading. As novice teachers, this was due not only to their own lack of experience talking about ability and race, but also their limited understandings of shared book reading gained from coursework and their fieldwork placements up until this point in the program. Yet, during interviews with young children in these fieldwork classrooms, it was clear that children were actively constructing ideas about ability and race, and expressed both positive and negative affiliations with identity markers. Taken together, an implication that follows from these results is for teacher educators to rethink how they are preparing pre-service teachers to engage in dialogue with young children during shared book reading. Opportunities for pre-service teachers to critically reflect on their own discursive practices and engage in critical literacy may be useful.

As stated in Chapter 2, critical literacy is an inquiry approach to teaching and learning that sees language, text, and discourse structures as a central means to disrupt and transform

inequitable ideologies in educational contexts, and to imagine new ways of constructing the world (Gainer, 2013; Johnson & Vasudeven, 2012; Luke, 2012; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011). In EC/ECSE, taking a critical inquiry approach means recognizing that texts are never neutral, and creating curricular spaces in which children can enter into dialogue with texts to explore the politics of representation (Harwood, 2011; Kuby, 2013a; McIntyre, 1997; Vasquez & Felderman, 2013). By positioning children as critics of texts, teachers can see children as language users (as opposed to language recipients). This means recognizing children's capacity to wrestle with notions of fairness as they conceptualize what it means to be a citizen and take action toward social justice (Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013). Thus, a critical literacy approach could be beneficial for pre-service teachers in talking with young children about ability and race during shared book reading.

For pre-service teachers to take a critical literacy approach, pre-service teachers need to recognize the relationship between language use and ideologies in their own discursive practices. Teacher educators may consider drawing on the tools of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) to raise pre-service teachers' metalinguistic awareness, including recognition of the ideological processes that occur through language use (Alim, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 1993). In particular, co-analyzing classroom video data and transcripts has been useful in helping pre-service teachers to critically reflect on how participation structures, such as I-R-F, contribute to the construction of children's identities (Rumenapp, 2016), as well as teachers' and children's co-construction of racial ideologies (Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). In the present study, when pre-service teachers co-analyzed their classroom discursive interactions with me, they began to think more critically about the consequences of ability and race talk in EC/ECSE contexts. An implication from this study is for teacher educators to incorporate course activities and assignments that

allow pre-service teachers' to critically reflect on classroom video data and transcripts with others. Opportunities to reflect on the relationship between their own language use and oppressive ideologies may support pre-service teachers in taking a critical literacy approach.

Further, as an inquiry approach, critical literacy means planning literacy instruction based on observations of children's interactions, interests, and curiosities, and being responsive to social and cultural issues they encounter in their communities (Chafel, Flint, Hammel, & Pomeroy, 2007; Vasquez, 2008). Taking a critical literacy approach also means recognizing that young children are capable of talking about social justice and issues of equity when conversations are meaningful to them and impact their lives (Vasquez, 2014). In the present study, co-analyzing child interview data allowed pre-service teachers to consider children's perspectives about ability and race. By reflecting with me on children's conceptions of ability and race, pre-service teachers also became more aware of the meaning children were making about ability and race through classroom interactions throughout the day. Based on this study, EC/ECSE teacher educators may consider incorporating inquiry based projects in which pre-service teachers listen closely to young children and document their understandings about ability and race. Pre-service teachers can use this documentation to challenge assumptions about young children's capabilities as well as plan future literacy instruction based on content that is meaningful to children's lives.

### **University-School Partnerships**

A third implication for teacher education is to re-examine links between coursework and fieldwork placements for pre-service teachers related to a value for an expanded definition of inclusive education. In the current study, pre-service teachers reported experiencing few conversations about ability and race in their fieldwork placements. Further, participants

described how mentor teachers' shared book reading practice focused on teaching explicit literacy skills, as opposed to providing conversational space for children to engage in dialogue and consider multiple perspectives. Mentor teachers' discursive modeling contributed to the difficulty pre-service teachers had with opening up dialogue about ability and race during shared book reading. Given the influence of fieldwork experiences in pre-service teachers' development of diversity-related practices (Correa et al., 2014; Hanline, 2010; Hollins & Guzman, 2005), for EC/ECSE pre-service teachers to engage in meaningful talk about ability and race with young children, teacher educators can consider how this is modeled in fieldwork placements.

A variety of models for university-school partnerships exist that may be useful for EC/ECSE teacher educators in supporting this link (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2006; McIntyre, 2009; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013; Zeichner 2010). For instance, a literacy methods course that incorporates an expanded definition of inclusive education and critical literacy may be held on-site in preschool programs. This would allow course instructors to support pre-service teachers to engage in talk about ability and race through practice with children, while also opening dialogue with mentor teachers about course expectations and requirements. Further, professional learning communities (PLCs), in which small groups work together and engage in continual dialogue to examine practice (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009), may be beneficial. Through PLCs, pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university faculty could engage in ongoing dialogue about classroom ability and race talk, reflecting on challenges in context, building collective understandings about critical literacy, and working together to improve practice. By strengthening communication between faculty in EC/ECSE teacher education programs and mentor teachers in fieldwork placements, pre-service teachers may be better positioned to engage in meaningful conversations about ability and race with young children.

### **Strengths, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research**

The scope of the present study was intentionally limited to four cases, to deeply understand how pre-service teachers facilitated ability and race talk during shared-book reading in their fieldwork placements. Taking such a close look at these four cases enabled in-depth learning in collaboration with pre-service teachers and through a rigorous process of iterative analysis from multiple data sources (pre-service teacher interviews, Critical Conversations Journey Maps, shared-book reading video data, mentor teacher interviews, and child interviews). These are methodological strengths of the present study. However, along with the strength of focusing in such detail on these cases comes an inherent limitation regarding generalizability to other contexts and populations. Additionally, there were several limitations related to data collection. Based on the strengths and limitations of this study, the following are several possibilities for future research that could continue to deepen understandings about ability and race talk during shared book reading in early childhood settings.

First, the study was connected to a semester-long course, which limited the length of time I could collect data (i.e., October-December, 2016). Based on data collected over three months, it is difficult to know how pre-service teachers might continue to shift their literacy practices through additional opportunities to practice talking about ability and race (e.g., in future fieldwork experiences, in their own classrooms). Extending the length of this study, including multiple shared book reading phases, as well further interviews with pre-service teachers to co-analyze data could provide rich information about the extent to which pre-service teachers transform practice over time. Future research can examine how co-analyzing discursive interactions can impact how pre-service teachers transform practice over multiple semesters and as they enter the field as in-service teachers.

Additionally, because of the length of time I could collect data, I also had a short window of time to develop trust with child participants. The length of the study limited the extent to which children felt comfortable with me in general, and impacted the kinds of conversations we shared during child interviews. Moreover, I used a teacher nomination process to select focal children who might readily speak with me. This participant selection decision limited the number of children with disabilities I interviewed. While children's voices were evident in the present study through shared book reading video data and focal child interviews, an expansion of the current study would be to further examine the perspectives of young children, and particularly the perspectives of children with disabilities. Additionally, providing young children with multiple means to express their perspectives may add depth to such an investigation. Drawing on methodological techniques such as identity mapping (Futch, 2014; Futch & Fine, 2013; Ruglis, 2011; Sirin & Fine, 2007) and photo-voice (Wang, 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997), may allow children multiple means to express their conceptions of ability and race.

Another limitation of this study was the extent to which I examined pre-service teachers' blended licensure program. Additional information about the EC/ECSE teacher preparation program, including program mission, course sequence, and course content, could provide contextual information that would deepen my analysis. In the present study, pre-service teacher participants' reported perceptions of coursework reflected what they found meaningful with regards to ability and race, which may not align what teacher educators intended. Further, pre-service teachers' shared book reading practice may reflect the complexity of learning new content and implementing associated skills in practice. Because pre-service teacher participants in this study were juniors in their blended teacher preparation program, future course content and field experiences may address some of the difficulty they had talking about ability and race with

children. More information about the program's philosophy regarding inclusion, as well as pre-service teachers' undergraduate experiences and course sequence, including learning about ability, race, and literacy, could add insight into how course practices influenced their current understandings. Future research can thoroughly examine the mediating role of coursework in pre-service teachers' talk about ability and race during shared book reading by collecting and analyze documents such of program materials (i.e., course syllabi, assignments), observing course sessions, interviewing a larger number of pre-service teachers, and interviewing university faculty.

Further, in this study I foregrounded ability and race as socially constructed identity markers. In designing the study, I sought parity in investigating these two identity markers (i.e., selecting one book about ability, one book about race; developing interview guides with equivalent questions about ability and race). While pre-service teachers in this study recognized their identities as White women based on previous experiences, they had rarely considered themselves as able-bodied, and had difficulty discussing this aspect of their identities. Despite the equal attention I intended to give to both ability and race as identity markers, given pre-service teachers' limited exposure to notions of ability identity, this was not possible. Thus, a limitation of this study is the extent to which I captured the mediating role of pre-service teachers' identities as able-bodied. Future research can consider methods that better elicit pre-service teachers' understandings of their own abilities.

Added to this, pre-service teachers discussed experiences learning about other identity markers (i.e., class, religion, sexuality), which may intersect with and influence classroom talk about of ability and race. For instance, pre-service teachers discussion of racial boundaries based on school geographic location was also connected to class differences (i.e., predominately White

private schools versus racially diverse public schools). Future research can take a more pointed look the ways pre-service teachers' identities, discourses, and experiences with class, religion, and sexuality intersect with their notions of ability and race.

There could be several possibilities for expansion of the current study to include other contexts or participant groups. For example, in this studied I worked with White, able-bodied pre-service teachers, who felt their educational experiences silenced discussion of ability and race, making it difficult to talk about identity markers that were not their own. Examining the perspectives of pre-service teachers of color and/or pre-service teachers with disabilities, could provide a more complicated view of ability and race talk in education. Researching families' perspectives on ability and race talk in classrooms could provide important information for supporting pre-service teachers to develop family-professional partnerships. Further, working with in-service teachers to learn about their shared book reading practices could potentially yield different findings pertaining to ability and race talk and the tools that mediate their practice. Although in this study, pre-service teachers relied on the text in picture books as the authority and felt uneasy about responding to children's questions in the moment, this may not be true for more seasoned teachers who might feel more confident in their shared book reading practice. Additionally, in the present study, the context of accountability and expectations for readiness were only discussed in the context of mentor teachers' practice. A study of in-service teachers' practice may lend deeper insight into the impact of accountability and literacy readiness on ability and race talk.

Finally, from a methodological perspective, learning from and with pre-service teachers in this study was both authentic and enlightening. By taking a humanizing approach to the research process, pre-service teacher participants and I built reciprocal relationships with

participants grounded in dignity, care, and consciousness-raising (Paris, 2011; Paris & Winn, 2014). From my own experience as a White, able-bodied woman, and former EC/ECSE teacher, I knew what I was asking pre-service teacher participants to do was difficult work. By partnering with pre-service teachers, honoring their knowledge, feelings, and experiences, I sought to bring about change in their discursive practices by collaboratively engaging in critical dialogue *with* (as opposed to *on* or *about*) them. As I engaged with pre-service teachers through the research process, I also shared my awareness of my own privilege related to my identity markers, the discomfort I have felt in talking about ability and race with young children, and difficulties I have had discussing issues of inequity with children.

Taking a humanizing approach meant that I did not attempt to experimentally change pre-service teachers' practices through implementation of an intervention package. Instead, I participated in conversations with each pre-service teacher participant as authentically as possible. This was especially important given that I was asking pre-service teachers to examine their own identities and practices related to ableism and racism. The more I shared, the more the pre-service teacher participants were able to relate to and trust me. Further, the more I shared, the more pre-service teachers took risks and shared back. Undoubtedly, the experiences pre-service teachers shared in dialogic conversation with me were influenced by the very nature of our speaking and listening together. Through our ongoing conversations, we continued to push each other's thinking about the nature of supporting pre-service teachers to facilitate in ability and race talk during shared book reading. A humanizing approach may be valuable to others wishing to learn from and support pre-service teachers with other social justice-oriented educational practices beyond ability and race talk with young children during shared book reading.

### **Conclusion**

In early childhood contexts, reading literature to engage children in critical discussions about ability and race – and how it impacts their daily lives – is a promising practice. Indeed, critical literacy scholars see the use of language, text, and discourse structures as powerful ways to address inequity in educational settings (Gainer, 2013; Luke, 2012; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011). However, research investigating the ways in which teachers and young children participate in dialogue about ability and race through shared book reading is sparse. Further, the ways pre-service teachers' identities mediate their classroom interactions is limited (Aboud et al., 2012; Yu, Ostrosky, & Fowler, 2012). The purpose of this study was to better understand how pre-service teachers construct identities and transform their practice as they facilitate dialogue about ability and race with young children during shared-book reading.

The present study has shown how four White, able-bodied pre-service teachers engaged in ability and race talk during shared book reading with young children, as well as the identities, experiences, and ideologies that impacted such talk. Conceptualizing this project through sociocultural theory (de Valenzuela, 2013; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978), discourse theory (Alim, 2005; Gee, 2014; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Rogers, 2011), and DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013), allowed me to examine how pre-service teachers' own educational experiences with silence about ability and race contributed to and perpetuated power evasion in their discourse. Through critical reflection with me, pre-service teacher participants began to shift their knowledge, beliefs, and practices. By taking a humanizing stance (Paris, 2011; Paris & Winn, 2014), this study provides new and rich perspectives about supporting future early childhood educators in facilitating critical conversations about ability and race with young learners.

I end this dissertation with a critical reflection from my own practice that led me to explore pre-service teachers' engagement in early childhood classroom talk about ability and

race. In my own teacher preparation program, I gained licensure to teach young children with and without disabilities. Following graduation, I accepted a position in a racially diverse, inclusive classroom. I soon found I was unprepared to respond to the comments and questions I heard in my own classroom (i.e., children calling a child with Down Syndrome a “baby,” children of color asking me if their skin would be White when they grow up). In my first few years of teaching, I avoided these conversations, and dismissed children’s comments. I realize now that through my silence, I evaded issues of power, by doing nothing to destabilize oppressive ideologies. Yet, based on this study, I am left with hope, as I imagine what inclusive education might look like for young children if pre-service teachers began thinking and talking critically about ability and race in their teacher preparation programs. Such a shift could contribute to ameliorating a silence that maintains an inequitable status quo. This study is a first step toward identifying a methodological approach that can be used to support pre-service teachers in ability and race talk, and contributes to efforts to advance inclusivity, human diversity, and social justice.

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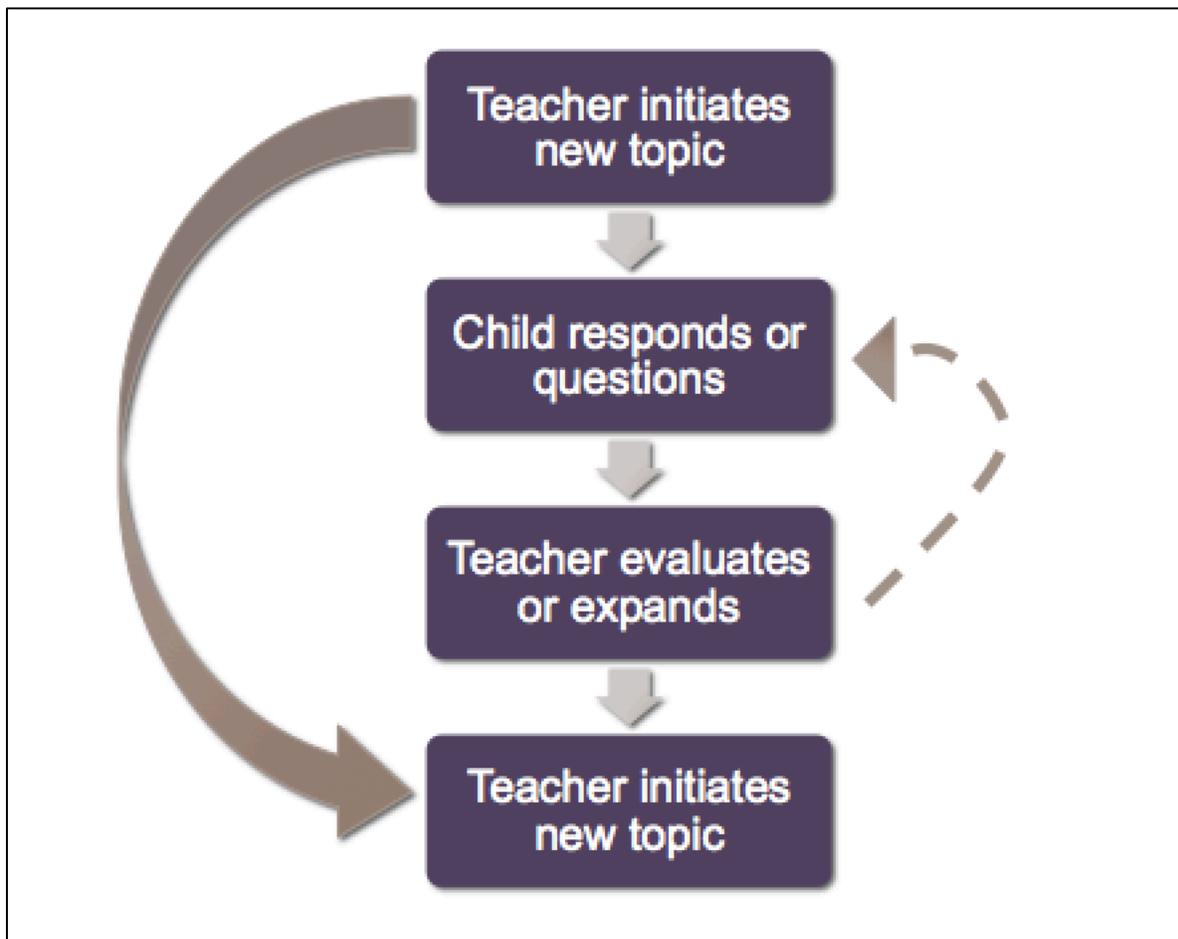
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**Appendix A: Participation Structure during Shared-Book Readings**

(Beneke & Cheatham, in press)





### Appendix C: Letter of Introduction for Pre-service Teachers

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (█████ Pre-service Teacher),

Greetings! My name is Margaret Beneke and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at KU. I am writing to tell you about a research project that I will be conducting with my advisor, Dr. Gregory Cheatham. We are interested in understanding how pre-service teachers facilitate communication about ability and race during shared-book reading with young children.

To gather information, we will be asking █████ pre-service teachers who are enrolled in █████ and completing their fieldwork to video-record classroom conversations as they read two developmentally-appropriate books (one about ability, one about race) over the course of four shared-book reading times (approximately 20 minutes a session; a maximum of 45 minutes per session) with a small group of children aged 3-5 years (5 children maximum). We will audio-record interviews with pre-service teachers on their experiences talking about these topics with children during shared-book reading three times over the course of the semester (approximately 90 minutes per interview) during regularly scheduled fieldwork hours. Additionally we will audio-record interviews with each mentor teacher one time (a maximum of 60 minutes) about her teaching philosophy and literacy practices. We will also audio-record interviews with two focal children following the first shared-book readings (15 minutes maximum per interview). We will work with each mentor teacher and pre-service teacher to schedule times for observation and interviews during regular story reading times, with the goal of minimizing any disruption to classroom routines.

The two books for this study (one about ability and one about race) will be approved by program directors at each fieldwork site from two of the Teaching For Change Early Childhood Anti-Bias Education Booklists: Learning About Racial Identity and Learning about Different Abilities. As a small token of gratitude, each mentor teacher will keep the two books that were read for the study for her classroom library. Additionally, each pre-service teacher will be invited to select a set of books (a maximum of \$75) from these booklists to keep for her future classroom library.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary for pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and children. Your decision to participate in the study will have no impact on your course grade in █████. If you choose to participate, please complete the attached consent form and demographic information.

We are happy to answer any questions you have about this study. In addition, if you have any suggestions you would like to share with us as we consider how pre-service teachers facilitate conversation about ability and race during shared book reading, we would be glad to hear your ideas. You can reach me at [maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu) or by phone at (815) 719-5774.

Thank you for all that you do to support young children.

Sincerely,

Margaret R. Beneke  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Special Education  
1122 W. Campus Rd., 505 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu)

Dr. Gregory A. Cheatham  
Associate Professor  
Department of Special Education  
1122 W. Campus Rd., 504 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[gac@ku.edu](mailto:gac@ku.edu)

### Appendix D: Pre-service Teacher Demographic Form

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Major 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Major 2 (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Minor (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Your race/ethnicity (choose more than one if needed):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African-American  | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latino/Hispanic   | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (White) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify _____ |

2. Year in the undergraduate program:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freshman  | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sophomore | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior    |  |

3. Type of early childhood program where you are currently completing fieldwork:

- Head Start  
 Public preschool  
 Private Preschool

4. Early childhood literacy curriculum where you currently are completing fieldwork:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>High Scope</i>          | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Wilson Foundations</i>       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Creative Curriculum</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Early Literacy in Action</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Reading Rockets</i>     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): _____   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know                      |

## Appendix E: Letter of Introduction for Program Directors

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Program Director),

Greetings to you from the University of Kansas! My name is Margaret Beneke and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at KU. I am writing to tell you about a research project that I will be conducting with my advisor, Dr. Gregory A. Cheatham. We are interested in understanding how pre-service teachers facilitate communication about ability and race during shared-book reading with young children.

To gather information, we will be asking \_\_\_\_\_ pre-service teachers who are enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ and completing their fieldwork at your site to video-record classroom conversations as they read two developmentally-appropriate books (one about ability, one about race) over the course of four shared-book reading times (approximately 20 minutes a session; a maximum of 45 minutes per session) with a small group of children aged 3-5 years (5 children maximum). We will audio-record interviews with pre-service teachers about their experiences discussing these topics with children during shared-book reading. Additionally we will audio-record interviews with each mentor teacher one time (a maximum of 60 minutes) about her teaching philosophy and literacy practices. We will also audio-record interviews with two focal children following the first shared-book readings (15 minutes maximum per interview). During these short interviews with children, we will use the book as a guide, inviting focal children to share what they know about the topic in each book. We will work with each mentor teacher and pre-service teacher to schedule times for observation and interviews during regular story reading times, with the goal of minimizing any disruption to classroom routines.

We are inviting you to approve the two books (one about ability and one about race) from two of the Teaching For Change Early Childhood Anti-Bias Education Booklists: Learning About Racial Identity and Learning about Different Abilities. As a small token of gratitude, each mentor teacher will keep the two books that were read for the study for her classroom library. Participating in this study is completely voluntary for participants. We will ask each pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, and parent/guardian for consent to participate. Additionally, we will follow assent procedures for child participation. Families will be given the title and short synopsis of the book, as well as information about where the books can be found online and/or at the local library so that parents/guardians may review the books in advance. Families may also contact me to borrow my personal copies of these books.

We are happy to answer any questions you have about this study. In addition, if you have any suggestions you would like to share with us as we consider how pre-service teachers facilitate conversation about ability and race during shared book reading, we would be glad to hear your ideas. You can reach me at [maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu) or by phone at (815) 719-5774.

Thank you for all that you do to support teachers and young children.

Sincerely,

Margaret R. Beneke  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Special Education  
1122 W. Campus Rd., 505 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu)

Dr. Gregory A. Cheatham  
Associate Professor  
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1122 W. Campus Rd., 504 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[gac@ku.edu](mailto:gac@ku.edu)

### Appendix F: Book Choices for Program Director Approval – Learning About Racial Identities

Book titles, book cover images, and descriptions retrieved from:  
<http://www.tfcbooks.org/best-recommended/earlychildhood/racialidentity>

Book	Description
<p><i>Bein' with You This Way</i> by W. Nikola Lisa</p> <p>[Insert book cover image here]</p>	<p>On a beautiful sunny day, an African American girl visits the park and rounds up a group of her friends for an afternoon of fun and playground games. As they play, this happy crew discovers that despite their physical differences straight hair, curly hair; brown eyes, blue eyes; light skin, dark skin they are all really the same. For ages 4 and up.</p>
<p><i>Shades of Black</i> by Sandra L. Pinkney</p> <p>[Insert book cover image here]</p>	<p>I am Black / I am Unique / I am the creamy white frost in vanilla ice cream / and the milky smooth brown in a chocolate bar...Using simple poetic language and stunning photographs, Sandra and Myles Pinkney have created a remarkable book of affirmation for African-American children. Photographic portraits and striking descriptions of varied skin tones, hair texture, and eye color convey a strong sense of pride in a unique heritage. A joyous celebration of the rich diversity among African-Americans. For ages 2 and up.</p>

### Appendix G: Book Choices for Program Director Approval – Learning About Different Abilities

Book titles, book cover images, and descriptions retrieved from:  
<http://www.tfcbooks.org/best-recommended/earlychildhood/abilities-disabilities>

Book	Description
<p><i>The Amazing Erik</i> by Mike Huber</p> <p>[Insert book cover image here]</p>	<p>Playing at the water table is fun. But Erik thinks getting splashed is <i>not</i> fun. When his sleeve gets wet, Erik gets sad, and he can't imagine ever being happy again. Then, with a classmate by his side, Erik becomes absorbed by a new idea: making the water disappear. As it does, Erik discovers his sadness has vanished and happiness has reappeared, like magic. <i>Airdah-taroo!</i> The book contains a page of information to help adults connect the story to children's experiences. For ages 3 and up.</p>
<p><i>Be Quiet, Marina!</i> by Kirsten DeBear</p> <p>[Insert book cover image here]</p>	<p>Marina and Moira are four years old. They both like to dress up, play with blocks, and go on the see-saw. But Marina makes a lot of noise. Moira, who likes quiet, runs away from Marina when she's noisy. How these two little girls, one with Down syndrome and the other with Cerebral Palsy, learn to play together and eventually become best friends is beautifully told in words and photographs. For ages 4 and up.</p>

## Appendix H: Letter of Introduction for Mentor Teachers

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Mentor Teacher),

Greetings from the University of Kansas! My name is Margaret Beneke and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at KU. I am writing to tell you about a research project that I will be conducting with my advisor, Dr. Gregory Cheatham. We are interested in understanding how pre-service teachers facilitate communication about ability and race during shared-book reading with young children.

To gather information, we will be asking if you would allow \_\_\_\_\_ pre-service teachers who are enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ and completing their fieldwork in your classroom to video-record classroom conversations as they read two developmentally-appropriate books (one about ability, one about race) over the course of four shared-book reading times (approximately 20 minutes a session; a maximum of 45 minutes per session) with a small group of children aged 3-5 years (5 children maximum). We will interview pre-service teachers about their experiences discussing these topics with children during shared-book reading. We are also asking permission to interview you (audio-recorded, a maximum of 60 minutes) about your teaching philosophy and literacy practices. Additionally, we would like to audio-record interviews with two focal children from your classroom following the first shared-book readings (15 minutes maximum per interview). We will work you and the pre-service teacher you are mentoring to schedule times for observation and interviews during regular story reading times, with the goal of minimizing any disruption to classroom routines. We have invited program directors to select the two books (one about ability and one about race) that pre-service teachers will read. As a small token of gratitude, you will get to keep the two books that were read for the study for your classroom library.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary for you and for children. If you choose to participate, please complete the attached consent form and demographic information. We also have a packet of materials for the parents/guardians of each child in your classroom, so they may review the study information and grant permission for children to participate. Please be sure that a parent/guardian of each child receives this packet. We are asking parents/guardians to complete a consent form for child participation, as well as a brief demographic form. Parents and/or guardians will be instructed to return these forms to you in a sealed envelope. They may also contact me directly with any questions regarding the study. Families will be given the title and short synopsis of the book, as well as information about where the books can be found online and/or at the local library so that parents/guardians may review the books in advance. I have also offered to loan out my own personal copies of these books for review.

We are happy to answer any questions you have about this study. In addition, if you have any suggestions you would like to share with us as we consider how pre-service teachers facilitate conversation about ability and race during shared book reading, we would be glad to hear your ideas. You can reach me at [maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu) or by phone at (815) 719-5774.

Thank you for all that you do to support young children's learning.

Sincerely,

Margaret R. Beneke  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Special Education  
1122 W. Campus Rd., 505 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu)

Dr. Gregory A. Cheatham  
Associate Professor  
Department of Special Education  
1122 W. Campus Rd., 504 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[gac@ku.edu](mailto:gac@ku.edu)

**Appendix I: Mentor Teacher Demographic Form**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Your race/ethnicity (choose more than one if needed):

- African-American  
 Latino/Hispanic  
 Caucasian (White)

- Native American  
 Asian/Pacific Islander  
 Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

2. Current professional position/title in your school/program: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Highest level of educational attainment:

- High school diploma  
 Bachelor's degree  
 Master's degree

- Specialist degree  
 Doctorate  
 Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. If held, your college degree major: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Other school certification/endorsement (e.g., ELL endorsement): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Number of years teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix J: Letter of Introduction for Families

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian),

Greetings to you from the University of Kansas! My name is Margaret Beneke and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at KU. I am writing to tell you about a research project that I will be conducting with my advisor, Dr. Gregory Cheatham. We are interested in understanding how pre-service teachers facilitate communication about ability and race during shared-book reading with young children.

In order to gather information, we will be asking if you would allow your child to participate in the study. We will be video recording classroom conversations in your child's classroom during four shared reading times (a maximum of 180 minutes total). During these shared reading, a teacher-in-training from [REDACTED] will read two developmentally-appropriate books – one about ability and one about race. Following the shared book-reading, we will also audio-record interviews with two focal children following the first shared-book readings (15 minutes maximum per interview). During these short interviews with children, we will use the book as a guide, inviting focal children to share what they know about the topic in each book. We will also be interviewing your child's teacher and the KU teacher-in-training in your child's classroom. All audio and video recordings will occur during regular story reading times in the classroom in order to minimize disruption.

Allowing your child to participate in this study is completely voluntary. More details about the books that will be used in this study, including title, synopsis, and where you can find them online is attached to this letter. Additionally, if you would like to review the books in advance, please contact me and I would be happy to loan you my personal copies. You can reach me at [maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu) or by phone at (815) 719-5774.

Please don't hesitate to contact me directly with any questions or comments regarding this study. We are happy to answer any questions you have about this study. In addition, if you have any suggestions you would like to share with us as we consider how teachers facilitate conversations about ability and race during shared book reading, we would be glad to hear your ideas.

If you choose to allow your child to participate, please complete the attached consent form and child/family demographic information. We ask that you please return these completed forms to your child's teacher in a sealed envelope and have attached an envelope for this purpose.

Sincerely,

Margaret R. Beneke  
Principal Investigator  
Department of Special Education  
1122 W. Campus Rd., 505 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[maggieneke@ku.edu](mailto:maggieneke@ku.edu)

Dr. Gregory A. Cheatham  
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1122 W. Campus Rd., 504 JRP  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[gac@ku.edu](mailto:gac@ku.edu)

### Appendix K: Child/Family Demographic Form

Your Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Child's Age: \_\_\_\_\_ (years) and \_\_\_\_\_ (months)

Your Child's Sex:

Female

Male

Your Child's Race/Ethnicity (choose more than one if needed):

African-American

Native American

Latino/Hispanic

Asian/Pacific Islander

Caucasian (White)

Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Your estimated total household income before taxes:

(Please include income such as Medicaid, Social Security, and unemployment payments.)

Less than \$20,000

\$80,000 – 99,999

\$20,000 - 39,999

\$100,000 – 119,999

\$40,000 – 59,999

More than \$120,000

\$60,000 – 79,999

Don't know

Does your child receive special education services based on any of the following?

Developmental delay (physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, adaptive)

Emotional disturbance

Autism

Hearing impairment

Deaf-blindness

Intellectual disability

Deafness

Multiple disabilities

Orthopedic impairment

Other health impairment

Specific learning disability

Speech or language impairment

Traumatic brain injury

Visual impairment (including blindness)

### Appendix L: Book Summaries for Families

Book titles, book cover images, and descriptions retrieved from:

<http://www.tfcbooks.org/best-recommended/earlychildhood/racialidentity>

<http://www.tfcbooks.org/best-recommended/earlychildhood/abilities-disabilities>

Book	Description
<p><i>The Amazing Erik</i> by Mike Huber</p> <p>[Insert book cover image here]</p>	<p>Playing at the water table is fun. But Erik thinks getting splashed is <i>not</i> fun. When his sleeve gets wet, Erik gets sad, and he can't imagine ever being happy again. Then, with a classmate by his side, Erik becomes absorbed by a new idea: making the water disappear. As it does, Erik discovers his sadness has vanished and happiness has reappeared, like magic. <i>Airdah-taroo!</i></p> <p>The book contains a page of information to help adults connect the story to children's experiences. For ages 3 and up.</p>
<p><i>Bein' with You This Way</i> by W. Nikola Lisa</p> <p>[Insert book cover image here]</p>	<p>On a beautiful sunny day, an African American girl visits the park and rounds up a group of her friends for an afternoon of fun and playground games. As they play, this happy crew discovers that despite their physical differences straight hair, curly hair; brown eyes, blue eyes; light skin, dark skin they are all really the same. For ages 4 and up.</p>

### **Appendix M: Child Assent Procedure**

My name is Margaret and I am learning about [ability/race]. I would like to ask you some questions that will take 10 minutes. I would like you to tell me about the book you just read and what you know about [ability/race]. If you don't feel like talking, you don't have to. If it is easier for you to draw your answers to my questions, that is okay too. You can stop at any time and that will be all right. Do you want to answer my questions?

## **Appendix N: Interview Guide for Pre-Service Teachers**

(Seidman, 2013)

### **Interview #1: Critical Conversations Journey Map + Reconstructing past experiences learning about early childhood education, ability, and race**

Concrete details about self and experiences learning about what it means to be an early childhood educator (Questions will be tailored in response to participants' Critical Conversations Journey Maps)

- Relationship between in school experiences and decision to pursue EC/ECSE as a career (Tell me about why you decided to become a teacher of young children. Describe the experiences you had in school that made you want to pursue a teaching degree in early childhood/early childhood special education.)
  - Earliest clear memory you have of being in school and the extent to which this memory as important to your decision to pursue EC/ECSE
- Relationship with out of school experiences and decision to pursue EC/ECSE as a career (Tell me about why you decided to become a teacher of young children. Describe the experiences you had outside of school that made you want to pursue a teaching degree in early childhood/early childhood special education. Babysitting? Volunteering?)
  - Earliest clear memory you have of working with young children outside of school and the importance of this experience in relation to your decision to pursue EC/ECSE
- Examples of past mentors in EC/ECSE in school and/or community (Tell me about why you decided to become a teacher of young children. Describe any past mentors you have had in early childhood or early childhood special education. Where did you get to know them?)
- Relationship between EC/ECSE professional identity and teacher licensure program (What do you remember thinking about the profession of early childhood/purpose of early childhood ed. when you started the program at KU? Has that changed as you began coursework? How? Were there courses/ideas that influenced the way you think about what it means to be an EC/ECSE educator?)

Concrete details about self and experiences learning/talking about ability (Questions will be tailored in response to participants' Critical Conversations Journey Maps)

- Relationship between in school experiences and understanding of ability (Tell me about your understanding of ability or disability as a child. Describe any experiences you had in school that influenced how you think about ability or disability. What messages about ability do you remember receiving? To what extent were there people with different abilities in your classrooms? What do you remember feeling about your own abilities? To what extent did teachers or peers talk to you about what disability means?)
  - Earliest clear memory you have of learning/talking about ability in school (What kind of meaning did this memory have for you?)
- Relationship between out of school experiences and understanding of ability (Tell me about your understand of ability or disability as a child. Describe any experiences you have had outside of school that influenced how you think about ability or disability. What

messages about ability do you remember receiving? To what extent were there people with different abilities in your community? What do you remember feeling about your own abilities? To what extent did family friends talk to you about what disability means?)

- Earliest clear memory you have of learning/talking about ability outside of school (What kind of meaning did this memory have for you?)

Concrete details about self and experiences talking/learning about race in schools

- Relationship between in school experiences and understanding of race (Tell me about your understanding of race as a child. What experiences did you have in school that influenced how you think about race? To what extent were there people with different racial identities in your classrooms? What messages about race do you remember receiving? What do you remember feeling about your own race? To what extent did any teachers or peers talk to you about what race means?)
  - Earliest clear memory you have of learning/talking about race in school (What kind of meaning did this memory have for you?)
- Relationship between out of school experiences and understanding of race (Tell me about your understanding of race as a child. What experiences did you have outside of school that influenced how you think about race? To what extent were there people with different racial identities in your family or community? What messages about race do you remember receiving? What do you remember feeling about your own race? To what extent did any family or friends ever talk to you about what race means?)
  - Earliest clear memory you have of learning/talking about race outside of school (What kind of meaning did this memory have for you?)

## **Interview #2: Reflexive Video Analysis + Reflecting on Current Experiences Talking About Ability & Race during Shared-Book Reading**

Concrete details about self and experiences learning about shared-book reading (Questions will be tailored in response to participants' video data)

- Relationship between shared-book reading and expectations/practices from current coursework (Tell me about your current courses and what you know about reading books with children. Describe what you are learning in coursework about the way shared-book reading should be facilitated. Can you think of an example?)
- Relationship between shared-book reading and expectations/practices of current supervising teacher (Tell me about how your mentor teacher reads books with children. Describe the expectations of your current mentor teacher during shared-book reading. How does she facilitate shared-book reading?)
- Relationship between shared-book reading and current knowledge of curricular/early learning standards (Describe your understanding of curricular expectations for young children. What curricular/early learning standards do you think are important to address during shared-book reading? Can you think of an example from the classroom or coursework?)
- Approach to facilitating shared-book reading (Tell me about how you read books with children. Describe your current approach shared-book reading with children. Describe

what factors come into play in your current decisions of how to facilitate shared-book reading.)

- Shared-book reading and current struggles/successes (How do you feel about your shared-book reading practice? What is your current goal with shared-book reading? Why? Has that changed since you have viewed the video data?)

Concrete details about self and experiences talking about ability during shared-book reading (Questions will be tailored in response to participants' video data)

- Abilities in current classroom field placement (Tell me about the children in your field placement. What do you know about the various abilities of children in your field placement?)
- Relationship between talking about ability and current mentors (Tell me about how your mentor teacher talks about children's abilities. Describe any conversations between teachers and children that have come up about ability in your current field placement. How does your current supervising teacher talk about ability with children? Does she ever talk about ability during shared book reading? If so, please describe.)
- Relationship between talking about ability and young children's conceptualizations (Tell me about what you think children understand about ability or disability. Describe any conversations between children that have come up about ability in your current field placement. Do the children in your classroom ever talk about ability? If so, what have you observed and heard?)
- General messages about ability in text (Describe your impressions of the book you read. What messages does the book you are currently reading with children send about ability?)
- General messages about ability in media/politics (Describe how you think ability is perceived more generally. What messages are you currently receiving about ability in TV shows/news/politics? From your perspective, what messages do you think children are currently receiving about ability from media?)
- Relationship between talking about ability and coursework (Have any of your current courses helped you think about how to talk about ability with children? How?)
- Relationship between current experiences talking about ability and own social identity (What is it like to talk about ability with children, given the social identities you shared in your map?)
- Relationship between current experiences talking about ability and own professional identity (As a future early childhood teacher, what is it like to talk about ability with children?)
- Talking about ability during shared-book reading and current struggles/successes (What is your current goal with talking about ability during shared-book reading? Why? Has that changed since you viewed the video? If so, describe.)

Concrete details about self and experiences talking about race during shared-book reading (Questions will be tailored in response to participants' video data)

- Race in current classroom field placement (Tell me about the children in your field placement. What do you know about racial identities of children in your current field placement?)

- Relationship between talking about race and current mentors/teachers (Tell me about how your mentor teacher talks about children's racial identities. Describe any conversations between teachers and children that have come up about race in your current field placement. How does your current supervising teacher talk about race with children? Does she ever talk about race during shared-book reading? If so, please describe.)
- Relationship between talking about race and young children's conceptualizations (Tell me about what you think children understand about race. Describe any conversations between children that have come up about race in your current field placement. Do the children in your classroom ever talk about race? If so, what have you observed and heard?)
- General messages about race in text (Describe your impressions of the book you read. What messages does the book you are currently reading with children send about race?)
- General messages about race in media/politics (Describe how you think race is perceived more generally. What messages are you currently receiving about race in TV shows/news/politics? From your perspective, what messages do you think children are currently receiving about race from media?)
- Relationship between talking about race and coursework (To what extent have any of your current courses helped you think about how to talk about race with children? How?)
- Relationship between current experiences talking about race and own social identity (What is it like to talk about race with children, given the social identities you shared in your map?)
- Talking about race during shared-book reading and current struggles/successes (What is your current goal with talking about race during shared-book reading? Why? Has that changed since you viewed the video? If so, describe.)

### **Interview #3: Connecting Past to Present Through Reflection to Make Meaning**

Attitudes and opinions about talking about ability during shared-book reading

- Relationship between past and present mentors/teachers (What have previous and current teachers taught you about talking about ability in school? What do you think about this?)
- Relationship between young children's conceptualizations of ability and talking about ability during shared-book reading (What have you learned about young children's conceptualizations of ability? To what extent do you think young children can talk about ability during shared-book reading?)
- Relationship between texts and shared-book reading (Given the messages you've observed about ability from the book you read with children, what do you think teachers should do during shared-book reading regarding ability?)
- Relationship between general messages in media/politics and talking about ability with young children (Given the messages you've observed about ability from the news/social media/politics, to what extent do you think it's important for teachers to talk about/challenge/question messages about ability during shared-book reading?)
- Relationship between curricular/early learning standards and talking about ability during shared-book reading (What have you learned about literacy standards and talking about ability during shared-book reading? What do you think about this?)

- Talking about ability during shared-book reading and present struggles/successes (What has talking about ability during shared-book reading taught you? What are the benefits of this? What is still challenging?)

#### Attitudes and opinions about talking about race during shared-book reading

- Relationship between past and present mentors/teachers (What have previous and current teachers taught you about talking about race in school? What do you think about this?)
- Relationship between young children's conceptualizations of race and talking about race during shared-book reading (What have you learned about young children's conceptualizations of race? To what extent do you think young children can talk about race during shared-book reading?)
- Relationship between texts and shared-book reading (Given the messages you've observed about race from the book you read with children, what do you think teachers should do during shared-book reading regarding race?)
- Relationship between general messages in media/politics and talking about race with young children (Given the messages you've observed about race from the news/social media/politics, to what extent do you think it's important for teachers to talk about/challenge/question messages about race during shared-book reading?)
- Relationship between curricular/early learning standards and talking about race during shared-book reading (What have you learned about literacy standards and talking about race during shared-book reading? What do you think about this?)
- Talking about race during shared-book reading and present struggles/successes (What has talking about race during shared-book reading taught you? What are the benefits of this? What is still challenging?)

#### Attitudes and opinions about role as early childhood educator

- Using video and reflection and importance (What have you learned about your own practice by reflecting on video? What are the challenges to reflecting? What are the benefits?)
- Facilitating dialogue with young children during shared-book reading (What have you learned about facilitating talk about ability and race with young children? What are the challenges to facilitating talk about ability and race with young children? What seems to work?)
- Approach to facilitating shared-book reading (Describe how you now approach shared-book reading with children. Has that changed since the last interview? Describe what factors come into play in your decisions of how to facilitate shared-book reading.)
- Selection of and interaction with texts (What have you learned about selecting and interacting with texts when discussing topics such as ability and race with young children?)
- Relationship between talking about ability and talking about race (What has talking about both of these identities with young children taught you? What are the similarities or intersections between talking about ability and talking about race? What are the unique challenges to talking about ability? What are the unique challenges to talking about race?)
- Future role as an EC/ECSE teacher (To what extent is talking about ability and/or race with children important to your future teaching? What, if any, are your goals in relation to this?)

to talking about ability and race during shared-book reading with young children? What would you need in order to accomplish these goals?)

How was the experience of being interviewed?

Is there anything you wanted me to ask that I didn't?

What would you like to ask me?

## Appendix O: Sample Focal Child Interview Questions

(Adapted from Ginsberg, 1997; Park, 2011)

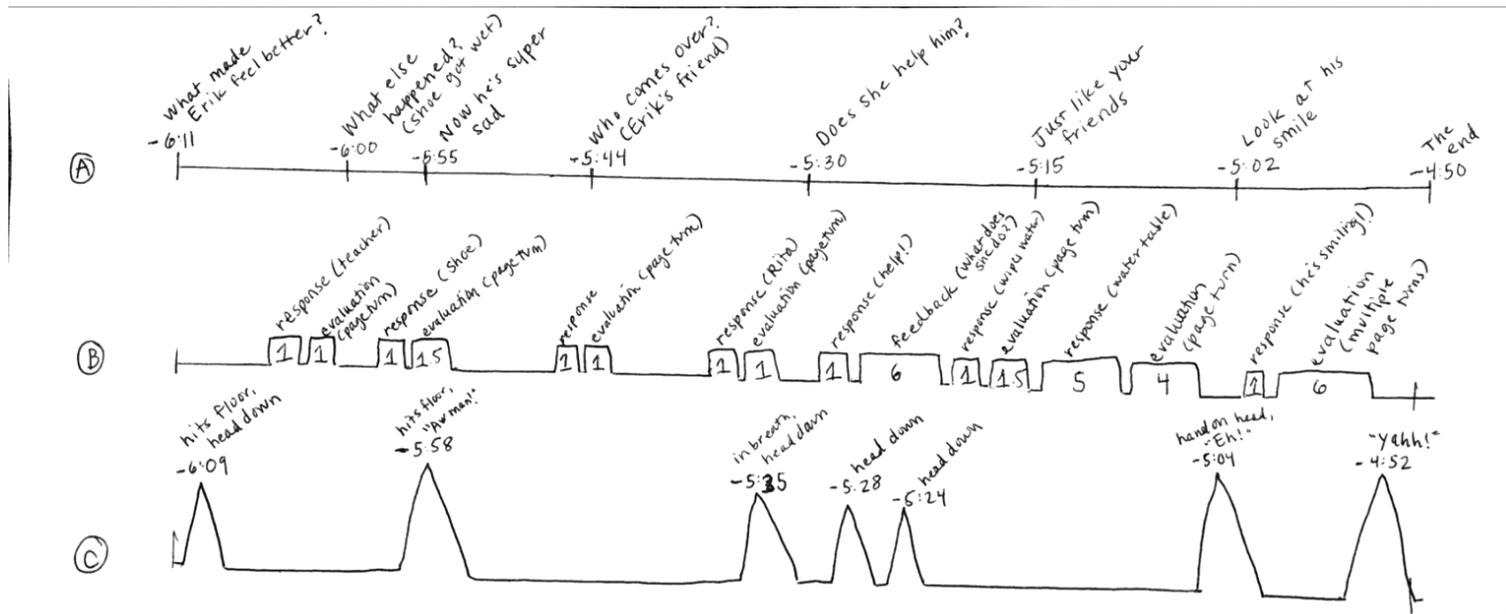
- Did you like that story? Why? What did you like about the story? What did you not like? How come?
- Did you have a favorite person in the story? Who was it? What did you like about that person?
- What do you already know about race/skin color/ability/disability? What did you learn from the story?
- If you could play with anyone in that story, who would it be? How did you choose?
- Was there anyone in the story you would not want to play with? Why?
- Did you notice anyone in the story that looked like you/different from you? What did you notice that was the same/different?
- Does anybody in the story look like somebody in our class? What kinds of things are the same? How can you tell?
- Does anybody in the story look like somebody in your family? What kinds of things are the same? How can you tell?
- Does anybody in the story act like somebody in our class? What kinds of things are the same? How can you tell?
- Does anybody in the story act like somebody in your family? What kinds of things are the same? How can you tell?
- If something in school isn't easy for somebody, is that okay? Would you still want to be their friend?
- What do you think about kids who have different skin color than you? Would you want to be their friend?

## **Appendix P: Mentor Teacher Interview Guide**

### Sentence Starters/Example Questions:

- Tell me about your background as a teacher.
- How long have you been working at this site?
- Tell me about why you decided to become a teacher of young children.
- What are your beliefs about teaching young children?
- Tell me about the curriculum you use in your classroom.
- What literacy curriculum do you follow?
- What literacy standards and expectations do you adhere to?
- Describe how you facilitate conversations during shared-book reading.
- Describe your goals for children during shared-book reading.
- To what extent have children learned about ability/race in your classroom?
- Describe how you facilitate conversations about ability/race when it comes up in the classroom.
- Describe your goals for [pre-service teacher's name] as she/he facilitates conversations about ability/race in your classroom through this study.
- Describe your goals for children as they talk about ability/race in your classroom through this study.

Appendix Q: Landscape Example



Title: Participation Structure & Responding to the Text During "The Amazing Erik"

M. Beneke, 2016

(A): Teacher initiates topic from book

(B): Participation structure, response & evaluation/feedback

(C): child B's responses

### Appendix R: Initial Case-Level Display for Partially Ordered Matrix: Mediating Experiences

Pre-Service Teacher	Early Educational Experiences	Family Experiences
Cora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Went to elementary school “in the hood” but no talk about race except in terms of history, didn’t question</li> <li>Elementary classmate with Down Syndrome included with para, “it wasn’t necessary to address it”</li> <li>College anthropology class: race is a social construct and “it felt casual”</li> <li>Felt tension in Multicultural Ed., “whites targeted”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older brother with autism (“mentally about one”), brought family happiness, discussion opportunity</li> <li>“Felt unfair” because brother got extra attention</li> <li>Interested in ECSE because brother is “like a baby”</li> <li>Parents s advocates for inclusion in parish schools</li> <li>Cleaning lady is only person of color family knew</li> <li>Educating friends about brother with autism</li> </ul>
Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer in wheelchair but he was “a normal kid”</li> <li>High school special education created disability</li> <li>School was “95% white”, only talked about race in history lessons</li> <li>Angry about racial disparities in school zoning and discrimination in school (the “n” word)</li> <li>Expelled from private high school for being gay</li> <li>Racial unity in the military, “we were all brothers”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cousin on the autism spectrum, “could see disappointment in uncle’s faces”</li> <li>Aunt had to fight for inclusion</li> <li>“Never had a conversation with my parents about being careful [around police]”</li> </ul>
Maddie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Spread the word to end the word” (R-word)</li> <li>Volunteered in high school SPED classroom</li> <li>Grew up in majority white community</li> <li>College anthropology: “race is pretty much arbitrary”</li> <li>SPED classes: No one tells you how to talk about it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sister with Down Syndrome and friends: “we don’t talk mean about her, we’re nice to her, how it is”</li> <li>Siblings: “That’s not fair that she gets to do that.”</li> <li>Moved to district for sister’s special education pull out, better than in a different building and bussing</li> </ul>
Sydney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Low income high school” “I was the minority”</li> <li>“Double standard” for hallway passes based on race</li> <li>Special education had it’s own hallway</li> <li>Volunteered in buddy program for peers with disabilities</li> <li>Students with disabilities roaming as they went back and forth</li> <li>Assembly about kids using the “n” word and “cracker” – “this has got to stop”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Parents were very open,” “sent me to school some people wouldn’t send their kids to”</li> <li>Talking to siblings about peers being afraid to go in certain neighborhoods</li> </ul>

### Appendix S: Final Code Book

Code	Definition	Count
<b>1. LANGUAGE IN USE</b>	Category from conceptual framework. Codes in this category relate to discursive behaviors and micro-interactions during shared-book reading.	1,967
1.1. Participation structure	Deductive, descriptive. Codes related to participation structure (i.e., socially-organized interactions, guided by tacit and conventional norms), specifically the three-part pattern Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Wells & Arauz, 2006).	1,778
1.1.1. Initiation	Deductive, descriptive. When a speaker initiates a topic; a bid for speakers to respond (Cazden & Beck, 2003; Heath, 1983; Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Mehan, 1998; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Wells & Arauz, 2006).	380
1.1.2. Response	Deductive, descriptive. When a speaker takes a conversational turn, responding to the topic initiated by previous speaker (Cazden & Beck, 2003; Heath, 1983; Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Mehan, 1998; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Wells & Arauz, 2006).	746
1.1.3. Feedback	Deductive, descriptive. When a speaker follows-up to provide feedback on response to topic through provision of evaluation, requests for justifications, counter-examples, clarifications, and/or connections (Kibler, 2011; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Wells & Arauz, 2006).	662
1.2. Topics	Deductive, descriptive. Topics (subject of a clause or the unit of speech) discussed during shared-book reading (Gee, 2010; Halliday & Mattheissen, 2004).	179
1.2.1. “Ability”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about ability, disability, smartness, or what people can/can’t do.	43
1.2.2. “Eyes”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about eyes and/or eye color.	11
1.2.3. “Help”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about getting help, giving help, and/or needing help.	6
1.2.4. “Hair”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about hair color, hair texture, and/or hairstyles.	11
1.2.5. “Playing together”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about playing with others, including with whom children play with, and/or decisions they make during play (e.g., what to play, how to play).	21
1.2.6. “Similarities and differences”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about similarities and differences among people (e.g., book characters, teachers, children in classroom, friends, families).	48
1.2.7. “Skin color”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about skin color and/or race.	18
1.2.8. “Wheelchair”	Inductive, in vivo. Classroom talk during shared-book reading about wheelchairs.	

<b>2. MEDIATING TOOLS</b>	Category from conceptual framework (Lantolf, 2000; Mendoza, Pagauyo, & Gutierrez, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978). Codes in this category refer to physical tools (e.g., picture books) and/or symbolic tools (e.g., identities, experiences) that mediate how pre-service teachers talk about ability and race during shared-book reading.	1,628
2.1. Educational experiences	Deductive, descriptive. From literature review (Aldemir & Sezer, 2008; Chang-Kredl and Kingsley Flores & Day, 2006; Luehmann, 2007; Walkington, 2005). Codes related to pre-service teachers' educational experiences that mediate how they talk about ability and race during shared-book reading.	319
2.1.1. Ability	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences learning about ability and/or disability.	58
2.1.2. "Bad school, bad neighborhood"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences with perceptions of "bad" schools and/or neighborhoods.	15
2.1.3. Being accepted	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences witnessing peers with disabilities and/or peers of color being accepted.	3
2.1.4. Building relationships	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences building relationships with peers with disabilities and/or peers of color.	10
2.1.5. Coming and going	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers' experiences seeing peers with disabilities and/or peers of color transition in and out of educational spaces.	10
2.1.6. "Different expectations"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences observing different expectations for peers with disabilities and/or peers of color.	6
2.1.7. Exclusion	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers' own experiences being excluded, seeing different peers with disabilities excluded, and/or seeing peers of color excluded from educational spaces.	8
2.1.8. "Felt blamed"	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences feeling personally blamed for racial inequity.	11
2.1.9. Inclusive practice	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences learning about inclusion and inclusive practice.	9
2.1.10. "It doesn't matter"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences learning, talking, or thinking that race doesn't matter.	7
2.1.11. Overt discrimination	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences witnessing overt discrimination toward peers with disabilities and/or peers of color.	14
2.1.12. Questioning labels	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences wondering about the meaning of identity labels.	2
2.1.13. Race	Inductive, descriptive. Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers' educational experiences learning about skin color, race, racism, white privilege, and/or white supremacy.	84

2.1.14. “Racism is history”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ educational experiences learning about racism as defined by historical events.	7
2.1.15. Seeing differences at school	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ educational experiences observing ability and racial differences among peers at school.	35
2.1.16. Shared-book reading	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers’ educational experiences learning about shared-book reading.	11
2.1.17. “Silence”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ educational experiences with silence with regard to talking about ability, ableism, disability, race, and/or racism.	26
2.1.18. Speaking up	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ educational experiences speaking up or witnessing others speak up against discrimination toward people with disabilities and/or people of color.	7
2.1.19. Talking about unfairness	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ educational experiences talking about unfairness for people with disabilities and/or people of color.	7
2.2. Family experiences	Inductive, descriptive. Codes related to pre-service teachers’ family experiences that mediate how they talk about ability and race during shared-book reading.	66
2.2.1.Ability	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers’ family experiences learning about ability and/or disability.	35
2.2.2.Advocating	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ family experiences advocating or witnessing others advocate for family members with disabilities.	5
2.2.3.“Day-to-day work”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ experiences witnessing the day-to-day work of parenting with a family member with a disability.	3
2.2.4.Educating others	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ family experiences educating others about disability.	7
2.2.5.Intervention	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers’ family experiences with intervention.	2
2.2.6.“Love in my family”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ experiences loving a family member with a disability.	3
2.2.7.“Never going to be able”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ experiences learning a family member wouldn’t be able to do something.	3
2.2.8.Questioning labels	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ family experiences wondering about the meaning of identity labels.	4
2.2.9.Race	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers’ family experiences learning about race.	4
2.3. Media	Inductive, descriptive. Codes related to pre-service teachers’ experiences with and perceptions of media that mediate how they talk about ability and race during shared-book reading.	61
2.3.1.Ability	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of ability in the media.	16

2.3.2. “Diversity and inclusion”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of how diversity and inclusion is represented in the media.	9
2.3.3. Making fun of disability	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ experiences witnessing Donald Trump make fun of a reporter with a disability on TV.	3
2.3.4. Normalizing disability.	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media normalizing disability.	2
2.3.5. “They overcome obstacles”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of TV characters with disability overcoming a disability.	2
2.3.6. Race	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of race in the media.	17
2.3.7. Raising awareness	Inductive, process. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the media as a tool for raising awareness about disability.	2
2.3.8. “The bad guys”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of people of color being portrayed as “the bad guys” through media.	6
2.3.9. “Who’s not represented”	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of people with disabilities and/or people of color not being represented in the media.	3
2.4. Fieldwork context	Deductive, descriptive. From literature review (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2007; Fults & Harry, 2012; Graue et al., 2015; Moloney, 2010; Strong-Wilson et al., 2014). Codes related to pre-service teachers’ fieldwork experiences that mediate how they talk about ability and race during shared-book reading.	349
2.4.1. “Child has problem”	Inductive, in vivo. Children in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts perceived as having a problem.	3
2.4.2. Children’s identities	Inductive, descriptive. Children’s identities (assigned and/or claimed) in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts.	75
2.4.3. “Different levels”	Inductive, in vivo. Children’s abilities viewed at different levels in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts.	17
2.4.4. Helping	Inductive, process. Classroom processes for helping children with disabilities in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts.	5
2.4.5. “It hasn’t come up”	Inductive, in vivo. Conversations about ability and/or race not brought up by children in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts.	15
2.4.6. “A diverse group”	Inductive, in vivo. Children in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts perceived as diverse groups.	8
2.4.7. Literacy curriculum	Inductive, descriptive. Descriptions of mentor teachers’ literacy curricula in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts.	67
2.4.8. “Not learning”	Inductive, in vivo. Children in pre-service teachers’ fieldwork contexts perceived as not learning.	5

2.4.9. Noticing physical differences	Inductive, process. Children in pre-service teachers' fieldwork contexts noticing physical differences related to ability and/or race.	19
2.4.10. Shared-book reading practice	Inductive, descriptive. Descriptions of mentor teachers' shared-book reading practice in pre-service teachers' fieldwork contexts.	43
2.4.11. Talking about differences	Inductive, process. Conversations about differences of ability and/or race in pre-service teachers' fieldwork contexts.	55
2.4.12. "They don't know"	Inductive, in vivo. Perception that children in pre-service teachers' fieldwork contexts don't understand concepts of race and/or ability.	12
2.4.13. "We embrace diversity"	Inductive, in vivo. View that pre-service teachers' fieldwork contexts embrace diversity.	10
2.5. Pre-service teacher identities	Deductive, descriptive. From literature review (Cheruvu et al., 2015; Clark & Flores, 2001; Norton Peirce, 1995; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009; Sumsion, 2000; Taguchi, 2005; Weedon, 1987; Zembylas, 2005). Codes related to pre-service teachers' identities that mediate how they talk about ability and race during shared-book reading.	133
2.5.1. Ability	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers' views of themselves in terms of ability.	6
2.5.2. "Ally"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' view of themselves as an ally to people of color or people with disabilities.	10
2.5.3. Developing teacher	Inductive, descriptive. Pre-service teachers' views of themselves as developing teachers.	49
2.5.4. "Fieldwork student"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' views of themselves as fieldwork students.	4
2.5.5. "Fortunate"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' views of themselves as fortunate.	2
2.5.6. "I'm more special ed"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' views of themselves as more oriented to special education than general education.	6
2.5.7. "Sibling"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' views of themselves as a sibling to a person with a disability.	2
2.5.8. "White girl"	Inductive, in vivo. Pre-service teachers' views of themselves as white women.	16
2.6. This study	Deductive, descriptive. From literature review on critical language awareness (Alim, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 1993; Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). Codes related to aspects of the present study that mediated how pre-service talked about ability and race during shared-book reading.	688
2.6.1. Child entry point: "feeling upset"	Inductive, in vivo. Entry point for further conversation during shared-book reading: children's perspectives on feeling upset.	32
2.6.2. Child entry point: "hair"	Inductive, in vivo. Entry point for further conversation during shared-book reading: children's perspectives on hair.	32
2.6.3. Child entry point: "like me"	Inductive, in vivo. Entry point for further conversation during shared-book reading: children's perspectives on similarities.	16

2.6.4. Child entry point: “play with”	Inductive, in vivo. Entry point for further conversation during shared-book reading: children’s perspectives on who they would play with.	13
2.6.5. Child entry point: “skin color”	Inductive, in vivo. Entry point for further conversation during shared-book reading: children’s perspectives on skin color.	33
2.6.6. Child entry point: “wheelchair”	Inductive, in vivo. Entry point for further conversation during shared-book reading: children’s perspectives on wheelchairs.	33
2.6.7. Maggie sharing: her journey	Deductive, descriptive. From strategy of inquiry: efforts to humanize the research process and share of myself (Paris, 2011).	70
2.6.8. Maggie sharing: critical feedback	Deductive, descriptive. From literature review on critical language awareness (Wetzel & Rogers, 2015): efforts to share critical feedback and engage participants’ critical language awareness.	26
2.6.9. Picture books: Amazing Erik	Deductive, descriptive. Based on pilot study of race talk. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of <i>The Amazing Erik</i> , a picture book by Mike Huber.	17
2.6.10. Picture books: Bein’ with You this Way	Deductive, descriptive. Based on pilot study of race talk. Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of <i>Bein’ with You This Way</i> , a picture book by W. Nikola-Lisa.	9
2.6.11. Post knowledge and beliefs: “An ongoing thing”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on talking about race and ability with young children as an ongoing process.	10
2.6.12. Post knowledge and beliefs: behavior	Inductive, descriptive. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on children’s behaviors during shared-book reading.	15
2.6.13. Post knowledge and beliefs: “bringing up the wheelchair”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on introducing the wheelchair as a conversation topic during shared-book reading.	11
2.6.14. Post knowledge and beliefs: “claiming responsibility”	Inductive, process. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on claiming responsibility for talking with children about ability and race.	8
2.6.15. Post knowledge and beliefs: Feeling uncomfortable	Inductive, process. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on feeling uncomfortable when talking about ability and race with children.	13
2.6.16. Post knowledge and beliefs: Finding an entry point	Inductive, process. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on finding an entry point for talking about ability and race with children.	9
2.6.17. Post knowledge and beliefs: “it’s okay to be sad”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on talking with children about feeling sad.	6

2.6.18. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Keep it concrete”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on the importance of keeping conversations with young children about ability and race concrete.	10
2.6.19. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Keep them innocent”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on the importance of keeping young children innocent.	3
2.6.20. Post knowledge and beliefs: Learning along the way	Inductive, process. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on how learning to talk about ability and race with children happens through practice.	11
2.6.21. Post knowledge and beliefs: “minority children’s perspectives”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on how talking about ability and/or race might be important for children with disabilities or children of color.	6
2.6.22. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Need diverse materials”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on the importance of diverse representation in books and classroom materials.	3
2.6.23. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Need to reflect”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ thoughts on the importance of reflecting on their own practice.	5
2.6.24. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Need to talk about it”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on the importance of talking about ability and race with young children.	19
2.6.25. Post knowledge and beliefs: “one aspect of identity”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on disability as one aspect of a person’s identity.	4
2.6.26. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Perpetuating stereotypes”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ concerns about perpetuating stereotypes by talking about ability and race with young children.	5
2.6.27. Post knowledge and beliefs: Personal connections	Inductive, descriptive. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on the importance of making personal connections to the story when talking with young children about ability and race during shared-book reading.	4
2.6.28. Post knowledge and beliefs: Questioning myself	Inductive, process. Through this study, pre-service teachers questioning their own assumptions.	22
2.6.29. Post knowledge and beliefs: Questioning text	Inductive, process. Through this study, pre-service teachers questioning the texts.	2
2.6.30. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Responding in the moment”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on the responding to young children’s comments and questions in the moment.	20

2.6.31. Post knowledge and beliefs: “seen as negative”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on how disability can be seen as negative.	4
2.6.32. Post knowledge and beliefs: “socially constructed”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on how identity is socially constructed.	5
2.6.33. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Taboo”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on how some conversations in the classroom are taboo.	3
2.6.34. Post knowledge and beliefs: “They notice”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on how young children notice differences related to ability and race.	12
2.6.35. Post knowledge and beliefs: “Use a story”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on using a story to talk about ability and race with young children.	7
2.6.36. Post knowledge and beliefs: “We’re all the same”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on the message that “we’re all the same.”	5
2.6.37. Post knowledge and beliefs: “When they’re older”	Inductive, in vivo. Through this study, pre-service teachers’ reflections on how some conversations about ability and race should occur when children are older.	6
<b>3. SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT</b>	Category from conceptual framework. Codes in this category relate to ideologies and macro-level Discourses about ability, race, literacy, and early childhood in pre-service teachers’ sociopolitical contexts.	488
3.1. Ableism as systemic	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review and theoretical orientation (Ferri & Bacon, 2011; Goodley, 2014; Oyler, 2011; Reid & Knight, 2006). Recognition that ableism (i.e., oppression of people based on what they cannot do in favor of able-bodied people) is systemic, and that exists within social processes and institutional structures.	8
3.2. Accountability	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review (Brown, 2013; Bullough, Hall-Kenyon, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014; Kim, 2016). Increased demands to teach kindergarten readiness skills in early childhood classrooms.	5
3.3. Activism	Deductive, conceptual. From theoretical orientation (Annamma et al., 2013; 2015). Discrit Tenet 7: Resistance to ableism and racism.	26
3.4. Ages and Stages	Inductive, conceptual. Ideology that childn develop along a biologically predetermined, linear series of developmental stages process towards becoming adults.	10
3.5. Autonomy	Inductive, conceptual. Ideology of independent competency, a competency assumed not to be present in people with disabilities.	11

3.6. Developmentally Appropriate Practice	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review (NAEYC, 2009). Approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development.	30
3.7. Disability as biological	Deductive, conceptual. From theoretical orientation (Annamma et al., 2013; Goodley, 2014). Disability is framed through medical knowledge related to physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments of an individual's body.	13
3.8. Election	Inductive, descriptive. Reference to the 2016 United States election of Donald Trump.	7
3.9. Erasure	Inductive, conceptual. Ideology of indifference in representation that renders certain people and groups invisible, dismissing facts, people, history, pain and achievement.	42
3.10. Inclusion	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review (Barton & Smith, 2015; Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Lawrence, Smith, & Banerjee, 2016; Puig, Erwin, Evenson, & Beresford, 2015). Placement of children with and without disabilities in classrooms and efforts to promote accommodation, developmental progress, and social integration for children with and without disabilities.	7
3.11. Individualism	Inductive, conceptual. Ideological value for individuals (i.e., "everyone is different"), viewing self and other as individuals as opposed to members of socialized groups.	37
3.12. Normalcy	Deductive, conceptual. From theoretical orientation (Annamma, et al., 2015; Erevelles, 2000; Reid & Knight, 2006). Ideologies and Western cultural standards by which Whiteness and ability are perceived as normal, leading to the marking of difference as deficit.	65
3.13. Power evasion	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review (Frankenberger, 1993). Discourse of evading questions of power to pacify the contradiction between a society structured in dominance and the desire to see society only in terms of universal sameness and individual difference, naming differences only when they do not entail acknowledging differences of power.	65
3.14. Racism as systemic	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review and theoretical orientation (Alim, 2005; Annamma et al., 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2002; Ferri & Connor, 2014; Oyler, 2011; Reid & Knight, 2006; Rogers, 2011). Racism (i.e., oppression of people of color in favor of Whiteness) is systemic, and that exists within social processes and institutional structures.	26
3.15. Readiness	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review (Falchi & Weis Friedman, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Peters, Ortiz, & Swadener, 2015). Focus on children's presumed deficits (e.g., what a child lacks/needs to be "ready") in relation to future schooling.	9
3.16. Representation	Inductive, conceptual. Ideology of bringing visibility to historically marginalized groups through images, standards of beauty, and narrative in order to communicate who is valued and who belongs.	26

3.17. Social construction of identity	Deductive, conceptual. From literature review and theoretical orientation (Annamma et al., 2015; Ben-Moshe & Magaña, 2014; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Gee, 2013; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007; Spencer, 2013). Ideology that identities are socially constructed, and gain meaning based on society's response to them in particular contexts.	39
3.18. Strength in our differences	Inductive, conceptual. Ideology that acknowledges the strengths and unique abilities of individuals historically viewed as deficient based on markers of "difference."	4
3.19. Unique experiences of identity	Deductive, conceptual. From conceptual framework (Annamma et al., 2013; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Ideology that acknowledges unique ways identity markers are experienced and/or practiced.	29
3.20. Universalism	Inductive, conceptual. Ideological value for sameness among human beings (i.e., "we're all the same").	19

## Appendix T: Relationship Between Research Questions, Themes, and Codes

Research Question	Theme	Explanation of Theme	Codes and Queries contributing to this theme	Examples of Data associated with these codes
<p><b>RQ1:</b> How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct ability and race during shared-book readings?</p>	<p>Talk Management: Participation and Response</p>	<p>Codes in this theme relate to the overall participation structure pre-service teachers initiated to manage and control discursive interactions when reading books about ability and race, including turn sequences and topic shifts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Utterance</i> counts (deductive, descriptive)</li> <li>• Organizing talk into stanzas</li> <li>• 1.1.1. Initiation (deductive, descriptive)</li> <li>• 1.1.2. Response (deductive, descriptive)</li> <li>• 1.1.3. Feedback (deductive, descriptive)</li> </ul>	<p><u><i>Amazing Erik – Reading 1</i></u>            Total utterances = 1427            Maddie utterances = 1219, 85%            5 children (comb.) utterances = 208, 15%</p>
				<p><u><i>Bein' with You This Way – Reading 1</i></u>            Total utterances = 763            Sydney utterances = 656, 86%            3 children (comb.) utterances = 107, 14%</p>
				<p>CORA: Erik held his rag up in the air and said / “The Amazing Erik will now make the water disappear” // He said to Rita / “You make the water appear / I’ll make the water disappear / like this” // He waved his rag across the green and said / “Airdah-taroo!” Rita smiled // She dropped her wet rag on the floor again and some water splashed up on her skirt // “Sloppity sloo!” she said //            2. (CORA turns page)</p>
				<p>GRACE: Now isn’t it / now isn’t it terrific / simply exquisite / bein’ with you this way // Her skin is light / his skin is dark / how perfectly remarkably strange / uh-huh!            (GRACE turns page)</p>

**RQ1:** How do pre-service teachers and young children discursively co-construct ability and race during shared-book readings?

The Naming of Difference and Neutralizing Identities

Codes in this theme relate to co-constructing meanings about ability and race during shared-book readings, and the ideological consequences of these discursive interactions

- 1.2.1. “Ability” (inductive, in vivo)
- 1.2.3. “Help” (inductive, in vivo)
- 1.2.4. “Hair” (inductive, in vivo)
- 1.2.6. “Similarities and differences” (inductive, in vivo)
- 1.2.7. “Skin color” (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.2. “Hair” (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.3. “Like Me” (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.4. “Play with” (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.5. “Skin color” (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.6. “Wheelchair” (inductive, in vivo)
- 3.3. Activism (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.7. Disability as biological (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.11. Individualism (inductive, conceptual)
- 3.12. Normalcy (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.13. Power Evasion (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.19. Unique experiences of identity (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.20. Universalism (inductive, conceptual)

1. SYDNEY: Now just cuz he’s in a wheelchair does this mean he’s super different than everyone? Was he still playing at centers?  
 a. CHILD8: Yep //

1. CORA: No / right? Because we’re all the same // We all might look differently /  
 a. CHILD17: Yep /  
 b. CORA: But we’re all the same right?  
 c. CHILD17: Yeah //

MAGGIE: Would you play with somebody who had different skin from you?  
 CHILD15: No  
 MAGGIE: No? Why not?  
 CHILD15: I want, I play with somebody who has light skin.

MAGGIE: No? Who, what are the kinds of people that could be in wheelchairs?  
 CHILD13: If you cannot walk. If, if you are a baby you cannot walk you have to sit in the baby chair.  
 MAGGIE: Oh, like a stroller?

**RQ2:** How do pre-service teachers' social identities and professional experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?

Mapping the Silence: Early Lessons in Drawing Your Own Conclusions

Codes in this theme relate to pre-service teachers' experiences talking about ability and race throughout their educational trajectories as well as observing differences related to ability and race in schools.

- 2.1.2. "bad school, bad neighborhood" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.1.4. Building relationships (inductive, process)
- 2.1.5. Coming and going (inductive, process)
- 2.1.6. "Different expectations" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.1.7. Exclusion (inductive, descriptive)
- 2.1.10. "It doesn't matter" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.1.11. Overt discrimination (inductive, descriptive)
- 2.1.14. "Racism is history" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.1.15. Seeing differences at school (inductive, process)
- 2.1.17. "Silence" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.1.18. Speaking up (inductive, process)
- 2.1.19. Talking about unfairness (inductive, process)
- 3.9. Erasure (inductive, conceptual)
- 3.11. Individualism (inductive, conceptual)
- 3.12. Normalcy (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.13. Power Evasion (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.16. Representation (deductive, conceptual)

00:07 GRACE: Okay, so like I said, most everything in mine wasn't explicit instruction; it was more just observations. So for ability, I had a guy in my 2nd grade class in a wheelchair. He's the only person that I was ever in school with that had any sort of a physical or mental, disability. But he had some sort of bone disease, so he wasn't always in a wheelchair; just when he would fall and break something, and then they would put him in a wheelchair, but the rest of time he was just like any other kid. And then...

7:46 SYDNEY: I remember talking about it in history, like the African-American kid would be like "Man that's messed up, screw your ancestors, blah-blah-blah," would make comments to me. I'm like, "Hello, it's literally 2014. What do I look like?" And that stuff, it's just like... Those kind of comments would be made, and they would just be disregarded. And I, of course, in the moment... In the moment I would just be like, "Yeah. Ha. Whatever." And, then, no one was actually... But it's just the fact that they felt the need to even say that to people. I would never be like, "Ha! You were a slave." Why would that ever be brought up? I don't know. I just don't get it.

**RQ2:** How do pre-service teachers' social identities and professional experiences mediate ways in which they talk about ability and race with young children?

Developing Inclusive Educators: The Elephant in the Room

Codes in this theme relate to pre-service teachers introductions to topics of ability and race in college, practices they observed in their fieldwork contexts, and their future identities as EC/ECSE educators.

- 2.1.9. Inclusive practice (inductive, descriptive)
- 2.1.12. Questioning labels (inductive, process)
- 2.1.16. Shared-book reading (Inductive, descriptive)
- 2.1.17. "Silence" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.1.19. Talking about unfairness (inductive, process)
- 2.4.3. "Different levels" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.4.5. "It hasn't come up" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.4.7. Literacy curriculum (inductive, descriptive)
- 2.4.11. Talking about differences (inductive, process)
- 2.4.12. "They don't know" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.5.3. Developing teacher (inductive, descriptive)
- 2.5.4. "Fieldwork student" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.5.6. "I'm more special ed" (inductive, in vivo)
- "Sibling" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.5.8. "White girl" (inductive, in vivo)
- 3.4. Ages and stages (inductive, conceptual)
- 3.6. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.9. Erasure (inductive, conceptual)
- 3.10. Inclusion (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.12. Normalcy (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.15. Readiness (deductive, conceptual)

0:08:34 CORA: It's almost like it wasn't really recognized until college, but then very... I don't know, almost like... Just seems like there's hostility, I feel like. Not that I'm a bad person or anything 'cause I'm white, but almost unnecessary. Do you know what I mean?

0:45:17 SYDNEY: So even just like in my classes, we kind of... 'cause even now when I'm in college, I'm not even talking about the elephant in the room that there's different students and how do I talk about it?

12:27 MENTOR1: With this class, they really act like they don't notice any differences amongst themselves. We have some developmental differences, and even those I don't think are really perceived by them. The most we've had was actually last week. A little boy was like, "Why are you black?" To a little girl in the room, and she goes, "Why are you white?" And turned around, and then that was that. Yeah, that's the most I've really heard about it.

30:52 MENTOR5: Yeah. But for me the kids, they had no idea, what white or black or Native American meant. It may be the first time that they had even heard it. It wasn't good, bad or otherwise, it was what it was. But I as a professional wondered, as someone that's taught for a really long time, whether or not they developmentally could even remotely grasp what we were trying to do.

**RQ3:** How does analyzing discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?

We Need to Talk but I Don't Know How

Codes in this theme relate to pre-service teachers' reflections as they analyzed discursive interactions on the need to talk about ability and race with young children during shared-book reading, as well as the challenges with having these conversations given their own experiences and identities.

- 2.6.9. *Amazing Erik* (deductive, descriptive)
- 2.6.10: *Bein' with You This Way* (deductive, descriptive)
- 2.6.11. "An ongoing thing" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.12. behavior (inductive, descriptive)
- 2.6.13. "Bringing up the wheelchair" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.14. "claiming responsibility" (inductive, process)
- 2.6.16. Finding an entry point (inductive, process)
- 2.6.18. "keep it concrete" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.19. "keep them innocent" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.24. "Need to talk about it" (inductive in vivo)
- 2.6.26. "perpetuating stereotypes" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.27. Personal connections. Inductive, descriptive.
- 2.6.30. "responding in the moment" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.33. "use a story" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.37. "when they're older" (inductive, in vivo)

0:44:17 SYDNEY: I think it's just been eye opening, like I said it's just like, you just don't realize how little it's talked about and how it is hard to talk about. 'Cause in my mind, I'm like, "I love special education, I can't wait. It's great. I just love it." Then I'm like, "I'm gonna get in the classroom or I'm gonna be in an inclusive classroom, or not even know I will." It's so much more, there's so much more to it that needs to be talked about, that I just have... I'm not even... Not that I'm not aware of 'cause now I am but it's a challenge.

16:58 MADDIE: I was hesitant to read this book, that's why I read the other book [first]'cause I was like, "I don't know how to..." It showed you his wheelchair, but it didn't necessarily talk about it, and so I didn't know how to talk about it.

GRACE: It's not something that I'm uncomfortable with. I think it just all goes back to not knowing the questions they're gonna ask and so not being able to prepare to respond, and that's something that makes me nervous because kids say whatever they wanna say and it's hard to I guess, have time to think about a response, and give them a good response without making it look like it's taking too much effort for you to think about something.

0:49:38 CORA: I think it's challenging to get on a deeper level with the kids, because it's mostly like, "Oh, Are they... Do they look like you?" That sort of thing.

**RQ3:** How does analyzing discursive interactions impact the ways pre-service teachers reflect on and/or transform their practices?

Learning Along the Way

Codes in this theme relate to pre-service teachers' reflections as they analyzed discursive interactions on how they will continue learning how to talk about ability and race with young children through reflection, questioning themselves, and practice.

- 2.6.9. Maggie sharing: critical feedback (deductive, descriptive)
- 2.6.11. "An ongoing thing" (inductive, in vivo)
- 2.6.20. "Learning along the way"
- 2.6.28. "Questioning myself"
- 2.6.36. "We're all the same"
- 3.3. Activism (deductive, conceptual)
- 3.9. Erasure (Inductive, conceptual)
- 3.17. Social construction of identity (deductive, conceptual)

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MAGGIE: Do you have thoughts about what you might do to support your growth in this area?

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1:03:05 CORA: I think just continuing to bring it up in conversation with kids through student teaching or different practicum's, and just kind of feeling it out for how they respond is a good way to...

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1:00:11 MADDIE: I would say just the fact that it's important to talk about both [race and disability] and even if it's something unfamiliar, even though I've not had a lot of experience with race, I still need to talk about it. I can't just avoid it and dismiss it because I don't know much about it. I need to, as a future teacher, educate myself on more things and how to talk about it.

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0:45:17 SYDNEY: I think experiences are definitely gonna help. Just having conversations with students and seeing how they react to them and how they take them in with that, so obviously, I'm not gonna have a zillion, it's gonna be as I go.

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