

DISSERTATION

BEYOND RHETORIC: A CASE STUDY OF CRITICAL AND INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL
PRACTICES IN A TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER

Submitted by

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School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2025

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ABSTRACT

BEYOND RHETORIC: A CASE STUDY OF CRITICAL AND INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN A TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER

The purpose of this study was to examine how critical and inclusive pedagogical (CIP) practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers. As organizations dedicated to the advancement of faculty development within higher education, teaching and learning centers (TLCs) provide useful insight into strategies aimed at fostering critical and inclusive pedagogies. Using a critical qualitative approach, this study employed an instrumental, single case study methodology informed by critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), critical consciousness (Freire, 1998), and the theory of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019). Four themes were identified that illuminate how TLCs operationalize CIP within their institutional and sociopolitical contexts: 1) interrogating tensions between critical and inclusive pedagogy, 2) teaching & learning centers as first responders: the limitations of pedagogical support, 3) performative commitments: the gap between institutional rhetoric and practice, and 4) navigating institutional power: the Faculty of Color experience. Overall, participants considered CIP to be a core part of teaching and learning praxis, and their collective efforts contributed to fostering a campus ecosystem where critical and inclusive pedagogy could be better understood, supported, and enacted. However, despite their shared articulation of values, various institutional and sociopolitical factors shaped differences in their understanding and application of CIP frameworks within teaching and learning center practice. The findings of

this study offer insights to educational developers, informing their organizational missions and practice-based approaches to advancing equitable teaching practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Early on in my doctoral journey, I received advice to celebrate each and every milestone, as this process feels like a marathon. This advice was incredibly useful and motivating, but even more important were the people who helped me reach each milestone along the way.

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation for my dissertation chair, Dra. Muñoz, who inspired me to pursue a PhD at Colorado State and provided guidance at every step throughout my journey. She stepped in to serve as my advisor and was always there to offer support, a challenging nudge for me to dig deeper, and the space and freedom to just be me. She is one of the most humanizing educators I know, and I feel so fortunate to have her walk alongside me over the last six years. I also want to thank my first advisor, Dr. Stewart, who invited me into the learning process in a way that felt rooted, connected to community, and intellectually dynamic. Dr. Jennings, thank you for offering a methodological critique that helped align my work more closely with my own intentions as a critical researcher. Dr. Doe, thank you for agreeing to join late and take on this responsibility, offering practical insight and validation of the importance of my work. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Tuitt, who has inspired much of this work through his scholarship on critical and inclusive pedagogies. Your expertise was always appreciated, and I thank you for being a possibility model for me.

To my cohort and doctoral friends, I am forever grateful that I was able to learn and grow with 14 other students who inspired, motivated, and challenged my thinking and being. The diversity, thoughtfulness, humor, and joy of our community always made me feel a sense of belonging that helped me persist and know that we could accomplish this goal. Thank you for the feedback on my work, co-writing time, check-in texts, hilarious group messages, and cards to show support as life widened with the birth of my two sons. As many of you reached the final

milestones and defended your dissertations, it helped reassure me at a time when I wasn't sure I would be able to finish. Living far away from my cohort also prompted me to develop and lean on friends who were also in their own doctoral processes and writing journeys. I would like to thank Ashley, Walter, Shruti, Craig, Jamila, Carlos, Quortne, and Jeff for writing together and helping to make this process a little less lonely and isolating.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and I have a huge village of support that has cheered me on along the way. Words cannot express my gratitude to my mom and dad, who always believed in me, encouraged me, and pitched in to babysit when I needed time to write. Thank you for fostering my love of learning, investing in my education, taking me to countless camps and programs, and advocating for me when educators couldn't see my full potential. Your tireless effort and sacrifice are the reason I am here and am sharing this achievement as our collective accomplishment. To my sister, Crystal, thank you for role-modeling what it means to take school and learning seriously, take risks, be bold, and for pushing me to dream bigger. To my family, particularly my grandparents, I constantly think about the lessons you shared, the time you invested, and the legacy you set. I hope this accomplishment makes you proud and reflects all the love and support you poured into me.

Finally, to my wife Ashley, pursuing my doctorate would not have been possible without your love, support, and willingness to hold down our little family, particularly as I neared the end of this process. We both started our doctorates soon after we got married, with the mantra of #fromthisdayPhorwarD symbolizing how intertwined our love story and marriage were with our studies and passions. I am so proud of us for reaching the finish line, but more importantly, for how we prioritized each other and supported one another, despite the high levels of stress we endured throughout our journeys. You are my biggest cheerleader, thought partner, believer, and

source of accountability. Thank you for listening to me in my darkest moments of fear and impostorism, reading drafts and sharing your feedback (even when I got nervous about it), and always encouraging me to keep writing. Over the last three years, balancing doctoral studies and parenting has been my greatest challenge, and you made it possible for me to accomplish this goal. To my boys, Adrian and Miles, thank you for your patience and understanding when daddy had to go write or work on school stuff. More than anyone else, this doctorate is for you. You are my hope, joy, and future.

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Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which they deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

It feels like yesterday that I was sitting in my office at the multicultural student center watching the video release of the murder of Eric Garner. As I watched the video, a colleague came and stood at my door. It took us two seconds to realize we had just taken in the same violent imagery. Over the course of the next hour, we sat and held space for each other to process, mourn, and feel the impact of the assault on each of our Black bodies. After sitting together, we regained our composure, walked into our center, and held this same space with our students as they processed the racialized violence they have experienced throughout their lives and on our campus. As we engaged with our Black students, they expressed feelings of fear, fatigue, and anxiety as they faced the pressure to “get back to work”. They shared the stress of navigating classroom and academic environments where their faculty and peers ignored, avoided, or were actively hostile to conversations about police violence, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy. I wish I could say this workday was different than most, but it was not. It was reflective of a much larger pattern and practice required of our work in multicultural affairs, where we processed students’ navigation of a hostile academic environment. Their stories are cemented in my consciousness and sparked my commitment to faculty development as a change project that seeks to alleviate the burden on minoritized students to enhance classroom climate, urging faculty to take ownership, hold themselves accountable, and consistently work to advance knowledge that aims to dismantle pedagogical hegemony.

Throughout the last few years following an uptick in racial violence, political unrest, and subsequent student activism, there has been a growing interest from faculty and administrators seeking to address classroom climate issues. I have fielded questions stemming from intrigue and skepticism of the relevance and applicability of social justice education as a tool to enhance

pedagogy. From 2015-2021, I worked alongside a variety of colleagues in teaching and learning centers (TLC) to develop programs for faculty, postdocs, and doctoral students related to teaching for equity and inclusion, inclusive pedagogy, understanding minoritized student populations, and intergroup dialogue. I believed that in order to improve classroom climate, we would need to directly engage faculty in critical self-reflection and dialogue about power, privilege, and oppression. Throughout these experiences, faculty development was never a formal part of my role as a student affairs professional. I was often brought in as a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) subject matter expert, prompting the question of why little expertise existed within the structure and operational mission of teaching and learning centers.

In the summer of 2021, I was invited to serve on a working group charged with creating an inclusive pedagogy practicum course for faculty. As our planning team developed relationships with faculty and staff partners, some expressed concern with our approach. I remember sitting in a meeting where we invited faculty experts, both of whom identified as People of Color, to share feedback on our initial programmatic conceptualization. Before we were able to dive into the design, one colleague expressed apprehensions about who was leading these initiatives given the predominately white faculty and staff composition involved in program design and facilitation. The other wondered about the efficacy, specific focus, and inclusion-centered paradigmatic positioning of the program. Would a curricular approach rooted in inclusive pedagogy and universal design for learning advance racial justice or serve as a tool to promote assimilation and essentialism? Additionally, they questioned the relevance of our program objectives to serve the needs of Faculty of Color alongside their white colleagues. By communicating these tensions, our colleagues helped us recognize that if our goal was to support racial justice and equity in teaching, we also needed to better understand the implications and

potential consequences of this work. Their questions and constructive feedback challenged me to consider the complexities of centering racial justice in teaching and learning, engendered a deep feeling of complicity when reflecting on my influence and partnership on the project, and sparked motivation to explore whether this experience signaled a broader pattern developing in educational development practice.

National Landscape

Colleges and universities are seeing immense change in the needs of today's diversifying student population. Campus climate surveys of students illustrate that prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes are relatively common on college campuses. In fact, about 50% of students reported encountering some form of prejudice on campus (Biasco et al., 2001), and students cited classrooms among the most common places for prejudice to occur (Rankin, 2003). Some students, particularly those from minoritized groups, reported that classrooms are among the most difficult spaces on campus to navigate. They described feeling invisible, not listened to, and as though they do not belong often due to their almost daily experiences with racial microaggressions (Boysen, 2012). Beginning in 2015, student-led activism inspired by the Movement for Black Lives became an increasing presence on college campuses (Hartocollis & Bidgood, 2015; Somashekhar, 2015), often bringing forth a critique of teaching and curriculum (Haynes & Bazner, 2019). Racial disparities in well-being, social media exposure of racial injustices, and the election of Donald Trump, whom many regard as a symbol of white supremacy heightened racial angst (Bazian, 2019; Coates, 2017; Gray, 2012). Imad (2021) argues the COVID-19 pandemic only served to amplify these inequities and exacerbate already existing problems that were present before the pandemic – from a mental health epidemic to poverty, from drug and alcohol abuse to inequality and racialized violence (ACHA, 2018;

Auerbach et al., 2018; Broton, 2019; Broton et al., 2018; Freudenberg et al., 2019). Despite this increased understanding of students' experiences, not much has changed in the overall approach to teaching diverse student populations (Howell & Tuitt, 2003).

The anti-critical race theory movement has only widened these challenges in college classrooms, especially in an instructor's ability to establish expectations that are conducive to civil debate, foster better understandings of society, and explore solutions to issues such as race and racism (Liou & Alvara, 2021). In September 2020, President Donald Trump issued the Executive Order 13950 under the guise that "all men are created equal" in the United States (U.S.). This executive order reinforced the belief that discussing racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression should be considered divisive and anti-white, and thus effectively banned Federal contractors from using public dollars to "promote discrimination" in the workplace (Executive Order No. 13950, 2020). The order was issued during the time of the global outcry against systemic racism and police brutality that resulted from the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Daunte Wright, and other People of Color. Moreover, sweeping anti-Chinese sentiments had led to escalating hate crimes committed against Asian Americans (Tessler et al., 2021). As many Americans sought out books and support groups to learn more about race and racism, Trump's Executive Order sent shockwaves through the education system prompting several states to take additional action in developing anti-DEI programs in higher education (Moody, 2023).

Despite these barriers, administrators and academics across higher education are engaged in active debates exploring whether or not changes in curriculum and pedagogy should be made to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body (Adams & Love, 2009; Tuitt, 2003). The field of faculty development surfaced from these debates to fill the knowledge and skills gap

across academic disciplines with a focus on critical and inclusive pedagogy in teaching and learning (Howell & Tuitt, 2003; Liston & Rahimi, 2017; Tuitt et al., 2016). The implications of this literature have been challenging for faculty, most of whom receive training in lecture-based classes or discussion sections within relatively homogeneous classrooms. Moreover, most faculty report that their faculty preparation has not equipped them to address the emotionally and socially charged issues that arise in the classroom or shape classroom climate (Bell et al., 1997; Haynes & Joseph, 2016). Quaye and Harper (2007) add that most faculty, in their graduate years, did not have professors who modeled an appreciation of diversity, emphasized inclusive teaching methods, and engaged in culturally appropriate pedagogical practices. As a result, many faculty enter their classrooms emulating their former professors' instructional strategies based on a tacit, unexamined stance towards teaching and learning (Haynes & Joseph, 2016).

Anderson (2008) proposed that faculty could benefit from a well-designed and supported, comprehensive, and systematic initiative. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on how to respond to, change, and diversify curricula and teaching practices to foster inclusive classroom environments (Salazar et al., 2010). Inclusive pedagogy is a term Tuitt (2003) uses to describe “an emerging body of literature that advocates teaching practices that embrace the whole student in the learning process” (p. 243). Efforts focused on inclusive pedagogy have developed within a variety of settings across higher education in institutional diversity offices, individual departments, and grant-funded initiatives (Garran et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2012; Leguizamo & Campbell, 2017). Consequently, approaches to faculty development reflect diverse and, at times, conflicting approaches, aims, viewpoints, and contexts (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013), making it difficult to gain an in-depth understanding of their potential and limits in supporting change. Several institutions have sought to create structural supports for

faculty development through the development of teaching and learning centers (TLCs). Such centers offered sustained teaching improvement services and advice often delivered by faculty colleagues who had been granted release time (Outlett, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Much of the scholarship on diversity in educational development has come from practitioners as they seek to apply evidence-based approaches to their work with faculty (Davis et al., 2012; Grooters, 2014; Mighty et al., 2010; Renn, 2012; Stanley, 2018). As expected, many studies expand on the “how to”—the myriad ways to train and support faculty as they strive to teach from inclusive perspectives that consider the diversity of students (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Renn, 2012). Less common are studies that turn the spotlight back onto the developers themselves (Mighty et al., 2010). Those infrequent studies offer a compelling glimpse of the inner world of developers and their lived experiences of diversity, how they see themselves, and how they see their work. The extant literature on educational developers documents a lack of diversity among practitioners and an absence of research that allows them to tell their own stories (Stanley, 2001; Mighty et al., 2010). A review of the literature shows that faculty development as a profession is composed of mostly white (Stanley & Ouellet, 2000) and female professionals (POD Network, 2016). In this profession, more than three-quarters (76.67%) reported holding an academic or professional doctorate (POD Network, 2016). As such, it is a field where both practitioners and scholars are seeking more diversity in terms of membership and the scholarship produced (Banks et al., 2011; Grooters, 2014; Mighty et al., 2010). That is, the literature shows both the call for more Developers of Color as well as the call to increase scholarly production of, and engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion topics.

Recognizing the dearth of empirical research on the application of inclusive excellence within TLCs, Stanley (2018) suggests that faculty developers within these roles must also consider and seek opportunities to enhance their own awareness, skills, and positionality as they work with faculty. Sievers (2016) argues that developers must also be learners to be innovators within organizations. As such, “ongoing reflection, self-awareness, and self-monitoring may be critical tools in this journey” (p. 110). In addition to the introspective work, faculty developers can also benefit from the use of effective collaboration with DEI-related units fostering a more consistent framework across campus environments. A critical next step in the scholarship, therefore, is to more deeply and explicitly explore the operationalization of faculty development focused on critical and inclusive pedagogy. Because a common critique of change efforts within faculty work is a lack of institutional accountability and support (Brownell & Tanner, 2012), this study deliberately examines how this work is approached by institutionalized organizations whose missions are firmly rooted in advancing faculty development – teaching and learning centers (TLCs). In such spaces, what can we learn from how critical and inclusive pedagogy (CIP) is understood, applied, and assessed to advance institutional goals for racial equity?

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers (TLC). As organizations focused on the advancement of faculty development within higher education, teaching and learning centers provide useful insight into strategies aimed at fostering critical and inclusive pedagogies. Additionally, TLCs provide “a strategic lever for institutional excellence and quality, and a critically important tool for fostering institutional readiness and change” (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013, p. 95). Using the theory of racialized organizations, I offer

scholarship that advances a deeper focus on racialization within structured organizational contexts that seek to embed faculty development focused on critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks in their mission, structure, and programs. By examining the ways in which TLCs incorporate critical race theory (CRT) and deepen critical consciousness in their work, this study enhances our understanding of critical frameworks and strategies for facilitating inclusive pedagogy programs.

By examining how TLCs implement CIP practices as a tool to advance racial justice (Tuitt et al., 2016), we can better understand how to attend to dynamics of power and oppression and extend these insights to inform CIP practice in higher education and beyond more effectively. The following questions guide my exploration of this topic:

- How does a teaching and learning center operationalize critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within its organizational structure?
 - In what ways does a teaching and learning center engage in and promote critical and inclusive pedagogical practices?
- How do sociopolitical contexts shape the operational mission of a teaching and learning center?
 - What internal and external factors shape how a teaching and learning center makes meaning of critical and inclusive pedagogy in its practices?

Significance

As critical and inclusive pedagogical practices continue to expand, it is necessary to understand the implications of this phenomenon in higher education contexts. By exploring the ways in which faculty development efforts are approached to align with critical frameworks in higher education contexts, this study deepens our understanding of the challenges, limitations,

and liberatory potentials of enhancing critical consciousness amongst faculty (Haynes & Bazner, 2019; Stanley, 2018). The outcomes of this study provide guidance to TLC practitioners, informing their organizational missions and practice-based approaches to advancing faculty, postdoc, and graduate student development related to critical and inclusive pedagogy. Additionally, as CIP practices continue to increase in higher education and other fields in ways that may unintentionally reinforce deficit ideology, assimilation, essentialism, and other dynamics of power (Annamma & Morrison, 2018; Harbour et al., 2003; Ryan & Dixson, 2006), this study reveals ways to negotiate the nuances of engaging faculty development through critical race frameworks.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. To situate the purpose of the study, Chapter Two presents a review of selected, relevant theoretical and empirical research to ground the study. The first section explores three theoretical concepts that frame and inform this study. The review then explores the development of teaching and learning as a field of knowledge, the development of teaching and learning centers, and scholarship of teaching and learning in the context of higher education administration. This section sets the context for how teaching and learning is understood in higher education and frames the need for faculty development related to critical and inclusive pedagogies. The chapter concludes with a review of research that explicates the tensions related to the development of critical and inclusive pedagogy in higher education. Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the research design, including the instrumental case study methodology, site selection, data collection and analysis, and researcher positionality. Chapter Four situates the TLC that was selected as the case for this study by offering a glimpse into the organizational context, the institutional approach to teaching and learning, and the

development of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices within the TLC. The findings from data collection and analysis are presented in Chapter Five, and the dissertation concludes with Chapter Six, which includes discussion and implications for research and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned in the introduction, this study examines how critical and inclusive pedagogical (CIP) practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers. By examining how TLCs implement CIP practices as a tool to advance racial justice (Tuitt et al., 2016), we may better understand how to attend to dynamics of power and oppression and extend these insights to inform CIP practice in higher education and beyond more effectively. The following questions guide my exploration of this topic:

- How does a teaching and learning center operationalize critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within its organizational structure?
 - In what ways does a teaching and learning center engage in and promote critical and inclusive pedagogical practices?
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 - What internal and external factors shape how a teaching and learning center makes meaning of critical and inclusive pedagogy in its practices?

To situate the study, a review of selected, relevant theoretical and empirical research is divided into three main sections. The first section explores three theoretical concepts that frame and inform this study and my positionality. These concepts and theories are critical to the methodological approach and analysis of data. Additionally, the concepts align with the significance and purpose of the study in that they aim to develop research and action examining how CIPs contribute specifically to the advancement of racial equity in faculty development practice. The second section explores literature on the development of teaching and learning as a field of knowledge, faculty development, teaching and learning centers, and the scholarship of

teaching and learning in the context of higher education administration. This section sets the context for how teaching and learning are understood in higher education and frames the need for faculty development. Finally, the chapter concludes by exploring literature on the development of critical and inclusive pedagogy in higher education. Because research on the development of CIP practices in teaching and learning centers (TLCs) is limited, the third section provides a foundational, in-depth overview of the development and related tensions of critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within teaching and learning scholarship.

Theoretical Concepts Framing Study

To explore the experiences of teaching and learning center practitioners' understanding, promotion, and implementation of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices, I use critical race theory (CRT), theory of racialized organizations (TRO), and critical consciousness to guide the design of the study, including data collection and analysis. This study is framed by critical race theory (CRT), which takes issues of race, gender, and class oppression into account. CRT was originally conceptualized as a legal counterdiscourse designed to critique the US legal system's role in upholding white supremacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Scholars utilize CRT to recognize the permanency and endemic nature of race in American education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Through its use, scholars seek to promote increased equity and social justice for People of Color by challenging dominant ideologies that support racialized inequities stemming from hegemonic educational practices (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). While CRT centralizes race and racism as a core element, Victor Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations (TRO) furthers the aim with a more specific focus on racialization within structured organizational theory. Finally, I introduce Freire's (1998) concept of *conscientizacao* – deeper consciousness or critical consciousness – to

explore the process for an individual to reflect critically on their sociopolitical environment and take action toward change.

Critical Race Theory

To understand, examine, and address the enduring racism in educational policy and practice that protects white supremacy, critical race theorists employ six central tenets (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Harper et al., 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000): (1) racism is endemic to American culture; (2) rejection of dominant narratives, processes, or systems that claim race neutrality, color evasiveness, and meritocracy; (3) racism has deeply rooted origins that attribute white people with dominant status and non-white people with subordinate status; (4) the voices and lived experiences of People of Color are legitimate and used to generate oppositional discourses; (5) recognition of interest convergence, which describes the conditions by which racial justice will be accommodated in a white power structure; and (6) racism's eradication is tied to eliminating all forms of oppression. CRT foregrounds race and racism throughout the research process but also acknowledges that other systems of domination intersect with race and racism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, the sixth tenet encourages a focus on intersecting systems of domination and the ways in which these systems influence the everyday, identity-specific experiences of individuals with multiple minoritized identities (Crenshaw, 1991). These scholars have collectively created a theoretical starting point for thinking about the possibilities that lie in connecting CRT to a broader discourse on pedagogy (Lynn, 1999), particularly regarding liberatory strategies that faculty can utilize as a vehicle for counteracting the devaluation of racially minoritized students.

By challenging dominant ideologies, critical race theory moves academic inquiry beyond frameworks of individual responsibility and success to discussions that center the unexamined

institutional and systemic factors that leave oppressive power dynamics intact (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Patton, 2006). In congruence with the first tenet of CRT, which argues that racism is endemic to American culture, the classroom therefore, like all racialized structures, cultivates white supremacy (i.e., normalcy, advantage, privilege, and innocence) through the perpetuation of structures, processes, and traditions that reinforce racial subordination (McFarlane, 1999). The third tenet of CRT validates the lived experiences and narratives of Students of Color who exist in the white supremacist classroom structure. CRT foregrounds and legitimizes their racialized experiences in the classroom by moving beyond frameworks of individual responsibility and success to discussions that center the unexamined institutional and systemic factors that leave oppressive power dynamics intact (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Patton, 2006).

One goal of this study is to challenge the deficit ideology that underlies explorations of the academic performance of racially minoritized students by shifting the responsibility of academic performance from student aptitude to faculty development. Through the fifth tenet, CRT illuminates the intrinsic connection between the pursuit of more equitable educational outcomes among racially minoritized students and the behaviors of white faculty (or what's in one's own best interests). Interest convergence also illustrates how the interests of racially minoritized populations can be undermined by white interests (or the self-interests of White people) (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Harper et al., 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000). A critical race theory framework can shed light on the ways in which TLC practitioners make meaning of inclusive pedagogical practices, identifying the racialized structures, deficit ideologies, and white interests that undergird their development and application.

Theory of Racialized Organizations

The theory of racialized organizations, introduced by Victor Ray in 2019, rejects race neutrality by bringing together key concepts of organizational theory and critical race theory. This framework allows researchers to move their analysis of organizations beyond individual prejudice and racialized motivation, to examining organizational processes, which then reinforce the “larger racial order” (Ray, 2019, pg. 27). Similar to the ways in which Ray addresses the gap in organizational theory, this framing addresses and magnifies individual acts of discrimination in ways that critical race theory has not by giving it structure across a multi-level system. Ray (2019) argues that “organizations are racial structures that reproduce (and challenge) racialization processes” (p. 27). Similarly, teaching and learning centers are organizations situated within a broader racialized institutional and societal context.

The theory of racialized organizations employs four tenets, the first of which is based on the idea that racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency (e.g. collective action) of racial groups (2019). Like a dam, those at the top shape and control the agency of the employees (Ray, 2019). This might be done through the controlling of schedules and the managing of time. It may also be accomplished by governing the location of the employee within the hierarchy of the organization — those with less power, at the bottom, are given less control over their work, and therefore have less control over the way they spend their time at work (Ray, 2019; Wingfield & Alston, 2014). A worker’s influence over organizational policy and procedure is diminished the lower the worker falls within the tiers of the hierarchy (Ray, 2019; Wingfield & Alston, 2014). This will become particularly salient when examining the racial make-up of teaching and learning centers where white women have traditionally made up the majority of the profession, white men have proliferated higher echelons of leadership, and Developers of Color, if even

represented, by and large fall into positions along the lowest tier (POD Network, 2016; Stanley & Ouellett, 2000).

In the second tenet, racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources. Ray (2019) positions the white organization as being perceived of as normative and neutral while non-white organizations are often seen as deviant. This is legitimized through the laundering of “racially neutral bureaucratic processes” that enforce organizational structure along racial lines (i.e. white vs. non-white) (Gusa, 2010; Ray, 2019; Wingfield & Alston, 2013). Teaching and learning centers’ relationship (or lack thereof) with diversity, equity, and inclusion units and programs provide an illustrative context for exploring forms of occupational segregation (Gusa, 2010; Harris, 1995; Stanley, 2010). The third tenet of the theory of racialized organizations states: whiteness is a credential (Ray, 2019). Credentials are typically understood to be objective and based on the organization’s assessment of the criteria required to perform a job (allowing organizations to claim to be racially neutral) (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Harris, 1995). Implicit bias, however, manifests in hiring and is visible in an organizational hierarchy where People of Color are either not present at all or not evenly distributed within the makeup of the organization (Artze-Vega, 2019; Mighty et al., 2010). This bias, based on socially constructed attributes around race, is indicative of the unspoken credential that is whiteness (Ray, 2019). The importance of possessing academic legitimacy to be deemed credible by faculty participating in TLC programming will serve as another context worthy of further exploration (Harris, 1995; Stanley, 2010).

Ray’s final theoretical tenet is that the decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice is often racialized (2019). “Commitments made to equitable practices often serve only as a ceremonial, public relations function but do little to change the racial distribution of

organizational power” (Ray, 2019 p. 42). Echoing Bonilla-Silva, Ray (2019) asserts that the current body of knowledge in critical race theory acknowledges that racism is systemic and institutionalized but does not adequately address the role of organizations in the process of racialization (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Utilizing an organizational theory offers the structure upon which to situate that process. Stanley (2018) suggests that faculty developers within these roles must consider and seek opportunities to enhance their own awareness, skills, and understanding of positionality as they work with faculty.

Critical Consciousness

Freire’s (1998) concept of *conscientizacao* – deeper consciousness or critical consciousness – challenges us to “intervene in reality in order to change it” (Freire, 1998, p.4). Critical consciousness involves (1) coming to an understanding of one’s social identities and their role in perpetuating oppression and (2) acquiring knowledge of historical and contemporary manifestations of systemic oppression. Critical consciousness requires a process of developing an awareness of one’s social identities and the societal conditions that create and sustain oppressive dynamics between social identity groups (hooks, 2010; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Racial consciousness, more specifically, is characterized as a complex understanding about the racialized nature of the world, requiring critical reflection on how assumptions, privilege, and biases about race shape a person’s worldview (Haynes & Patton, 2019).

Critical consciousness emphasizes individuals’ ability to reflect critically on their sociopolitical environment and take action toward change (Diemer et al., 2006). It focuses on identity reflection, analysis of power and privilege, and examination of assumptions (McDonough, 2009). Critical reflection is defined as critically analyzing the various forms of oppression that lead to social inequity and injustice. It also leads to the moral rejection of those

inequities that restrict well-being and human agency (Watts et al., 2011). People who possess critical consciousness also have the capacity to question their own place in society, to grow intellectually and emotionally, and to transform their social realities (Gatimu, 2009). Considered as the second step in critical consciousness development following critical reflection, critical action involves acting on the sociopolitical environment to create social change through activism and civic engagement (Diemer et al., 2014).

Teaching and Learning as a Field of Knowledge

Faculty development emerged in U.S. higher education in the social and economic turbulence of the late 1950s and 1960s (Ouellett, 2010). With the advent of the student rights movement across higher education in the United States, “students began to demand more control over what they studied (for example, the development of ethnic studies programs) and to assert the right to give teachers feedback on what they found to be boring and irrelevant courses” (Gaff & Simpson, 1994, p. 170). Additionally, students demanded a role in the determination of the content of the curriculum, expecting that courses would be, in their perceptions, more relevant to their experiences, concerns, and aspirations. As higher education continued to experience change and student-centered learning became the focus, there was a strong need for change in faculty approaches in the classroom. Traditional methods were becoming dull and defeated the purpose of student success. With this in mind, new professors needed to develop new and improved methods of delivery (Fink, 2013a). The shift in student expectations meant that these professors had to have a means to obtain these skills either through graduate training programs or on-the-job training. The availability of graduate training was limited, so many higher education institutions sought to provide their own internal training via TLCs. These centers, armed with

various teaching and learning philosophies, would improve student-learning outcomes with the faculty development that was provided (Fink, 2013a).

Fink (2013a) defined faculty development as combinations of activities that engage faculty members in ongoing professional development that enhance their instruction and curriculum design to meet the educational needs of students and greater society while fulfilling the mission of the higher education institution. Faculty development serves to help faculty members to develop student- or learner-focused teaching methods. These methods focus on other modes of delivery rather than the traditional lecture style. Although one needed formal training to teach at the primary and secondary levels, there was no rigorous training intended for teaching in higher education (Fink, 2013a, 2013b; Schwartz & Haynie, 2013). The realization that training was necessary materialized in the mid-20th century, but efforts to address the need were not very successful. If there is no formal training available, one tends to resort to the traditional method of lecture or adapt the style one experienced as a student. This essentially resulted in the presentation of knowledge via lecture and lab for sciences and classroom discussions for humanities subjects (Fink, 2013a, 2013b). Although many faculty were hired for research expertise, they possessed limited skills in pedagogical techniques; therefore, faculty development programs were necessary to help faculty members develop effective teaching and delivery methods (Beckerman, 2010; Estep et al., 2012).

Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

Ouellett (2010) acknowledges how an increased number of faculty became dissatisfied with the narrowing of resources and sole focus on research as the definitive benchmark of faculty accomplishment. Recognizing the changing landscape, faculty and foundations began to argue for a broader definition of scholarship and an exploration of other venues for faculty fulfillment

and vitality (Liston & Rahimi, 2017). The groups hoped that a broadened definition of scholarship would allow faculty to increase engagement in the praxis of teaching, as well as service. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) emerged as an offspring of faculty development to create a movement in higher education that revolutionizes scholarship in relation to teaching. Many faculty receive training as experts within their field of study and are passionate about conducting new and innovative research. There often lies a tension for faculty as they weigh the competing demands of teaching and scholarship, where success in one reduces success in the other.

SoTL serves as a vehicle designed to dissolve these tensions between research and teaching (Liston & Rahimi, 2017) by seeking to transform the academy through its three-fold agenda:

1) recognizing teaching as inquiry relevant to research; 2) recognizing the act of teaching as a public rather than private endeavor, and thus related to the formation of community or commons; and 3) recognizing teaching as a scholarly endeavor, and thus subject to peer review and evaluation. (p. xii)

Liston and Rahimi (2017) describe the second item of the SoTL agenda as having transformative potential to make meaning of the classroom as a community and thus implicate teaching and learning to move beyond solely a set of mechanics to a praxis that calls us to explore our relationship to one another and ourselves to the world. The SoTL agenda has created a change in higher education where faculty are approaching their teaching in self-reflective ways that enhance pedagogy and support student learning. Faculty who engaged more deeply in the analysis of their teaching and learning processes, holistically, have often functioned as the

driving force behind linking SoTL to pedagogical changes related diversity and inclusion (Ouellett, 2010).

Development of Teaching & Learning Centers

A discussion of teaching and learning centers (TLCs) and their functions is necessary to comprehend its origins, purpose, structure, and initiatives. Schwartz and Haynie (2013) noted that, as TLCs developed across the nation, they had names such as “center for teaching excellence, teaching enhancement center, or the center for teaching and learning” (p. 101). The initiation of faculty-development centers, such as TLCs, dates back to the 1960s (Schumann et al., 2013). Lee (2010) stated that the first teaching center in the nation materialized at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in 1962 and was called the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst soon followed with the Clinic to Improve University Teaching. Since this time, there has been a steady rise in the number of educational development centers across the nation and abroad (Lee, 2010).

Kaplan and Cook (2011) explained that teaching and learning centers are a “relatively new part of the administrative structure in academe; most have been established in the period from 1990-2010” (p. 1). Although there are many teaching and learning centers across a variety of institutions, they exist within five basic structural organizations ranging from centralized units to advisory committees to state system-wide offices (Lee, 2010). While TLCs do appear at liberal arts institutions, community colleges, and specialized schools, the bulk of the centers are part of research-oriented colleges and universities (Kaplan & Cook, 2011). Lee (2010) noted that teaching learning centers can develop from a variety of initiatives, ranging from system-wide to a push from faculty or administration for the continued focus teaching and learning excellence. It

is important to note that TLCs need to fit the institutional structure and culture and must differ in prioritizing faculty development goals (Kaplan & Cook, 2011; Sorcinelli & Austin, 2006).

TLCs were created as a response to public criticism of higher education, especially regarding student learning outcomes and success (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Kaplan & Cook, 2011). The purpose of these centers has been to provide meaningful professional development for faculty focused on teaching effectiveness in combination with increased comprehension of student learning theories (Kaplan & Cook, 2011; Schwartz & Haynie, 2013). The centers realized that allowing faculty members to become effective takes time and growth, and some require a support system to aid in this process. In response, centers offered sustained teaching improvement services and advice often delivered by faculty colleagues who had been granted course release time (Ouellett, 2010). Throughout the past few decades, faculty developers have shifted from being pedagogically focused lead by individual faculty to more networking focused collectives of teaching and learning center practitioners who seek to work collaboratively with faculty as co-learners (Liston & Rahimi, 2017; Ouellett, 2010). As these networks have broadened, faculty and practitioners have sought to tie the practice of teaching to research, often a more primary responsibility at research institutions.

Challenges in Teaching and Learning Centers

Although there is an abundance of evidence that student learning is enhanced by diversity in the learning environment, many college faculty continue teaching without adjusting their instructional practices to meet the needs of the diversity of students in their classes (Garcia & Smith, 1996). Teaching workloads, time constraints, administrative difficulties, and diminishing student academic performance were all factors contributing to faculty motivation to engage with teaching and learning. While these factors hold significant weight, it is also important to consider

the ways in which the practice of teaching has become antithetical to professional identity, particularly in the sciences (Brownell & Tanner, 2012). Faculty members often cite a focus on teaching instead of research as a detriment to their careers (Scott & Scott, 2016). Entwistle et al. (2014) examined how faculty can face difficulty in adopting more effective teaching methods, citing underfunding, discrepancies in departmental policies, and institutional priorities (promotion is based on research instead of good teaching).

According to Forgie, et al. (2018), TLC administrators agreed that faculty and administrative emphasis of research over teaching was a significant challenge to TLC missions although some did acknowledge a growing shift toward a greater valuing of effective teaching, especially as a factor of performance evaluation. In many institutions, research is prioritized over teaching as a part of the tenure and promotion process. This prioritization can often lead to a perception that good teaching is less valued by administration. Forgie, et al. (2018) explained that many directors saw few examples of faculty promotions as the result of effective teaching, but many could give examples of bad teaching as the cause for not being promoted. For TLCs to maximize their effectiveness, teaching and research should hold equal weight in the evaluation process. Only when institutions and broader disciplines recognize the inherent value of such activities and provide structural support for their execution will widespread progress in equity, access, and inclusion be made (Haynes, 2017; Orr & Hammig, 2009).

Increased Faculty Workload

Because faculty are often overloaded and tasked with teaching, scholarship, and service, time can present a significant challenge for using a TLC. It takes time to develop new teaching methods and programming, which many faculty do not have. Unfortunately, insufficient training, time, and incentives are among the most commonly cited institutional barriers for faculty change,

and the focus of most of the current efforts to understand and promote faculty pedagogical change (Brownell & Tanner, 2012). In addition to a considerable teaching load, faculty face a variety of other competing priorities, therefore, institutional support and prioritization is essential for pedagogical improvement (Evans et al., 2017). Along with time, fear might also be a factor in resisting new teaching methodologies. Forgie et al. (2018) explained that the “underlying fear of failure, or the fear of being penalized for failing with a new teaching technique or technologies” can keep faculty away from using a TLC (p. 7). Another concern is that the TLC at some institutions is shifting from a developmental to an evaluative role. As more TLC directors are being asked to weigh in on faculty teaching as part of the tenure/promotion process, the “safety” of the TLC is at risk. Fewer faculty will feel comfortable approaching the TLC for help (Forgie, et al., 2018). However, the evaluative role could also increase the use of TLC programming as more faculty will work to improve their teaching to receive high evaluations (Forgie, et al., 2018).

Budgetary Support

TLCs are steadily increasing their roles on campus; however, budgets continue to remain stagnant. In many cases, budgets are enough to cover salaries and benefits for a few permanent positions (Forgie, et al., 2018). Honan et al. (2013) stated that investing in faculty development is essential for creating more effective instruction. This investment should not be seen as a negative. In contrast, they explained, “expenditures for professional development of the faculty should lead to transformed learning outcomes” (p. 40). Effective teaching and learning can provide great benefit to an institution in the form of student retention and graduation rates. On the other hand, a lack of investment in teaching and learning development can stagnate a college campus and create a culture devoid of educational innovation. As Honan et al. (2013) pointed

out, “an institution cannot afford not to promote and achieve faculty development” (p. 43).

Without definitive funding from institutions, TLCs can have difficulty in creating the most dynamic programming. Sorcinelli (2002) explained that administrative support and participation is of vital importance to the success of a TLC. If faculty cannot see, through budgeting, visibility, and reward, how administration demonstrates support for the TLC mission, they are less likely to use the center’s services. Without administrative support, TLC practitioners are left to invest a “considerable” amount of time to seek out and write grants to develop new programs (Sorcinelli, 2002, p. 17).

Limited Action and Accountability

There has existed a significant need to provide effective and dedicated support outside of professional development workshops to faculty engaging in innovative teaching strategies such as converting to a student-centered course. In a study conducted by May, et al. (2011), the researchers discovered a disconnect between what faculty learned in professional development workshops and how they applied that knowledge to their classrooms. Although faculty reported satisfaction with professional development workshops, video observations revealed that a majority were still using a lecture-based design in their classes (May et al., 2011). May et al. (2011) argued that in addition to workshops, an “on-site network of support” (p. 557) as well as “direct practice and feedback” on student-centered learning (p. 557). Prince and Igbineveka (1995) argue that faculty need to transform their consciousness to understand that the creation of knowledge must have a liberating purpose behind it rooted in an analysis of their own positionality. In fact, the literature strongly recommends that faculty should engage in critical reflection of themselves and their teaching practices to understand their own identity and recognize the biases that inform their teaching practices (Quaye & Harper, 2007; Salazar et al.,

2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teaching and learning centers have the capacity to provide this support and collaboration.

How the program is administered is important for faculty buy-in. If they deem the program as something forced or punitive, they could potentially react negatively. If, however, the content and program are deemed trustworthy, the faculty will react more positively. Faculty involvement in creation of the program is imperative for a successful center (Smith & Gadbury-Amyot, 2014). Facilitators are instrumental in the success of any professional teaching development and must work to create a desire on the part of faculty to engage in the deeper level of learning necessary for change to occur. Sorcinelli (2002) emphasized that faculty are often the best motivators for other faculty. Centers can provide opportunities for faculty to learn from each other and have conversations about good teaching. For any program to be successful, the teaching and learning research community must be involved in order to create the most effective professional development agendas (Borko, 2004).

Increased focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Colleges and universities are seeing immense change in the needs of today's diversifying student population. Austin and Sorcinelli (2013) stated that increased access to higher education has created increased diversity in student populations. Students vary by age, academic background, and academic aspirations. There are growing numbers of first-generation college students, international students, adult learners, LGBTQ students, and students with disabilities representing a variety of ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds and affiliations (Lee, 2010). Austin and Sorcinelli (2013) added that students seek colleges that provide easily accessible and relevant educational opportunities, offer opportunities in the labor market, and are flexible enough to accommodate their personal and professional lives. These changes have led to an

increased offering of courses at more convenient times such as evenings and weekends, new formats, and new delivery modes within higher education (McKee & Tew, 2013). The COVID-19 pandemic created an urgent need for faculty to learn the technologies necessary to move their courses online amid increasing worry, anxiety, and the unsettling reality (Imad, 2021). Faculty members must develop an awareness of changes in student needs and cultivate curricula and teaching methods suitable for diverse learning environments (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013).

Krutky (2008) noted that, as higher education becomes more diverse, internal and external agencies necessitate higher education prepare students to be globally cognizant citizens. Stanley (2010) indicated that the challenges and opportunities presented by increased diversity forces faculty members to critically examine their traditional style of teaching and develop different methods that serve the needs of a diverse learning population. Faculty must use pedagogical strategies that promote students' ability to engage across difference in constructive ways. Wallace (2000) argues that the increased diversity and growing interaction between people with culturally diverse backgrounds necessitates that faculty have cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes, such as respect for others and suspending judgement to understand and engage constructively with their students. Faculty members must acknowledge changes that support learning with diverse student needs and cultivate curricula and teaching methods suitable for diverse learning environments (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). Bok (2006) adds that faculty in higher education institutions do not put enough emphasis on pedagogy but are more involved in discussing course logistical concerns rather than discussing best pedagogical approaches to teach a particular course to achieve educational goals. Bok (2006) maintains that most often, faculty members are reluctant to modify their traditional ways of teaching and learn new skills. Changing demographics demand that faculty developers address diversity so institutions and

their faculty may teach in ways that acknowledge and empower students with minoritized identities (Artze-Vega et al., 2014).

Stanley (2010) asserted that many higher education institutions look to faculty development centers, such as a TLC, to help face instructional challenges and support teaching and learning values of the institution. Ouellett (2010) explained the importance for faculty developers to deepen their understanding of diversity and multiculturalism. Centers such as the TLC require awareness and understanding of how campuses and the wider community are affected by diversity and social justice issues (Ouellett, 2010). Teaching and learning centers have the ability to provide new resources and improved teaching and learning practices. Stanley (2010) cautioned that, when considering designing a faculty-development program that addresses diversity, there should be institutional commitment, strong facilitation, and ongoing professional development. Orr and Hammig (2009) suggest that faculty developers within these roles must consider and seek opportunities to enhance their own consciousness as they work with faculty. TLCs have the opportunity to help students, faculty members, and leaders embrace and implement practices that represent and advance equity and inclusion.

As one of the largest professional organizations dedicated to advancing the research and practice of educational development in higher education, the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD) has established itself as a standard-bearer in the field. As such, it is noteworthy that the 2018-2023 POD Network strategic plan puts an explicit emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The document states, “This priority reflects . . . the recognition that progress toward equity requires great intentionality in order to reverse marginalization of historically underserved and underrepresented populations at all levels” (POD Network, n.d., p. 4). Grooters (2014) set out to measure the organization’s engagement with

diversity by analyzing the journal titles and abstracts of peer-reviewed articles (published from 1982 through 2011 in *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*) and conference session titles for POD annual conferences (from 1977 through 2011). She found that POD has not been consistently engaging with diversity at a significant level and should focus on deliberate expansion. The study discovered that it is necessary for POD as an organization to increase the variety of ways that diversity is addressed by educational developers:

Questions of class, disability, gender identity, religion, indigenous identity, and sexuality all have been underrepresented in both our conference sessions and our journal articles. This, of course, is not to suggest that we are somehow focusing too much on questions of race, nationality, or gender, but that as we seek to further increase our attention to diversity, we must also be intentional in supporting work that expands our understanding of the needs of these populations that go largely unmentioned in the POD scholarship (Grooters, 2014, p. 15).

Anderson (2008) proposed that faculty could benefit from a well-designed and supported, comprehensive, and systematic initiative. Several institutions have sought to create structural supports for faculty development on inclusive pedagogy.

Pedagogical Frameworks

While the use of inclusive pedagogical models to alter or transform current educational teaching practices has been present in educational settings for several decades (Tuitt, 2003), understanding what types of pedagogy work for certain groups and why these practices are successful is still unknown in many instances (Haynes & Joseph, 2016). In recent years, there has been an increased focus on how to respond to, change, and diversify curricula and teaching practices to foster inclusive classroom environments (Salazar et al., 2010). Inclusive pedagogy is

a term Tuitt (2003) uses to describe, “An emerging body of literature that advocates teaching practices that embrace the whole student in the learning process” (p. 243). The development and implementation of inclusive pedagogy as a theoretical framework is understood through five characteristics (Tuitt, 2003):

- Faculty-student interaction focused on relationship building;
- Shared power in the construction of knowledge;
- Dialogical professor-student interaction fostering respectful, collaborative, and challenging learning environments;
- Activation of student voice, particularly students from marginalized groups, unlocking a broader range of voice and expression;
- Utilization of personal narratives connecting life experiences to the subject matter.

These tenets have evolved into a framework that includes additional principles of critical and inclusive pedagogies to combat the current volatile climates on campuses (Tuitt et al., 2016). The tenets of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogies (CIP) draw upon paradigms and theoretical models that promote liberation and critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). For example, Tuitt et al. (2016) highlight that CIPs help students personalize the subject matter by modeling for them how to make connections between the concepts under study and their lived experiences. Also, CIPs demonstrate an understanding that the classroom/content is not race-class-gender-sexuality neutral by making pedagogical decisions that center on students’ intersectional and multiple identities. Additionally, CIPs employ interactive and dynamic teaching practices that position students as ‘knowers’. It further utilizes diverse and interdisciplinary content that disrupts dominant viewpoints and narratives. Finally, CIPs are courageous, transparent, and equity-

minded because they engage in the self-work of developing critical consciousness and evaluating its influence on faculty behavior (Stewart et al., 2020).

Research studies indicate that a student's cognitive development, ability to think critically, and problem-solving skills are enhanced when learning in a classroom incorporates inclusive pedagogy and curricula (Liston & Rahimi, 2017; Quaye & Harper, 2007; Tuitt, 2003). With an understanding that educational institutions can help create an inclusive atmosphere by making a conscious effort to consider the unique needs of all students (Salazar et al., 2010), scholars have pursued critical, culturally responsive, and universal design frameworks to enhance inclusive teaching and learning practices. Utilizing a CRT analysis, I examine the racialized structures, deficit ideologies, and white interests present in or disrupted by each of these frameworks.

Disrupting Racialized Structures

To address social injustice in institutions, such as education, critical pedagogy was founded upon philosophical traditions that “critically interrogate the pedagogical interrelationships between culture, economics, ideology and power” (Darder et al., 2009, p. 23). Freire (1998) describes the framework as an approach to teaching for freedom that bridges teaching and politics through dialogue. Critical pedagogues challenge the political neutrality of curriculum, pedagogy, and education systems and seek to develop students' sociopolitical consciousness through co-investigation, problem-posing, and dialogue (Haynes & Joseph, 2016). Freire (1998) describes this process as *conscientização*, or “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 35). Central to critical pedagogy is an analysis of the relationship among sociopolitical power,

social processes, and the construction of knowledge (McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007; Tuitt et al., 2016).

By identifying relations of dominant, hegemonic culture, the framework empowers learners to engage in critical reflection that encourages the creation of a counterculture in alignment with CRT tenets, acknowledging racism as endemic and white dominance as pervasive (Braa & Callero, 2006). Scholars have expanded the scope of critical pedagogy using the term as an umbrella encompassing a variety of theoretical perspectives that encourage learners to think critically (Liston & Rahimi, 2017). Building from the “borderlands” work of Anzaldúa (1987), Giroux’s (1992) border pedagogy compels students to explore the fragile nature of their identities across borderlands of language, voice, and experience. Rendón (2009) pushes these boundaries by embracing a *sentipensante* (sensing/thinking) pedagogy representing the union and coexistence of intuition, introspection, and the inner life alongside intellectual development. Solórzano and Yosso (2000) broaden the work to articulate a critical race pedagogy providing an analysis of racial, ethnic, and gender subordination that relies mostly on the counterhegemonic practices of Educators of Color. Each of these applications of critical pedagogy prioritize steps to facilitate greater dialogue, critique, counter hegemony, and praxis. Unfortunately, these core elements of critical pedagogy are often lacking in postsecondary classroom teaching practices which allows for interest (di)vergence to undermine this approach (Braa & Callero, 2006; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007).

Critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and anti-racist pedagogy are responses to education, which has often been exclusionary and functioned to assimilate students by normalizing dominant knowledge and values through the hidden curriculum (Darder et al., 2009; McLaren, 2009). Education continues to maintain the dominant system through the recent

corporatization of higher education, where education becomes a commodity/service, provided by faculty/staff, and consumed by students (Mohanty, 2003). At the same time, education can be a site for resisting dominant ideologies, for example, through courses that foster critical analytical skills. These critical pedagogies challenge the hidden curriculum and critique the banking system of education (Freire, 1998). In addition, these pedagogies critique the positivist assumptions of knowledge, of an objective and universal truth, which fails to acknowledge the embedded hegemony of dominant systems. These approaches critique the power relations in knowledge production, which can be oppressive as well as oppositional and transformative. As Freire (1998) states, “[t]he solution is not to “integrate” them [the oppressed] into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become “beings for themselves” (p. 61).

Employing a critical pedagogical approach, Shine (2011) insisted that the classroom will remain a racialized structure so long as the system of higher education in the United States continues to reinforce structural racism and white privilege. *Structural racism* is a method of analysis that explores how historical and contemporary systems or institutions distribute symbolic or material advantages based on race (Shine, 2011). As a form of resistance, critical pedagogues employ behaviors in their classrooms aimed at dismantling and redistributing the structure of power in their classrooms originally being maintained by the perpetuation of racial hierarchies (Koro-Ljungberg, 2007; Shine, 2011). Successful execution of this approach requires active participation in the learning process from both the faculty member and the students (Freire, 1998). Two critical mechanisms are being set in motion when this process takes place. First, examinations of race, class, gender, and other oppressive structures are being moved from the private to the public sphere (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). Secondly, white faculty, in particular, begin to let go of preoccupations with preserving white self-interests and racial superiority.

Koro-Ljungberg (2007) asserts that when critical pedagogues grapple with the racialized nature of our society, they are also able to develop a curriculum that extends beyond the promotion of cultural competency to an exploration of how their students' professional contributions facilitate and disrupt racial injustice.

While anti-racist pedagogy recognizes intersecting identities, intersectionality has also been used to flatten differences, and thus, Luft (2009) argues for the strategic usage of single-issue approaches in certain contexts. Anti-racist pedagogy attempts to teach about race and racism in a way that fosters critical analytical skills, which reveal the power relations behind racism and how race has been institutionalized in U.S. society to create and justify inequalities. It is also about how one teaches, even in courses where race is not the subject matter. It begins with the faculty's awareness and self-reflection of their social position and leads to the application of this analysis not just in their teaching, but also in their discipline, research, and departmental, university, and community work. In other words, anti-racist pedagogy is an organizing effort for institutional and social change that is much broader than teaching in the classroom (Kishimoto, 2018).

Sustaining White Normativity

First conceptualized as culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), Ladson-Billings (1995) advocates for a pedagogy designed to prepare Students of Color for their participation in a white-dominated world. However, unlike critical pedagogues, which focus primarily on classroom-level processes, culturally responsive pedagogy centralizes teacher identity and students' academic outcomes (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). As a pedagogical framework, CRP aims to preserve students' cultures and counter negative effects of mainstream messages about those cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1992). In critically assessing CRP, there is a danger that faculty may

inadvertently use “stereotyped ideas about how and what [...] [students] should learn” (Dutro et al., 2008, p. 37) highlighting the importance of understanding how racism is socially constructed and deeply embedded within our socialization. Even with preparation and knowledge, faculty cannot predict how and whether students will relate to the material. Therefore, developing an instructor’s cultural competence is important rather than solely focusing on students’ cultural competence (Milner, 2011). The practice of CRP requires critical reflection by the educator to examine assumptions and biases, which requires remapping towards interest convergence and recognition of endemic nature of racism. A less prominent part of this theory is to challenge racism and other issues of social injustice (Young, 2010). Ladson-Billings (2014) expressed dismay that this critical, activist aspect of CRP has not been as widely adopted. This means engaging students to examine issues that affect their lives and communities. Using the pedagogy to create sociopolitical consciousness “allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162). Students engage the relationship between dominant cultures and the cultural groups of which they are a part (Hyland, 2009), which can help them to identify and respond to inequities in their local communities and the larger culture (Milner, 2011).

Gay (2000) carries this approach forward advocating for a culturally responsive pedagogy that utilizes the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching more effectively. Culturally responsive educators make the culture of the classroom inclusive of all students (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). They use constructivist methods to bridge students’ cultural references to academic skills and concepts, engage students in critical reflection about their own lives and societies, facilitate students’ cultural competence, and explicitly name and critique “discourses of

power” (Delpit, 1992, p. 297). Specifically, culturally responsive educators call for the analysis of educators’ political ideologies, instructional preparation, technical skills, and readiness to effect change, and assert that faculty must be specifically trained to interrupt social and educational inequity (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Aligning with a CRT analysis, a strength of culturally responsive pedagogy surfaces in how it places as much emphasis on instructors’ political stances as their techniques (Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Culturally responsive educators are attuned to hegemonic classroom practices and willing to examine and reflect upon their own social, educational, and political identities. They consider their students’ out of school lives, family structures, interests, beliefs about schooling, and prior experiences with subject matter, and the demographic, religious, and sociopolitical context of the community in which they teach (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Building upon the work of these scholars, culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) pursues a fuller realization of what it means to sustain diverse and dynamic youth of color and non-dominant youths’ literate and cultural practices and learning across classrooms and communities (Alim & Paris, 2017). This shift emphasizes cultural pluralism and equality as specific pedagogical goals, resisting political and educational practices that emphasize uniformity and homogenization. Thus, teaching should not just relate to students’ diversity but “support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (Paris, 2012, p. 95). As CSP asks those committed to teaching toward justice to push beyond approaches grounded only in “tolerance,” “responsiveness,” and “relevance,” and toward “culturally pluralist” classrooms that sustain practices of Communities of Color. Recognizing the endemic nature and social construction of race it further asks, “What would our pedagogies look like if [the White gaze]

(and the kindred patriarchal, cisheteronormative, English-monolingual, ableist, classist, xenophobic, Judeo-Christian gazes) weren't the dominant one?" (Morrison, 1998, as cited in Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 2). It is from this view that they argue justice-oriented teaching begins.

Culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and culturally sustaining pedagogies primarily aim to invoke a sense of membership in the classroom among racially minoritized students (Barrington, 2004; Ofori-Dankwa & Lane, 2000). The goal is to empower students "with knowledge and practices to operate successfully in mainstream society" (Osborne, 1996, p. 292). Additionally, much of the literature works from the original motivation of CRP to improve student learning and achievement. But as CRT has indicated through the attribution of whiteness as normative, foregrounding inclusiveness of the other reinforces whiteness as prescriptive and does little to alter the overall educational outcomes of racially minoritized students (Katz, 1983). Dis/ability critical race theorist conceptualize the term color evasiveness to demonstrate the social construction of race and ability while simultaneously confronting the social and material consequences of racism and ableism (Annamma et al., 2017). Ryan and Dixson (2006) argue that faculty who make pedagogical choices rooted in color evasive ideologies maintain racial inequality in the classroom and beyond. Color evasiveness in classroom teaching perpetuates a cycle of failure to the detriment of all students, especially those who are racially minoritized (Gordon, 2005). An overemphasis on inclusion, to the near exclusion of addressing racial inequity, recenters whiteness and allows those with racial privilege to remain the subject of investigation (Ryan & Dixson, 2006). Students of Color then, who are outside of the dominant culture, are forced to assimilate to participate in the learning process (Harbour et al., 2003).

Reinforcing Deficit Ideologies

First articulated by architect Ronald Mace in the 1980s, universal design originally focused on eliminating architectural barriers for persons with physical disabilities (Scott et al., 2003). Over the past few decades, various scholars have modified the concept to include considerations of diverse learners and introduced the theory of universal design to higher education to enhance accessible instruction (Silver et al., 1998). Universal instructional design (UID) principles emphasize equitable and flexible teaching based on simple and intuitive instructional practices with careful attention to ensure that material is presented in a variety of formats to create access for all learners regardless of disability. In a similar effort to equate the theory of universal design to education environments, the Center for Applied Special Technologies (2012) developed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) that introduced three central tenets for postsecondary instruction (Zeff, 2007):

- Multiple means of representation: Course content should be expressed using a variety of methods to assist all students, including those with learning disabilities;
- Multiple means of expression: Expression of student understanding should be solicited using an array of modes;
- Multiple means of engagement: Faculty should be cognizant of differing backgrounds and motivation of students and provide means of interaction with course material that support diverse learners. (p. 30)

UDL relegates the medical or deficit model of disability in favor of a more inclusive paradigm in which students with disabilities are seen as part of a continuum of learners with various strengths and weaknesses (Orr & Hammig, 2009). As such, the framework seeks to shift the burden of change to the environment and faculty rather than the student.

Universal instructional design is a widely accepted approach to classroom teaching within the academy. With its emphasis on creating inclusive classroom environments, UID rejects the idea that there is one single approach to teaching that engages all students in the learning process (Mino, 2004). UID encourages faculty to meaningfully integrate opportunities for students with differing abilities, interest, and backgrounds to actively engage in the classroom from the start, as opposed to it being an afterthought. But despite its claim of meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body, UID emphasizes creating inclusive classroom environments that address students' varying needs of ability (e.g., cognitive and physical). Expectations to meet the needs of all students promote a hokey or false sense of hope that ignores the breadth and depth of social inequities that preceded it (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). It also presumes that faculty who do so are seemingly addressing the needs of racially diverse students and the white supremacy embedded in their classroom as well (Johnson, 2002). In applying a CRT analysis to the literature, shortcomings are revealed through a lack of explicit recognition of racism as endemic and a tacit mapping of (dis)ability as whiteness.

It is important to note that race-neutral policies, pedagogy, and practices have not led to race-neutral outcomes; instead, the opposite is true (Annamma & Morrison, 2018). Color-evasion, avoiding discussions about race and racism, has contributed to multiply-marginalized Students of Color being the outflows of education ecologies (Annamma et al., 2017). Dysfunctional education ecologies are ones in which participants explicitly evade discussions on racism, white supremacy, and intersecting oppressions even when they produce inequitable racialized outcomes (Milner, 2010). Drawing from the field of functional ecology, Annamma & Morrison (2018) frame the current education system as a web of dysfunctional ecologies where something has gone wrong for multiply marginalized Students of Color. They argue that many

education settings are dysfunctional education ecologies, wherein multiply marginalized Students of Color are not imagined as valuable natural resources. When education ecologies are already dysfunctional for multiply marginalized Students of Color, there is no place where educators can be neutral bystanders (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Thus, we must unsettle the deficit perspectives embedded within UID of multiply marginalized students, their families, and communities (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). UID requires faculty to anticipate and be tolerant of differences among students with regard to prerequisite skills, pacing, and level of effort necessary to learn course content (Orr & Hammig, 2009). By doing so, the framework maintains a deficit ideology that centers tolerance instead of a more humanizing pedagogy (Annamma & Morrison, 2018).

Conclusion

While there is a growing body of research on critical and inclusive pedagogy in higher education, there remain significant gaps in the literature regarding how these frameworks are understood and engaged in teaching and learning centers. This review of literature intentionally began with an overview of the conceptual framework for the study which offers a lens for examining how CIPs contribute specifically to the advancement of racial equity in faculty development practice. To further explore the navigation of CIP practices in an embedded, institutional context, I then discussed the development and shifting practices within campus-based TLCs, drawing upon research that outlines the diverse institutional missions, structures, and contexts that inform the aims and direction of its practitioners. In the final section of the chapter, a variety of frameworks were offered and critiqued, but there remains a void in our understanding of how teaching and learning practitioners conceptualize and promote critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within their programs and resources. While the challenges are

clear, it is imperative that faculty and faculty developers understand that “to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (hooks, 1994, p.13). Many of my questions come back to pondering how we not only decrease classroom hostility but create a culture of possibility where transformative education unlocks the full potential of all students as both knowers and learners.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This critical qualitative single-case study investigates how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers. The literature review analyzed the history and evolution of these centers while also examining various pedagogical frameworks. However, there remains a gap in our understanding of how teaching and learning practitioners conceptualize and promote critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within their programs and resources. The following research questions guide this investigation:

- How does a teaching and learning center operationalize critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within its organizational structure?
 - In what ways does a teaching and learning center engage in and promote critical and inclusive pedagogical practices?
- How do sociopolitical contexts shape the operational mission of a teaching and learning center?
 - What internal and external factors shape how a teaching and learning center makes meaning of critical and inclusive pedagogy in its practices?

In this chapter, I discuss the research design, which employs a critical qualitative, case study methodology. I then outline the research procedures for data collection and analysis, validity, and reliability.

Critical Qualitative Research

Jones et al. (2014) explained that a paradigm is the lens through which a researcher may interpret the issue under study and the methodologies being applied to study it. The choice of paradigm both reflects and influences how the researcher sees the problem to be studied, the

questions to be asked, the methodology to be applied, and how the findings will be interpreted and used (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). The paradigm forms the foundation upon which the rest of the study is built, aligning with the methodology and methods chosen. This study draws upon critical qualitative research, which seeks to emancipate and critique status quo ideologies (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Critical qualitative research seeks to understand itself as a practice that engages with people to foster critical consciousness rather than simply describe social reality (Carspecken, 2012). This study employed critical qualitative research due to the intended goal of this research being to alleviate the burden on minoritized students to enhance classroom climate, urging faculty developers to take ownership, deepen their consciousness, and consistently work to advance knowledge that aims to dismantle pedagogical hegemony. For this study, I employed a constructivist paradigm influenced by critical theoretical perspectives, which I describe below. I then discuss how a case study methodology fits with these worldviews and the emergent nature of the research design.

Theoretical Perspective

To explore the experiences of teaching and learning center practitioners' understanding, negotiation, and engagement of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices, I use critical race theory (CRT), theory of racialized organizations (TRO), and critical consciousness to guide the design of the study, including data collection and analysis. This study is guided by critical race theory (CRT), which centers on factors such as race, gender, and class oppression. CRT was originally conceived as a legal counterdiscourse aimed at critiquing the role of the US legal system in upholding white supremacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). While CRT emphasizes race and racism as a central element, Victor Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations (TRO) furthers the aim with a more specific focus on racialization within structured organizational

theory. Finally, I use Freire's (1998) concept of *conscientizacao* – deeper consciousness or critical consciousness – to explore the process for an individual practitioner to reflect critically on their sociopolitical environment and take action toward change. Along with these three theoretical frameworks, my own perspective as a Black, cisgender, heterosexual man shapes my understanding, interpretation, and summary of the data and findings.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT), the epistemology that guides this study, explicitly names racism as the foundational (and normal) factor in the disadvantaged social positioning of racialized groups (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). As both an analytical and methodological approach, CRT elevates the perspectives of racially oppressed people as a means to challenge white racial dominance and elevate knowledge about racial oppression (Baszile, 2008; Reynolds & Mayweather, 2017; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). As a methodological tool, CRT is expressly interested in how racially oppressed groups use stories to challenge majoritarian narratives (i.e., those from the perspective of racially dominant groups). Majoritarian stories typically depict People of Color as inferior, deficient, or dependent while claiming to be objective (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Within my research, CRT is used to challenge the deficit ideology that underlies explorations of the academic performance of racially minoritized students by shifting the responsibility of academic performance from student aptitude to faculty development.

A critical race theory analysis is used to shed light on the ways in which TLC practitioners make meaning of inclusive pedagogical practices identifying the racialized structures, deficit ideologies, and white interests that undergird their development and application. As a qualitative approach, counternarratives are tools that capture the social knowledge of groups that would otherwise be defined by the perspectives and experiences of

those with power (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In validating the stories of racially marginalized groups, CRT asserts that racism in the US is endemic and ordinary. Furthermore, it demonstrates how integral colonial epistemologies and ontologies are in perpetuating racial oppression (Khalifa et al., 2016). Accordingly, Derrick Bell (1980, 2004) coined the term *interest convergence* to describe how social policies designed to redress racial injustices are strategically crafted to maintain white dominance. Accepting that race and racism always matter encourages an analysis of data that foregrounds the systemic and multifaceted ways that race subjugation operates. In my study, understanding how racism is simultaneously interwoven within institutional policies and everyday interactions fosters a holistic depiction of how domains of power influence the development and implementation of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices.

Theory of Racialized Organizations

Ray (2019) provided a theoretical framework for racialized organizations to explain how race is constituted within an organization. Echoing Bonilla-Silva, Ray (2019) asserts that the current body of knowledge in critical race theory acknowledges that racism is systemic and institutionalized but does not adequately address the role of organizations in the process of racialization (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Utilizing an organizational theory offers the structure upon which to situate that process. The theory of racialized organizations includes four tenets to understand how racism manifests within organizations. (Ray, 2019):

- Racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups
- Racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources
- Whiteness is a credential
- Decoupling is racialized

Further, Ray (2019) breaks down the racialization process across three primary levels: macro, meso, and micro with organizations. Thus, the tenets were used to guide the development of research questions for the study related to the exploration of internal and external factors shaping the operationalization of CIP practices. Additionally, TRO is used to guide the data analysis and interpretation process to understand faculty and staff engagement, resource allocation, credentialing, and how internal and external factors shape the operationalization of CIP practices within teaching and learning centers.

Critical Consciousness

A concept developed by Freire (1998), critical consciousness emphasizes individuals' capacity to critically reflect on their sociopolitical environment and take action for change (Diemer et al., 2006). It focuses on reflecting on identity, analyzing power and privilege, and examining assumptions (McDonough, 2009). Critical reflection is defined as the critical analysis of the various forms of oppression that lead to social inequity and injustice. This reflection also leads to the moral rejection of those inequities that restrict well-being and human agency (Watts et al., 2011). Individuals who possess critical consciousness can question their own place in society, grow intellectually and emotionally, and transform their social realities (Gatimu, 2009). Considered the second step in the development of critical consciousness, following critical reflection, critical action involves taking action in the sociopolitical environment to create social change through activism and civic engagement (Diemer et al., 2014). Stanley (2018) suggests that faculty developers leading critical and inclusive pedagogical practices must consider and seek opportunities to enhance their own awareness, skills, and understanding of positionality as they work with faculty. Therefore, survey questions were designed to ascertain participant perceptions of race consciousness, exploring their awareness of white privilege, race-based

oppression, and anti-racist pedagogical practice. Additionally, critical consciousness is used to analyze the role of professional socialization, motivation, and commitment to activism and institutional change work amongst practitioners involved in program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Case Study Methodology

To examine critical and inclusive pedagogical practices within teaching and learning centers, an instrumental, case study design is the most applicable methodology. A case study is an in-depth, holistic analysis of a contextual and bounded phenomenon within its real-world context (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Cases may include individuals, organizations, processes, programs, institutions, and even events (Stake, 2005). An instrumental case study design allows researchers to gain insight about an issue or phenomenon, illustrated by the chosen case (Stake, 1995). “The specific case is important because it uncovers knowledge about the phenomenon of interest, which may not be the case itself. Rather, the phenomenon of interest may be some other external interest” (Luck et al., 2006, p. 106; Stake, 2000). By employing an instrumental, case study design, this study considers one teaching and learning center as the bounded case with a specific focus on programs and resources related to critical and inclusive pedagogical practices. I use an instrumental approach to case study to inform changes in teaching and learning center policy and practice to better meet the needs of faculty and faculty developers.

While case study research can apply both quantitative and qualitative methods (Merriam, 2009), the research questions in this study, which focus on understanding “how” the phenomenon happens, align with a qualitative approach (Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative methods are utilized to achieve depth of understanding through focusing on process, understanding, and meaning making (Patton, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A

qualitative approach is compatible with this case study design because of its shared focus on “holistic description and explanation” (Luck et al., 2006; Merriam, 1998, p. 29). Further, because qualitative, case study research is based on the understanding that there are multiple interpretations of reality “constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6), a constructivist paradigm guides this study.

Site Selection

As Yin (2018) described, it's important to consider the reasons for selecting a particular site for a single site, instrumental case study is important. It is important to select a sample that maximizes what we can learn and is “likely to lead us to understandings, to assertions, perhaps even to modifying of generalizations” (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Thus, through purposeful sampling, I identified a TLC case that was information-rich and illuminative of the real-life phenomenon of interest – critical and inclusive pedagogical practices (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). For this study, historical and contemporary mission for supporting faculty development, established critical and inclusive and pedagogical practices, stand-alone organizational unit, and four-year institution characteristics were prioritized. The site selection criteria prioritize a case site that maximizes our understanding of the negotiation of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices over time through the perspectives of professional TLC staff members, partners, and key organizational documents. Finally, the study included a higher education institution where advocacy and activism related to faculty, faculty work, and classroom climate were present.

Research Methods

In this section, I outline the methods I used to collect data for my study, which includes recruitment procedures, interview protocols, document analysis procedures, and observation analysis. My approach to data collection is informed by Merriam’s (1998) characterization of

case studies as being particularistic (focuses on a specific situation, event, program, or phenomenon), descriptive (includes as many variables as possible to produce a rich, thick description), and heuristic (illuminates the reader's understanding). Case study research utilizes two-tier sampling to first select the cases to be studied and then to select a sample within each case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For both levels of sample selection, a set of criteria needs to be pre-determined (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this section, I will first describe my sampling procedures and criteria to identify a relevant case. I will then present my approach for within-case data collection through individual interviews and documents, using several pieces of evidence to "encourage convergent lines of inquiry," validate the findings, and enable a rich detailed description of the case (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014, p. 47). Collecting narrative and textual data across these sources provides an opportunity to understand the development and operationalization of critical and inclusive pedagogy in TLCs in relation to their racialized organizational contexts (Ray, 2019).

Recruitment Procedures

After developing a final list of potential cases and gathering a sense of potential interest, I selected a TLC that met the inclusion criteria. I approached the center director via email to communicate an overview of the study and request their participation. After securing a letter of cooperation (see Appendix D), I conducted snowball sampling and individually sent a participant outreach email (see Appendix A) and participant consent form (see Appendix C) to current staff members and program partners at the site. I also worked directly with the director to identify a date for an in-person visit to the center. To maintain confidentiality, the institution and center will be described in broad terms so that they cannot be identified.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Pseudonym	Role	Years at WCU	Identities
William	Faculty	2-3 years, current	Black, Disabled
Tyler	Senior Admin	4 years, current	white, cisgender man, heterosexual
Patricia	Senior Admin	3 years, current	white, female
Nate	Staff	1-2 years, current	white, man, husband, father
Gretal	Faculty	19 years, current	Latinx/Xicana, female, Queer
Stephanie	Staff	4 years, current	white, female
Alejandro	Faculty	17 years, current	Latinx, male
Sasha	Faculty	22 years, current	South Asian, female
Gloria	Faculty	20 years, current	Mestiza, female
Abby	Senior Admin	3 years, former	white, bisexual, woman
Tina	Staff	3-4 years, current	white, female
Sharon	Senior Admin	2 years, current	white, female
Esther	Staff	2 years, current	Asian, woman, immigrant, disabled
Remi	Staff	3-4 years, current	white, woman, Queer
Kelly	Faculty	20 years, current	white, non-binary
Austin	Faculty	26 years, current	white, male
Marie	Staff	10 years, current	white, female
Laura	Staff	1 year, former	Chicana, woman
Briana	Staff	2 years, current	white, female

Individual Interviews

According to Stake (1995), interviews are the “main road to multiple realities” (p. 64). They allow us to gain insight about people’s intentions, perspectives, and how they both shape and interpret the world around them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Additionally, critical race theorists see storytelling as an essential tenet in shedding light onto systematic and

structural oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Not only do interviews provide space for people who have routinely been marginalized to share their story, a process that is empowering, it also provides a necessary context that can challenge the dominant story (Ladson-Billings, 1998). As Ray (2019) described in his theory of racialized organizations, “individual institutional agents contribute to the overall mission and culture of an organization and therefore will provide support in understanding how organizations reproduce (and challenge) racialization processes” (p. 27). By interviewing participants and seeking to hear how their personal and professional socialization has influenced their critical consciousness (Freire, 1998; Harro, 2018), we can better understand the ways in which bias is constructed in faculty development efforts and how practitioners can disrupt it (Stanley, 2018).

I conducted 60 to 90-minute, semi-structured interviews in-person or virtually with current and former TLC professional staff members and program partners. While the interview protocol (see Appendix B) was prepared in advance of the interviews, it was not intended to restrict or rigidly structure the conversation. The semi-structured interview design facilitated open-ended conversations with each participant, primarily guided by their personal experiences and viewpoints, enabling new ideas on the topic to emerge. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Yin, 2014). The inclusion of former staff members was critical to gathering holistic information about the trajectory of shifting practices in the organization. The interview phase of the study began with interviewing current staff members; based on typical TLC staffing models, I anticipate interviewing three to four professionals within the center and three to four faculty or staff partners. At the conclusion of these interviews, I asked for referrals to any key, former staff members or program partners who can provide direct insight on the development of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in the center. Based on Lincoln and Guba’s (1985)

recommendation, I continued sampling until a point of saturation or redundancy was reached. I anticipated that one to two former staff members would be included in the study.

Table 2

Data Collection Process

Data Method	Purpose	Means	Completed
TLC Administrator Interviews	Mission and Priorities	Audio recorded	Fall 2023
Partner Unit Interviews	Priorities and Resources	Audio Recorded	Fall 2023
Faculty Partner Interviews	Program Priorities	Audio Recorded	Fall 2023
Document Analysis	Identify key individuals for interviews, Mission, Curriculum, Priorities	Read	Fall 2023

Informed by theoretical underpinnings of CRT, TRO, and critical consciousness, the interview protocol (see Appendix B) included questions that explore your career histories, racial consciousness, contributions to the center’s policies and practices, perspective on resource distribution, and views on the aims of TLCs and the role of CIP practices in the work. Prior to conducting interviews, I piloted the interview protocol with a TLC professional to clarify language and identify opportunities for revisions. All sessions were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis. I assigned pseudonyms to each participant to maintain confidentiality and separated identifiable information from interview transcripts and data analyses. Additionally, all data was stored in a password-protected folder on a hard drive.

Document Analysis

Informed by Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations, I collected and systematically analyze documents to strengthen my understanding of the center's organizational structure and context as well as its engagement with CIP practices. "Documents can serve as key evidence of how dynamic networks operate in a setting" (Prior, 2003) and can even contain information that will help generate useful interview questions (Bowen, 2009). Additionally, given the unavailability of former staff members for interviews, documents served as a helpful source of historical insight (Bowen, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Document analysis focused on publicly accessible materials, including flyers, websites, reports, news articles, and press releases. I also collected key documents that the center's director was willing to share, including program planning documents, strategic plans, newsletters, assessments, funding requests, proposals, correspondence, and staff-led conference or campus presentations. Document analysis is a stable form of data collection because it is unobtrusive, specific, and broad; however, it is important to keep in mind that, because I relied on center staff to access this data, a significant limitation is retrievability and biased selectivity (Yin, 2014).

To access historical documents related to the center, I consulted archival records that were held at the college or university archives. These records offered perspective on the trajectory of each center's history, aims, priorities, and practices. When reviewing archival materials, I searched for previous mission statements, program plans, proposals, newsletters, strategic plans, news stories, and other relevant documents or artifacts to better understand how environmental factors shaped practices within the center. Public and organizational documents were utilized to corroborate evidence from the individual interviews (Yin, 2014). Because "archival records were produced for a specific purpose and a specific audience other than the

case study,” however, it is important that these conditions are “fully appreciated in interpreting the usefulness and accuracy of the records” (Yin, 2014, p. 110).

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. During the data collection process, I wrote memos to record my thoughts, speculations, and what I was learning and noticing to prepare for in-depth data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). As each piece of data was collected from both interviews and documents, I assigned initial shorthand notations, also known as codes, to keep the data organized to prepare for subsequent and more complex coding schemes (Merriam, 1998). To further prepare for the more intensive phase of analysis, the data set, consisting of all transcribed interviews, key documents, and memos, was brought together and managed in Dedoose. Yin (2014) calls this systematic archive of data the case study database. When pulling the database together, I organized and sorted the information in order to easily locate specific data. Within the case, the interview transcripts, documents, and memos were placed in separate folders.

Utilizing a constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I systematically examined the data from the case to inductively develop common categories, themes, and patterns (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2002). Stake (1995) contended that, because full coverage of the data is impossible:

It is important to spend the best analytic time on the best data. ... The case and key issues need to be kept in focus. The search for meaning, the analysis, should roam out and return to those foci over and over (p. 84-85).

Therefore, it is important to begin constructing categories that capture recurring patterns in the data that are directly informed by the research questions (Hamilton & Corbett Whittier, 2013;

Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014). To begin this process, I closely reviewed one transcript or document and made notations next to specific excerpts that seemed relevant to the purpose of the study (Merriam, 1998). I then reviewed my notations and developed groups of common themes to form categories. Then, moving to the next transcript or document, I scanned it, keeping in mind the list of groupings extracted from the first transcript, checking to see if they are also present in this second set (Merriam, 1998). I then made a separate list of comments, terms, and notes from this set and then compared this list with the one derived from the first transcript. As Merriam (1998) instructs, I then took those two lists and merged them into a master list of concepts derived from both sets of data. This master list constituted a primitive outline or classification system reflecting the recurring regularities or patterns in [the] study (Merriam, 1998, p. 181). I continued this process, and the patterns and regularities became the categories or themes (Merriam, 1998). Codes were clustered into substantive categories, and these category codes were compared across interview transcripts and data from documents (Bowen, 2009). Once a set of categories was constructed from the data through the constant comparative method, I refined and interpreted the data's meaning (Merriam, 1998). I finalized the analysis only after the evidence from documents and interviews clearly illustrated how the TLC engages with and understands CIP practices.

Validity and Reliability

To address concerns of validity and reliability, I designed this study with specific attention to data collection and analysis procedures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). There can be multiple approaches to CIP practices and ways that TLCs make meaning of this work. While this study can never capture an objective “reality,” we can support validity through data source triangulation. I utilized multiple data sources to strengthen the credibility of the research (Patton,

2015). Collecting narrative data from individual interviews and textual data from documents provides critical opportunities for triangulation; for instance, data from an individual interview can be checked against organizational documents and vice versa (Denzin, 1978; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Finally, I engaged in member checking by asking key participants to review their interview transcript and the preliminary findings of the study to provide feedback. Not only will member checking ensure that I do not misrepresent what participants say, but this process is also important for identifying and addressing my biases as a researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Maxwell, 2013).

Positionality

In any qualitative study, the primary research instrument is the researcher. Consequently, “all observations and analyses are filtered through [my] worldview, values, and perspectives” (Merriam, 1998, p. 23). To recognize and track how my subjectivity shapes my interpretations of the data, I practice reflexivity by regularly noting my reflections in memos throughout the research process. (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 2005). It is also important that I explore my assumptions and beliefs as they relate to the study of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices, which are informed by my own experience as a Black, cisgender, heterosexual male student, administrator, and social justice educator in higher education.

As I reflect on the harmful experiences shared by my students navigating hostile classroom climates, I can easily think back to my own experience navigating historically white colleges and universities (HWCUs) (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022) as an undergraduate and graduate student. I can recall the consistently low expectations shared by my professors, erasure of Black cultural and scholarly contributions in my curriculum, and lack of representation of faculty who reflected my identities. I often grappled with microaggressive language, pressure to

represent my community, and expectations to educate my white peers as I habitually navigated classroom spaces as the only Black male student. I remember participating in a Men of Color transition program, where a speaker discussed the abysmal retention rates at my university for Black and Latino men inviting us to look to our left and right before telling us it was likely neither of those people would graduate with us. The speaker was intending to motivate us, but it left me feeling like I wasn't supposed to be at the university, likely would not be successful, and solely held responsibility for my journey to and through higher education. These experiences culminated in feelings of isolation, depression, anger, tokenization, and dissonance. It was in my own pursuit of political and liberatory education, which primarily occurred outside of formal curricular environments, that I found space for me to exist more fully. Much of this education came in intergroup dialogue, student leadership, and racial justice-focused communities, where I was challenged to deconstruct the ways I internalized deficit ideologies, quieted my voice, and emotionally numbed for self-protection and survival. My co-curricular experiences instilled a deep sense of mattering that was absent from my curricular education as a finance student.

The liberatory and harmful experiences I had as an undergraduate student motivated me to pursue a career in multicultural affairs, where I have held responsibility for supporting the engagement and development of minoritized students. I entered the work believing that in order to address inequitable outcomes related to student retention, academic success, and leadership development; I needed to focus my energy on preparing students to fill gaps in their knowledge and preparedness. By doing so, I operationalized my own internalized oppression, which Tuck (2009) describes as working in the specific and cumulative so that disenfranchised communities come to see themselves as damaged. As I transitioned into my doctoral work, I learned the harm of deficit-driven approaches undergirded by an achievement gap educational analysis (Patel,

2016). It struck me as both liberating and infuriating that I was just starting to learn from critical paradigms that allowed me to feel seen, affirmed, and held accountable for advancing equity in my work as both a scholar and practitioner. As I was challenged to critically reflect on my positionality from both a space of marginality and privilege, I realized that my being was just as if not more important, than my doing.

In my current work leading diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within academic affairs, faculty, and administrators have shown growing interest in incorporating inclusive teaching practices into curriculum and instruction. Colleagues often approach the conversation seeking an inclusive teaching checklist or responsive intervention after a bias-related concern has come to their attention. In both scenarios, I am challenged to reject simplistic approaches and deepen consciousness to dismantle pedagogical hegemony. As Freire (1998) challenges:

education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which they deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 34)

Many of my questions come back to pondering how we not only decrease classroom hostility but create a culture of possibility where transformative education unlocks the full potential of all students as both knowers and learners. By recognizing and engaging my learning edges, I have come to understand that CIP practices can encompass both liberatory and harmful possibilities. This study explores these complexities to provide insight into more equitable approaches. Having actively participated in creating CIP practices and navigating the associated challenges, I seek to show my curiosity, vulnerability, and commitment to learning as an insider in the community, rather than as an external researcher.

Limitations

While case study methodology offers an in-depth approach with multiple forms of data collection, limitations still exist within the methodology. A single-site case study design gives depth and breadth to a single institution. While the findings from a single site may benefit other institutions, individuals should exercise caution when applying lessons learned from one campus to all institutions (Bhattacharya, 2017). A common critique of case study research is its inability to produce generalizable findings (Luck et al., 2006; Yin, 2014). To address this criticism, case studies must demonstrate rigor in their chosen methods, theoretical frameworks, and research design (Luck et al., 2006; Yin, 2014). I use multiple data sources, systematically apply a constant comparative method, and engage in member checking to strengthen the study's rigor. As a critical qualitative scholar, I recognize that my own perspective and biases shape how I design, collect, and interpret my data. Therefore, there may be limitations in what I can uncover and understand throughout my research study.

Summary

The purpose of this critical, qualitative, single case study was to examine how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers. In this chapter, I outline the methodology used for this study, including the research design, research questions, participants, data collection and analysis, and methods for establishing validity and reliability. In Chapter 4, I present an in-depth description of the case, followed by the results of my study in Chapter 5, and conclude with a discussion of the results in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4: THE CASE

Summary of the Case

For this case study, a single university was selected and given the pseudonym “Western City University” (WCU). Presenting information from institutional documents, observations, and interviews, this chapter offers a deeper explanation and context for why WCU’s teaching and learning center (TLC) was selected for this case study. To examine critical and inclusive pedagogical practices (CIP), WCU serves as an ideal site of study. WCU is a midsize, private, research one university (R1) with a stand-alone teaching and learning center with an explicit mission of advancing transformative and inclusive teaching. In 2016, WCU created a professional staff role within its teaching and learning center to develop critical and inclusive pedagogical practices (CIP) and is continuing to build its CIP programs and resource offerings. Further, despite the university’s R1 status, many study participants highlighted its teaching approach, emphasizing its commitment to the teacher-scholar model. For example, William describes WCU’s commitment by emphasizing, “the teacher-scholar model is meant to make equivalent, the importance of both teaching and scholarship for faculty, that one is not more important than the other.” WCU’s institutional commitment and resource investment through a stand-alone center, dedicated staff, and multiple programmatic entry points make it an ideal case study site to explore.

Historical Background

WCU was founded in the late 1800s, shortly after the city’s founding. In the same year of its founding, the school’s founder and initial funders planned and executed a massacre of Native people in the area. More recently, the university has sought to confront the violent legacy of genocide and settler colonialism tied to its founding by studying its effects and strategies for

reconciliation with Tribal nations. The university's history and relationship to settler colonialism have spurred calls from students, faculty, and staff to change the university mascot's name and imagery through several movements throughout the university's history. Despite demands for change, university leadership has maintained the mascot's moniker mainly due to fierce resistance from university students, fans, alums, and donors. Abby, a senior administrator, describes:

I think some of the politics of campus, particularly with a really seemingly intractable commitment to the [mascot], from my perspective. It seems that there's really an ongoing need for us to do more work around [university founder] and about legacies of genocide and colonialism and our contemporary relationship with [tribal nations] and other Native peoples. And I know our provost has been working a lot in this space. And I think really trying to do that from a reciprocal partnership view. But it's, it's big. And to me, it shapes the DEI possibilities, pretty markedly, not just around indigenous issues, but more broadly, because I think it's hard. It's hard to feel like there's real commitment to big change if we won't to change that thing.

The institution's challenging history, rooted in settler colonialism and racist practices, makes WCU a vital case to explore, as many institutions of higher education have colonial and white supremacist roots (Wilder, 2013). While institutions may have good intentions for promoting critical and inclusive pedagogical practices to support transformative education, it is important to understand how settler colonial histories and present-day manifestations of structural racism influence institutional programs, services, and policies to advance these efforts. For example, in my interview with a staff member, Marie, she shared:

I find myself in meetings now noticing who is in this space. And so often, the people who are in any space, a meeting, high level meetings, there's not racial diversity among the people at the table. And there isn't even acknowledgement that there is no racial diversity among the people at the table. And yet, that's so important as we're making decisions around how this institution operates.

As many participants described, WCU identifies itself as an institution committed to serving the public interest around the campus and strives to serve the broader society. WCU

resides in a major city in the western United States with over 700,000 people. The city is a bustling hub for various industries and often attracts people interested in outdoor activities. Despite its large size, the city lacks racial diversity, as seen in many other major cities across the United States. Comparably, WCU has long been perceived as an institution lacking racial and socioeconomic diversity, built and maintained for students from higher-income backgrounds in the region. As Sharon, a senior administrator, described:

WCU was, at that time, known in my small town as the place where rich white kids went when they couldn't get into an ivy, and it was a very rarefied place that was snobby and expensive. And not for kids like me and a lot of other kids that I went to school with. So, I think there's that long-standing perception of WCU as a private institution for the public good. I think it is, in some ways, a response to trying to say, look, we, we want to engage in the community in a service and supportive way. And yet, we're a private institution that's out of reach for a lot of people.

While the university has a mission of contributing to the local and global common good, WCU is a Historically white College and University (HwCU) with a student population that is sixty-five percent white. Only sixteen percent identify as the first in their family to attend college.

Throughout my campus visit, I saw several banners, posters, and print materials highlighting the inclusive environment the university hoped to communicate. However, I was struck by how little racial diversity I saw throughout the day.

Teaching and Learning at WCU

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) was created in the late 90s by a founding director who transitioned to the center from the faculty and was motivated by the goal of improving the student learning experience. The center started its work by developing a grant program to improve teaching and increase technology use in the classroom. What some complained would be a “slush fund” put WCU ahead of the curve in a shift to create more student-centered learning environments across university classrooms (May et al., 2011).

Especially on smaller campuses, more focus was being placed on the student learning experience (Fink, 2013a), something the founding director had already been espousing and researching for years. An oral history project about the center's early years revealed that its reach expanded over time by creating a representative board with faculty involvement from every school on campus. The TLC focused much of its initial programming and consultation on teaching technologies, instructional design, and teaching consultations, often promoted through relationship development and newsletter marketing. The center amassed increased operational funding through central administration funding, collaborative research grant development, and joint faculty appointments.

Expanding Equity across the Faculty

Over time, like many universities, WCU reduced the percentage of tenure-line faculty while increasing the number of teaching-line faculty. One of the faculty participants, Austin, described this evolution as causing an increased relevance and utilization of faculty development resources:

So, we've reduced the percentage of tenure line versus teaching line. And that's happened all over the country. So, the researcher in me says, this is a horrible thing, the teacher in me says this is a wonderful thing. Because now we have a significant chunk of our faculty that are primarily interested in teaching. Enhancing the centrality of a teaching and learning center makes a lot of sense because now you have people that actually want to improve their teaching and figure out how they can make a difference through their teaching instead of their focus on research. I would say that as we added more and more teaching faculty, the teaching and learning center became more important.

In addition to the increase in teaching line faculty, the board of trustees also approved a revision of their tenure and promotion guidelines in 2015. During that process, the institution created a new line of full-time non-tenure-track faculty where teaching faculty could now receive three-, five- and seven-year appointments, constructing a process of going through promotions from assistant to associate to full professor. WCU's implementation and institutionalization efforts

were guided by an equity-minded approach (Bensimon, 2007), which promoted ongoing revisitation of their policies, procedures, and initiatives with a lens focused on inclusion and relevance for teaching faculty. Many of the participants in the study identified the importance of these decisions in elevating the respect, inclusion, and governance capability of teaching line faculty, thus enhancing the importance of the TLC, given its heightened relevance for teaching faculty.

TLC Mission & Operations

Now housed within the Office of the Provost, the TLC is the central hub of teaching, learning, and assessment expertise, support, and development for faculty of all tracks and series across campus. During interviews, questions were asked to explore how participants understood the mission of the TLC. Many participants could trace a connection between teaching and learning and the institution's increased focus on inclusion; Tyler noted, "Their core mission is around how we make teaching and learning more inclusive, more equitable, learner-centered, and faculty-centered." One of the ways the center embraces this mission in practice is by creating more of a synergetic relationship between good teaching and inclusion. One of the center's practitioners, Briana, argued, "Good teaching is inclusive teaching...you want to be giving folks a space where they feel like they can learn, where they feel like they can share who they are, and share their experience." Briana notes an important relationship placing inclusive teaching as a core aspect of good teaching. Similarly, Abby emphasized, "So much of inclusive pedagogy is good for all students...Learning how to do it better makes sense if you want to be a good teacher, whether you're motivated by a particular justice outcome or not." These are significant statements to consider inclusion a core aspect of instruction because it is a core pillar of faculty responsibility. Several participants drew a similar parallel, William contended:

It's important because it centers instruction as equity practice. It makes being inclusive and doing inclusive pedagogy that is teaching. It's not some extra thing you do. This is part of what it means to be an effective and excellent instructor. And so having it tied together and incorporated in that center...centers [inclusive pedagogy] as teaching. That is teaching, it's not extra.

William makes the connection to inclusive pedagogy as effective teaching and extends this connection to considering instruction as equity practice. An important organizational statement about the benefit of placing CIP practices specifically within the TLC is also being made.

Furthermore, the center serves three primary domains of faculty affairs at WCU: teaching and learning, faculty development, and faculty lifecycles. Annual report documents articulate that the center strives to serve the role of curator, collaborator, incubator of ideas, and sanctuary for all faculty at all points of their careers. The TLC accomplishes this goal through signature programs that support faculty in course design, create opportunities for faculty and student partnerships, cultivate expertise in the use of educational technology, promote growth in inclusive teaching practices, encourage evaluation of learning-based assessment, and celebrate teaching excellence. Additionally, they offer several opportunities for continuing education about teaching and learning practice through micro-credential learning programs focused on inclusive and equitable teaching, online teaching, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). During my visit to the TLC, I noticed several learning communities advertised to foster belonging amongst various faculty demographic groups, including faculty of color, faculty with disabilities, and international faculty. TLC staff are also often called upon to address emerging trends and needs in higher education, like advising faculty on using artificial intelligence (AI) in learning design and assessment. Documents reveal that their work is often funded in partnership with the provost, which includes programs like the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Faculty Fellows program and the Teacher-Scholar lecture series.

In addition to support from the provost, the center also receives funding from internal and external grants and philanthropic giving. Most recently, the center expanded UDL programs by transitioning their Accessibility Technologist role to a permanent Faculty Developer position and developing a new stipend-funded Neurodiversity Institute. Partnerships with accessibility offices in student affairs and development drove these resources. Participants described that a family working with the accessibility office identified a need for increased resources due to their son's college experience and difficulties navigating inaccessible classroom environments and materials. Tina, a TLC staff member, articulated that the family raised several questions about the university prior to their gift:

How come faculty don't know a lot about this? Where's that coming from? Who supports teaching faculty about students with disabilities and, more broadly, neurodiversity? Not even going into the accommodation space, but thinking about neurodivergent students in your class. And so, it came out of that. It was a space where this family saw that they were going to have more children potentially coming to WCU, and they wanted to donate a lot of money to help us train faculty on it.

Beyond gift funding, resource development was also motivated partly by shifting sociopolitical contexts brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, where participants described that it became clear that more students were struggling to navigate inaccessibility in the online classroom.

Stephanie explained:

We started to see not only racially motivated aggression is happening in the virtual classroom, like people were saying things in chats and discussions that they would never say in real life or in the classroom. But then we also started to see accessibility issues bubble up.

This shifting context and broadening of funding sources contributed to expanding center staffing and resource offerings. Tina described the impact on the TLC staff and operations, suggesting:

We have a really big office, which compared to other universities it's quite remarkable to have. I think there's 10 of us here, and they just fought for my position to go from a temporary role to full time in part of the budget. And so again, I think there's moments like that where I see that there is investment in long-term change and in the work that we

do. During COVID, there was a big increase here with our instructional design team, because I think the university saw that we needed more folks who had the capacity to help people take an in-person class and bring it into the online space. And so, we had the staff power to do that. Long term, that team has evolved and changed. And honestly because we're quite large, we do get to really dial in on our very specific expertise while also co-creating with each other.

Reporting to the Provost and Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs, the center is led by the director, who has nine direct reports, signifying a flat organizational structure. Four director-level roles align with the four highest priorities for the center – instructor development, assessment and evaluation, inclusive teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Three faculty developers provide individual consultation and manage several programs related to universal design for learning and teaching technologies. Finally, business, IT, and front desk staff support the center's operation. Figure 1 below further details the staff composition and reporting structure.

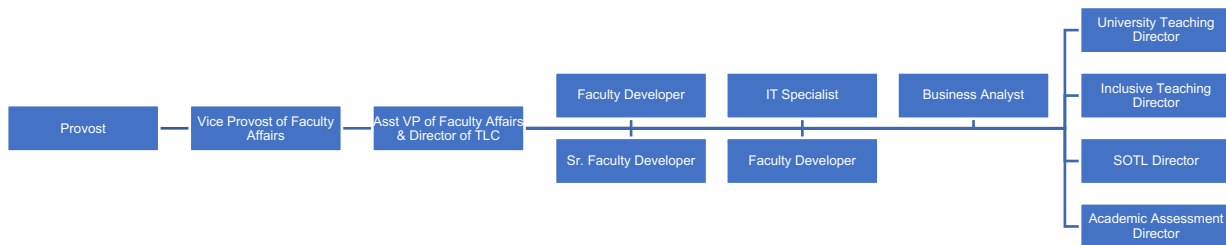


Figure 1

Organizational Chart

Fostering Change through Alignment & Collaboration

Like many universities, several participants described WCU as a relational campus where most initiatives and organizational change efforts are accomplished through collaboration. Similarly, TLC practitioners operationalize much of their work through collaboration with key partners throughout the institution and seek to align their work with institutional strategic priorities. In 2016, WCU launched a strategic plan that articulated the university's commitment to inclusivity and academic excellence. According to the university website, the plan resulted from 18 months of collaboration and thousands of interviews with students, faculty, alumni, staff, and community partners. The new plan championed five strategic priorities believed to spark a transformation of the institution by 2025. These priorities focused on preparing students to lead in an increasingly global and diverse society, collaborative and interdisciplinary research development, engagement with the local and regional community, and uniting the university across differences and lifecycles. The TLC sought to align its work directly with these broad priorities, focusing its resources on supporting faculty diversity initiatives, improving the learning environment, and broadening equity and inclusion within the WCU community.

A key outcome of WCU's new strategic plan was the development of a new initiative focused on holistic student development. Like most universities, WCU strongly focuses on ensuring an outstanding intellectual and academic experience. University leaders developed a team and institutional strategy through this new initiative to couple intellectual development alongside career development, well-being, and character development to create a campus experience where all students can thrive. The initiative is supported by a partnership between student affairs, academic affairs, and career development to create organizational shifts through consultation, capacity building, and increased engagement opportunities throughout the campus. One outgrowth of this effort was a project management initiative that sought to support

community-based programming and initiatives that would help actualize WCU's values and strategic priorities. Tyler, a senior administrator at WCU, articulated:

There was a need to understand more about who we are as a community. And we need to re-explore and differentiate our values. We built out this idea of what do we stand for and what do we stand against. And so, it grew into this really beautiful idea that we want to increase a sense of belonging and inclusion for everybody in our community.

Project managers explored who was a part of the WCU community, what was their experience, and how the university could evolve their work to improve the campus experience for all stakeholder groups. TLC staff sought to collaborate with the project management team to develop the university's first inclusive teaching website. Tyler went on to describe the partnership as one of their most effective collaborations:

This inclusive teaching practices site was a perfect example of people connecting around this idea. There was money put towards it in terms of resources, people's time put towards it towards in terms of resources, and then this idea that we were then amplifying it through marketing and communications, there was even a launch party. And it really was a beautiful representation of what we try to do. We've done it with a number of other initiatives, but it really is almost an organizer approach. Let's bring experts together. We have this idea [organizational change team] can provide project management support so that we're not asking people to do free labor and that we're building out a really powerful set of tools or resources or programs that people can then benefit from and feel a sense of community.

The new university resource quickly became the most frequently visited website at the university in 2020, highlighting the TLC's heightened relevance, accessibility, and impact. It also highlights the effectiveness of collaboration and resource allocation in amplifying TLC practitioner expertise.

Evolution of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogical Practices

As the Movement for Black Lives and campus protests sprung up around the country, campus leaders at WCU started experiencing the need for increased support for faculty related to inclusive excellence and inclusive pedagogy. Following an increase in racist language being used

on the campus free speech wall related to Black Lives Matter and the 2016 presidential campaign, students organized several protests in reaction to racialized violence and silencing occurring at WCU. At the same time, a leadership decision was made to add a staff role in the teaching and learning center that would focus on inclusive teaching. Patricia, a senior administrator, noted the role was designed to “support the professional development of our faculty to be more inclusive teachers, thinking about how their curriculum, their content, their teaching materials, and classroom instruction was impacting all students within the classroom.” From its inception, strong partnerships were established with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) staff, faculty senate, and relevant research institutes to coordinate faculty support and accountability efforts following an uptick in bias-related concerns. The newly developed role was tasked with providing proactive and responsive leadership, direction, and programming that advances WCU's commitment to inclusive excellence and inclusive pedagogy.

Furthermore, early reports suggest the role was charged with creating, implementing, and assessing strategic faculty development opportunities, online resources, and consultations. Some concerns were raised that this new role would create a condition where other staff members within the center would think they no longer held responsibility related to inclusion. Marie, a staff member in the TLC, articulated this fear offering, “That person is responsible for doing all this really hard work, and the rest of us can just go it’s not my job.” However, Marie emphasized how “staff having a title that has director of inclusive teaching practices in it has helped because it makes it visible that we care about the work.” Many participants in the study marked the hiring of the assistant director as the first real push by the TLC to promote equity and inclusion within teaching practice across campus. Since the initial hire, the role has been elevated to director and held by three professionals over the past 8 years. While turnover has been a challenge, the

university's continued commitment to the role corresponds with the growing interest and investment from faculty to teach more inclusively and equitably.

The TLC developed four strategic priorities in advancing critical and inclusive pedagogical practices: 1) providing faculty and administration support, 2) continuing faculty development programming, 3) online programming, and 4) tracking national trends and sharing best practices. The priority broadened research-based consultation for individual faculty, department heads, and deans to assess, design, and implement inclusive pedagogical practices across all disciplines of study. The second priority spurred the development of programming efforts within learning communities, workshops, short courses, and guest speakers. Annual reports highlight the various topics explored, such as the cognitive impact of microaggressions, implicit bias in the classroom, universal design for learning, and critical pedagogy. Over time, this work expanded to incorporate innovative approaches, like podcasting and certificate badging and was aided by over \$400,000 in collaborative internal and external grant funding.

The third priority prompted the development of the most signature program discussed by participants in the study, an online asynchronous inclusive teaching institute. Two TLC staff members and a research institute postdoc fellow developed the online inclusive teaching institute in-house. The Institute consists of eight content modules. Each module explores a specific topic through critical definitions, content to advance understanding, pedagogical tools, and pre-and post-assessments to gauge faculty understanding. The program was created on an expedited timeline, consisting of over 100 pages of original content created in less than three months.

In August 2020, university leadership made a historic announcement formally requiring all faculty to complete the course by the first day of the academic quarter. The online institute

became the first formally required course in the history of the TLC. William described the impact of this requirement offering:

The fact that that was required for new faculty coming in the door, there's an expectation that you have an awareness, knowledge, and are developing some skills around how to run your classroom in an inclusive way. And that that came out of the [TLC] alongside all the other resources and strategies. I think there's a really important message because you have people on campus who will dismiss the DEI office. Have no reason to engage with it, you know. As a faculty member you may have no reason to engage with it, particularly if you're not from a minoritized group. But every faculty member can have a touch point to the [TLC]. Every single one coming in the door. Been here for 20 years? Doesn't matter. Tenure line, clinical, professor of practice, doesn't matter. That place can touch every single faculty member on campus.

While the history-setting requirement brought hundreds of participants to the online institute and held significance for some, concerns developed over time related to the integrity in which faculty were engaging with the online modules, challenges in accountability for faculty who did not complete the modules, and critiques related to the disciplinary relevance and criticality of the content. A senior faculty member, Alejandro, described this disconnect, saying, “They're just too broad and too general. Like, okay, I don't disagree with anything here. But you're still not helping me figure out how to bring this into my classroom”. The institute was tweaked through rigorous assessment and the addition of a cohort-based component for a hybrid, more immersive learning experience.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a glimpse into the organizational context, institutional approach to teaching and learning, and the development of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices within the TLC. The combination of WCU's development and expansion of CIP practices, along with the university's historical and contemporary manifestations of structural racism, made this center a compelling case to explore how CIP is understood, promoted, and implemented. The university's mission of serving the public interest, emphasis on

promoting a teacher-scholar model, and strategic priorities to advance inclusion within a private, R1 institutional context also make for a compelling exploration of the possibilities and limitations of advancing critical and inclusive pedagogies within HwCU organizational contexts. The following chapters present the findings from the case study analysis, followed by a theoretical discussion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

This study examines how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers (TLC). As organizations dedicated to the advancement of faculty development within higher education, teaching and learning centers provide useful insight into strategies aimed at fostering critical and inclusive pedagogies. This chapter presents the findings from a case study analysis of a single teaching and learning center to address the research questions posed in this study:

- How does a teaching and learning center operationalize critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within its organizational structure?
 - In what ways does a teaching and learning center engage in and promote critical and inclusive pedagogical practices?
- How do sociopolitical contexts shape the operational mission of a teaching and learning center?
 - What internal and external factors shape the ways in which a teaching and learning center makes meaning of critical and inclusive pedagogy in its practices?

The research questions in this study were developed to examine how TLCs utilize critical and inclusive pedagogical practices as a tool to advance equitable teaching practices. By identifying relevant themes, the current study sought to inform TLC practice through better understanding how to attend to dynamics of power and oppression while supporting the development of faculty, postdoc, and graduate student teaching practices.

Using a critical qualitative approach, this study employed an instrumental, single case study methodology to collect data through nineteen in-depth, semi-structured interviews with

senior administrators, faculty, and TLC staff, document analysis of TLC documents and institutional website content, and one on-campus observation. Data analysis was informed by critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), critical consciousness (Freire, 1998), and the theory of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019). These critical frameworks helped expose how inequities stemming from hegemonic educational and organizational practice shape critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in definition, rhetoric, messaging, and actions by institutional and university agents. This chapter will detail how TLC practitioners, senior administrators, and faculty partners at the selected site engaged in and supported critical and inclusive pedagogy (CIP) as part of the institution's efforts to foster educational development.

In describing their experiences of developing, coordinating, and/or supporting formalized programs to expand the use of critical and inclusive pedagogy, practitioners and partners reflected diverse levels of engagement and understanding of the work. Overall, participants considered CIP to be a core part of teaching and learning praxis, and their collective efforts contributed to fostering a campus ecosystem where critical and inclusive pedagogy could be better understood, supported, and enacted. However, despite their shared articulation of values, various institutional and sociopolitical factors shaped differences in their understanding and application of CIP frameworks within teaching and learning center practice. Through data analysis, four themes were identified that illuminate how TLCs operationalize CIP within their institutional and sociopolitical contexts: 1) *interrogating tensions between critical and inclusive pedagogy*, 2) *teaching & learning centers as first responders: the limitations of pedagogical support*, 3) *performative commitments: the gap between institutional rhetoric and practice*, and 4) *navigating institutional power: the Faculty of Color experience*.

Interrogating Tensions between Critical and Inclusive Pedagogy

Participants in this study defined critical and inclusive pedagogy as a concept in disparate ways, often decoupling critical pedagogy from inclusive pedagogy. This pattern highlights the challenge of advancing collective efforts to implement CIP without a common framework and shared aims. While the use of inclusive pedagogical models to transform teaching practices in educational settings has been present for several decades (Tuitt, 2003), much remains to be understood about which pedagogical frameworks are effective and for whom (Haynes & Joseph, 2016). A core theme that emerged from data analysis was promoting and applying inclusive teaching from varying standpoints and perspectives. This theme materialized through participants' accounts of their work to define critical and inclusive pedagogy, establish CIP boundaries and limitations, often at the expense of criticality, and envision critical pedagogy in practice.

Institutional Tensions in Understanding Critical and Inclusive Pedagogy

The literature review in Chapter Two provided an overview of shifting and evolving theoretical understandings of critical and inclusive pedagogy, and these varied definitions were also reflected in the experiences of participants in the study. During interviews, questions were asked to explore how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices were engaged in the TLC, and participants often pre-empted their responses by reflecting on their understanding of these frameworks. Their definitions and understandings often revealed a tension in how they perceived critical pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy as two distinctly different concepts that were related to each other but sometimes conflicted.

Cultivating Community and Belonging

Several participants centered their understanding of CIP as an approach to supporting students' multiple identities in the classroom. For these participants, support was framed through

efforts to cultivate a sense of community in the classroom and promote a sense of belonging for all students. Marie, a veteran staff member in the TLC, articulated a focus on supporting all students through an identity-centered lens, stating:

Inclusive pedagogy, to me, is about creating spaces in which all students feel like they are seen, that they are able to engage, and that the experiences, identities, and backgrounds that they bring are valued and very much a part of that space. And they feel that what they are learning will be meaningful to them...Inclusive pedagogy isn't just about the content or the nature of the learning activities themselves. But also, the classroom community, a space in which people feel supported, feel a sense of trust, feel like they are able to be in that space without being traumatized or without experiencing sort of the negative emotional aspect that can get in the way of learning.

Marie recognized the importance of considering students' identities when constructing learning spaces in ways that allow students to feel safe, seen, and valued. She also points to considerations regarding the environment and sense of community cultivated with the intention to reduce harm in the classroom. Similarly, Patricia, a senior administrator on campus, characterized inclusive pedagogy as central to WCU's institutional mission. Patricia stressed that "there must be a commitment in the classroom to creating a space of belonging and of thriving for all students, first and foremost... all students must feel valued, welcomed, embraced in the classroom." To foster a campus atmosphere where all students experience inclusion and belonging, these participants viewed inclusive pedagogy as a crucial component of the classroom learning experience. In doing this, they prioritize CIP as a tool to cultivate belonging for all students, uplifting the rhetoric of all, which often serves to appease white interests.

While some participants centered their understanding of CIP as a tool to support the needs of all students, others brought more attention to the necessity to account for socialized power. These participants saw critical and inclusive pedagogy as being in direct relationship with one another, with inclusive pedagogy serving as the entry point to the work. Abby, a senior administrator and facilitator of CIP practices, explained:

I see [critical and inclusive pedagogy] as some kind of continuum or Venn diagram where I can imagine there being some inclusive pedagogies that maybe focus on bringing people in, making sure they have a voice that maybe aren't critical in some senses. But I think, broadly, I see them really fitting together well, because I think a lot of faculty and a lot of [developers] start with, at least in our practice, start with inclusion and start with thinking about how do we welcome all learners and then start thinking about the way that we're limited by the structures that shape our campus, but also higher education. Both material structures, and then the ideas and ways of knowing and what's valued that shape the experience that people have. So, for me, I don't see a big tension necessarily.

Abby situates her understanding of critical and inclusive pedagogy on a continuum that ranges from surface level to systems level. Development begins with a foundational awareness of inclusion, progressing towards a critical consciousness of the material structures that support the learning environment. This linear learning pathway fosters an understanding of critical and inclusive pedagogy that highlights the significance of belonging and then considers the role of structural oppression in creating a lack of belongingness. Finally, Abby acknowledges the role of external structures at the institutional and societal levels that shape the material and epistemic possibilities for CIP practices.

While Abby rejects the notion of there being a “big tension” between frameworks, a few participants offered their understanding with more dissonance and problematization. Marie captures the challenge of centering belonging as the primary purpose for critical and inclusive pedagogy when reflecting on the politics of belonging for students who feel othered on campus.

She reflected:

It might be easy to talk about belonging with someone like me who might just feel comfortable in this space, sort of naturally. It might be a really different thing to talk about belonging for a student who feels othered the minute they walk into this space. Sense of belonging might practically feel unattainable, and maybe sometimes it's just feeling less othered...perhaps just thinking about belonging as everybody belongs can be harmful sometimes because it's not acknowledging that what that means might be very different for someone who typically feels othered. And so, perhaps sometimes it's important to think about belonging, not in this general sense. But what does it mean to think about belonging for someone who feels othered the minute they walk into this space?

Reflecting on the desire to utilize CIP to cultivate belonging for all learners, Marie problematizes to what extent belonging is attainable for all students. By acknowledging the potential for perpetuating harm, Marie surfaces a tension when considering the goal of fostering sense of belonging devoid of a structural analysis.

Decoupling Critical and Inclusive through Systems Analysis

Several participants across the study articulated a similar understanding that inclusive pedagogy focuses on representation and accessibility, but they also added a framing of critical pedagogy as interacting with systems. In doing so, they separated critical pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy into two distinct frameworks. Briana, a TLC staff member, pondered:

The way that I think of them differently is that critical pedagogy is looking in the face of some of these systems and the hierarchies that exist and pointing them out, making that clear, and questioning those things. Whether it's in your own role as an instructor or doing that work with your students. I think that connects with inclusive pedagogy in that way. Because when you are pointing out these systems of inequality and power and these things that exist, that we're all living within, you make space for folks who are experiencing those things. Like, yeah, I am experiencing that, or yeah, my voice is not heard as much as this other person's voice. So, it opens up the space for them, which becomes more inclusive. But the critical piece is really where you're looking at it and where you're pointing it out. And then the inclusive pedagogy element of it, I think fits within it. But also, it includes things like accessibility and design and how you're presenting content, who you're representing in your work and in the materials that your students are looking at, and how you're making space for your students to represent themselves and do their work.

In describing her understanding, Briana conveyed that instructors need a foundational understanding of the systems and power dynamics within the classroom to recognize the importance of inclusive pedagogy. By naming power, Briana decouples critical and inclusive pedagogy highlighting the systemic reasons behind the power differentials that impact individuals' ability to use their voice.

Furthermore, Laura, a former researcher involved in leading and developing CIP practices in the TLC, troubled the decoupling of critical pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy by questioning:

What does inclusive pedagogy really mean if we're leaving out the critical component of it, and what does critical really mean? I think critical pedagogy is really the self-awareness to grapple with the self, as educators, as students, or as individuals, and really try to receive, understand or at least acknowledge the world for what things are lacking, that are problematic, that could grow. I feel like inclusive pedagogies could be empty.

By naming inclusive pedagogies as “empty” without a systems analysis, Laura warns that inclusive pedagogy is insufficient to advance more equitable learning in the classroom. Laura’s coupling of these frameworks identifies a necessary relationship. Similarly, Gloria argued, “Criticality is always about pushing; it's always about challenging the status quo. And that includes challenging yourself and whether you’ve taken up that mantle of white supremacy inadvertently to get where you are today.” Both Laura and Gloria identify a relationship with the self and a necessity to interrogate whiteness when enacting critical and inclusive pedagogies.

While participants communicated the importance of coupling critical and inclusive pedagogies, several questioned to what extent critical pedagogy was embraced or enacted at WCU. Stewart’s (2017) work on the language of appeasement and how institutional diversity and inclusion efforts serve to appease dissent and maintain the status quo are instructive in considering this limitation. One of the faculty participants, William, emphasized:

I don't think anyone is doing critical pedagogy. So, to me, inclusive pedagogy is about diversity and inclusion, and critical pedagogy is about equity and justice. In the way that inclusive pedagogy is like the bare minimum. Let's make sure everybody gets along in the classroom, let's make sure everybody can access knowledge. Yeah, we're talking about Universal Design for Learning, which is not a critical pedagogy. Universal Design for Learning is about inclusion. It's about diversity. It's insufficient. If you're gonna talk about critical pedagogy, critical pedagogy, to me, is when you are centering the voices of those who are most marginalized, where you are centering our most vulnerable. Where you are centering, in your pedagogy, the needs of the students in your class with minoritized identities at the beginning of how you shape the syllabus, class activity, and

all of that stuff. Like, who you have in mind are those who are minoritized in your class, not the dominant majority.

William recognizes critical pedagogy as a disruptive pedagogy to dominance and is skeptical about its utilization at WCU. Considering the language of appeasement in the context of teaching and learning raises questions about the possibilities of enacting CIP practices as a tool for transformation or maintenance of the status quo. Across the study, several participants identified a heavy emphasis on inclusive pedagogy at WCU with a lack of attention given to critical pedagogy. Abby, a senior administrator and facilitator of CIP practices, shared:

I could think about criticality as being more focused on liberatory or, I want to say, radical only in the sense of thinking about structures and roots. And so, I can see those things being teased apart and maybe not overlapping always. And I could see a campus being willing to invest in what they see as inclusion but being nervous about the criticality and the way that it might ask us to question the neoliberal structures of our institution.

In doing so, Abby points to the role of institutional investment in maintaining the status quo and disinvestment in critiquing neoliberal structures embedded within the institution. Participants' understanding of critical and inclusive pedagogy provided a foundation for the development or limitations of CIP practices within the TLC. Although their conceptualizations varied, shifting values and priorities within TLCs created conditions for participants to consider the strengths and challenges of implementing these initiatives.

Promoting CIP at the Expense of Criticality

Although participants saw critical pedagogy's theoretical value and relevance, most participants saw a lack of engagement and utilization of critical perspectives in CIP practice. There was a common belief that promoting inclusion was challenging enough, which led to complacency about deeper and more systemic critiques of power. Some participants rooted this

disconnect in how the broader university prioritizes diversity and inclusion efforts over justice and transformation. Remi, a TLC staff member, stated:

I don't see justice work happening...we are applying as much of a critical lens to this space, as just making sure that our campus is diverse, or our faculty hiring committees are diverse, or making sure that faculty are including their queer students, or that students of color have a space on campus to go and receive support when there are microaggressions. So, I see us just checking some boxes, and I also don't see us doing any of this transformative change in really including folks from these different identities in our campus and the way we operate.

While Remi can point to some efforts to practice inclusion and promote diversity, she traces an apparent disconnect rooted in performativity from efforts that would spark institutional transformation at its core. Similarly, Sharon, a senior administrator, reflected on the institutional boundary-setting she perceives when promoting social change and racial justice, stating:

I do see folks struggling with advocacy, anything that kind of veers into we should be advocating for X, Y and Z...I think there's a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion...to the faculty, to the students. Less so, the promotion of social change and racial justice in the external environment. That's not to say that it's not supported. If that's the work that you do, and you're a faculty member, we want you to do that and we support you to do that. But is the institution committed itself to social change and racial justice? In a big C kind of way? Eh? I don't know. I don't think so. I personally feel responsible for these efforts toward social change, equity, and racial justice. And I know other colleagues of mine do, but I couldn't say that would be true across the board institutionally.

Sharon acknowledges the institution's support of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, particularly at the individual level, but signals a skepticism to more extensive efforts to advocate for racial justice and transformation underscoring the impact of white liberalism within campus culture and practice. Across the study, participants consistently highlighted how the institution demonstrated performativity through rhetorical support for equity initiatives that enhance the student or faculty experience but drew a line when considering notions of justice, transformation, or disruption of the status quo.

Along with the influence of broader institutional factors shaping the work, the TLC itself engaged in practices and approaches that advanced inclusive pedagogy at the expense of criticality. As mentioned in Chapter Four, one of WCU's most prominent programs for supporting teaching and learning is an online institute. Patricia shared her reflections that, despite the program's intentions, the content does not center critical pedagogy, saying:

Having gone through the curriculum a couple of times now, it is much more keyed towards these questions of inclusive pedagogy without sort of overt signaling of critical pedagogy and structural racism. I think it's more framed in terms of questions of belongingness. And of inclusivity, of fairness, of creating a healthy learning environment in which all are welcomed. So, the [institute] curriculum, to my recollection, doesn't signal much in terms of structural issues.

Patricia signals that the lack of racialized analysis in program content neglects to contextualize how racialized structures shape classroom and institutional contexts. Gloria, a faculty member and past TLC program participant, reflected a similar critique of her experience, stating, "I see it in their trainings...just the lack of knowledge. The way they address race and culture is fairly superficial. Because sometimes they completely miss the boat, just invisible." Gloria and Patricia point to a pattern of race evasiveness and white liberalism embedded in TLC programs. In instructional design programming, TLC staff received similar feedback that their curricular efforts to address race and racism felt like an add-on. Marie shared:

I had an article that people read, and then we talked about it. One of the participants said this feels like it's an add-on. And while it was just one participant that brought it up, she was someone who I felt it was important to listen to. She was a Person of Color who studied this as her field of study. And so, talking with her a little about that, and recognizing, yeah, if this feels bad to her, we need to think about this more carefully.

Marie acknowledged the limitations of her curricular approach, validating the constructive feedback she received from a faculty participant. While the TLC made efforts to practice inclusion, the lack of depth in their engagement with race amplifies the limitations of the lack of race specificity.

Several participants considered the disconnect between critical pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy as a reaction to faculty needs and interests. When pressed further about why there might be a disconnect from critical pedagogy within CIP practices, Patricia stated:

I would say our faculty are more broadly engaged with inclusive pedagogy than they are likely with critical pedagogy, though I'll say that there are surely segments of our faculty and segments of our curriculum that are more directly engaged with critical pedagogy...I would suggest that our faculty probably see [critical pedagogy] as a more radical enterprise than inclusive pedagogy is, which probably then explains why there would be less broad participation in that endeavor.

Patricia identifies a rejection of criticality by faculty at WCU. It is important to ask which faculty she might be referring to and whether that perception upholds a dominant view of faculty perspectives and pedagogical practices. Similarly, William wondered to what extent the faculty reached out to the TLC for CIP-related resources. William contested:

Faculty development is skewed away from thinking about inclusive pedagogy, let alone critical pedagogy, to focus on this is how you set up Canvas. So, I wonder, of all the services that the [TLC] here offers, where do they see the most demand? And I would wager that they see the most demand around things that have nothing to do with inclusion. That it's about instructional design for an online course. It's about how to really use Canvas to its fullest degree. It's about how do I record my lecture and get it up on Canvas. I bet it's about that kind of stuff. And that the least used way of [TLC] is around inclusive pedagogy. That would be my guess because that's how whiteness shows up. Faculty life broadly is the same thing. We're shuttled into modes of operation that are neoliberal that are focused on productivity and production, and faculty as the means of production. And so, teach more, research more, serve more, and produce more stuff so that we, as an institution, have something to brag about.

William questioned the likelihood that faculty were interested in accessing resources for inclusive pedagogy of any kind but rooted this skepticism in the neoliberal and colonial nature of the institution, consistently placing productivity above all else.

Another challenge in promoting critical pedagogy is posed by the TLC's heavy investment in encouraging universal design for learning (UDL). Briana, a staff member in the TLC, emphasized, "I feel like there's a little bit of a gap with critical pedagogy, actually. But

inclusive pedagogical practices we've got; we have a really big emphasis on Universal Design for Learning.” Throughout the study, participants referenced UDL as a framework consistently applied and supported through resource allocation and professional roles dedicated to the expansion of UDL. While often discussed as a valuable resource, tensions arose in considering UDL as a critical framework applicable to supporting the educational needs of all students. One of the UDL instructors, Tina, described an interaction she had with a faculty participant in one of her programs, stating, “I did have someone pushback on the Universal Design for Learning Framework...they believed it was a white framework that helped white students with disabilities.” Gloria participated in TLC programming and shared similar concerns about the UDL curriculum. Gloria shared:

I did a training with them on neuro divergence. And it was all white students talking about getting accommodations. There was no acknowledgment of Students of Color or why Students of Color wouldn't necessarily go and sign up for accommodations. They've been underserved in K-12. And thus, they're underserved in higher ed. There's just no acknowledgment of it; it was just invisible. And so, I pushed them in this area. And I also push them around Universal Design for Learning and how it's not universal, we're norming it to white students. And we're calling it universal, like, come on. So, what does it look like in a way that's culturally responsive?

Gloria outlines how UDL lacks cultural responsiveness and norms whiteness, highlighting the erasure TLC programming contributes through the proliferation of UDL. TLC practitioners offer an awareness of the limitations of Universal Design for Learning but continue to uplift the framework despite concerns about the lack of intersectional relevance for multiply marginalized students.

Finally, several participants highlighted the role that faculty play in avoiding criticality when attempting to engage in CIP practices. When discussing the challenges of inviting faculty to develop a more critically conscious approach to inclusive teaching practices, participants reflected on the reflexivity and self-critique required to enact these practices. Abby reflected on

her own experiences as a faculty member engaging with critical pedagogy workshops that were led by the TLC, stating:

It can be hard to take on new things, especially I think a lot of, maybe all, critical and inclusive pedagogies also require you to deal with your own emotions and are often hard and heavy. And I can definitely think of times when I attended as a participant...I was like, oh, man, I could sit and have someone webinar talk at me about this and that tech thing, but I'm not feeling quite ready to do the sharing and the processing I'm gonna have to do in this hour.

Abby identifies a key aspect of critical pedagogy rooted in the process of developing consciousness that often takes time, emotional vulnerability, and processing with others.

Stephanie extended this notion when reflecting on balancing the utility of more skill-based training with more introspective work, asserting:

I have mixed feelings, because I do think that tips and tricks are things that people need. Like, if you could learn just one thing to do differently...having more sustained work is really important. And that was, for me as a practitioner, something that I realized over time. It's like, oh, I am racist, and I am doing things in my class that are damaging my students, and I have to continually work and learn. And [consciousness] has to be a sustained effort over time.

Stephanie's self-awareness and reflexivity about her racist teaching practices are notable and create a pathway to exploring the role of racial consciousness in shaping teaching and learning praxis. Throughout the study, several participants demonstrated they were willing to omit critical perspectives because they were too challenging or risky or pushed faculty beyond what Stephanie described as more accessible "tips and tricks." The following section will explore the necessity of elevating critical pedagogy and envisioning it as a key asset in CIP practices.

Envisioning Critical Pedagogy

While most participants agreed about the challenge of pushing forward an approach to CIP practices that included both critical and inclusive frameworks, only a few could envision an approach centered on critical pedagogy. The willingness to consider approaches that envisioned

critical pedagogy came exclusively from participants of color, primarily faculty who also use critical frameworks within their research. Their visioning process often came in the form of critical questions for pushing the work forward more effectively. Gloria suggested that this process must start with questioning foundational assumptions about how the TLC defines good teaching, stating, “[Centers] just name good teaching or excellent teaching in a way that's super broad. You have to be very intentional about naming. What does make it inclusive? Why is it inclusive? What makes it critical?” In exploring these questions, Gloria demonstrates a pathway for more intentional approaches to teaching through understanding the role of educators and clearly defining what factors are being utilized to determine what makes teaching critical, inclusive, or good. Laura further argued that TLC practitioners should ask questions of foundational critical pedagogical frameworks that speak to an embodied and emotive connection, offering:

The heart and spirit of it is really important. And so, I think about how I treat my students and how I want to be treated as an educator. I think what, for me, lives and thrives in ethnic studies, ... can live and thrive anywhere really if we give it a chance to grow. But that's the spirit of critical pedagogy. What was Paulo Freire really saying to us? What was bell hooks saying to us? It's really about that heartbeat, that spirit and really living it.

As Gloria and Laura demonstrated, advancing critical pedagogy requires establishing clear definitions and doing internal work to enact a liberatory and embodied understanding and application of critical and inclusive pedagogy. These participants envision a pedagogy that moves instructors beyond a set of practices to an approach that centers a depth of relationship with self, students, and the philosophical nature of what it means to teach.

Beyond theory and reflection, participants also surfaced the importance of offering practical examples of critical and inclusive pedagogy so instructors could envision the approach in more applied ways. Gloria emphasized this point, asserting, “You have to make it visible for

people. So, they know how to do it, and they can see it. For example, in a STEM context, what does it look like? How might it look similar? How might it look different?” Rather than talking about CIP in solely theoretical ways, Gloria emphasizes the importance of praxis, placing these frameworks in contexts that are accessible, relevant, and intentional for the faculty audience being served. Similarly, William acknowledges the need to provide tangible examples that uplift the specific work critical pedagogues are attempting to do. When it comes to crafting assignments, William shared:

As one example, I’m going to think about the neurodivergent student in my class, that likely is there. Whether I actually know they've been identified, because this work begins before, just like inclusive pedagogy, the work begins before class actually starts. It begins before the first day of the job. But critical and inclusive pedagogy both require thinking about who might be in the room before you find out who's in the room. The difference for me is that inclusive pedagogy goes okay; a neurodivergent student might be in the room, so let's make sure that I have a variety of assignments that can meet the needs of different learners, including my neurodivergent students. A critical pedagogy-centered practice goes: I might have neurodiverse students in my class, likely will have neurodiverse students in my class; this assignment in and of itself is going to center and be accessible for neurodiverse students. Regardless of who else is in the room, this is the assignment. And I've constructed the assignment in a way that meets the needs of neurodiverse students. And by doing so, it'll work for everybody else.

In William’s example, there is an articulation of the process of enacting critical and inclusive pedagogy starting before class even begins, surfacing the need to explore onboarding and course development processes for instructors. William asserts the need to consider which students you place at the center of your mind when crafting assignments in your syllabus. By placing neurodivergent students at the center, instructors are less reliant on students coming forward with accommodation requests, which structurally embeds their needs within the course's design.

Finally, there was also a question about how and with whom critical pedagogy can be enacted. Some participants advocated for an approach that would disrupt the notion of expertise and enact more of a community-engaged approach to teaching and learning. Gloria asserted:

[TLCs] get stuck in traditional forms of knowledge. They should be reaching out to the community, and the community should be teaching. I'd like to see examples of actually taking faculty to work with communities to say what is it that you want people to learn about you? What is that you want to see in the curriculum to prepare people to meet your needs? And I don't think [TLCs] do that. It's very traditional, inside the ivory tower. So basically, the message is that teaching and learning happens inside the ivory tower or not outside the ivory tower; we are the holders of the expertise.

Gloria disrupts traditional modes of knowledge production and sharing within the academy. She advocates for an approach to CIP that works alongside the community, broadening notions of who has expertise and where it can be derived from. Another faculty participant, Gretal, identifies herself as a critical feminist pedagogist. This relationship to pedagogy was notable in the connection to thinking about these frameworks and practices as an identity. In describing her initial hesitation and process in approaching TLC staff for support in enhancing her teaching practices, Gretal stated:

I'm a critical pedagogist, a critical feminist pedagogist. And I said to [past inclusive teaching director], you know, I need to think more deeply about my own teaching and the way I'm doing [course] content. And as a critical feminist pedagogist, I cannot achieve that goal all by myself. I have to achieve that goal with others, with either you or somebody else. Because it's in the engagement, in the struggling with the ideas and concepts, that knowledge develops. That's how I define this pedagogy.

Like many participants, Gretal speaks to the value of constructing her pedagogy in collaboration. In doing so, she envisions CIP as a process of cultivating shared knowledge through community rooted in reciprocity. When reflecting on the value of community within her development process, Abby also emphasized, "There's a lot of hard work you have to keep doing with yourself on yourself, but you get to work with other people who are themselves committed to that work." Drawing from Freirean understandings of knowledge production (Freire, 1998), these participants envision a pedagogy derived from grappling with their ideas, knowledge construction, and decisions with others.

Teaching & Learning Centers as First Responders: The Limitations of Pedagogical Support

The current study sought to understand how internal and external factors shape how a teaching and learning center makes meaning of critical and inclusive pedagogy in its practices. As demonstrated by the first theme, the work of CIP is influenced by varying perspectives and approaches, which led to varied understanding and engagement with critical frameworks. Participants also described how evolving sociopolitical issues and local, national, and global contexts increased demand for CIP learning and engagement. The TLC was often called into action when relevant social justice issues arose to help faculty better understand how to engage students, particularly in navigating difficult classroom conversations. This practice expanded the roles of teaching and learning center practitioners increasing their function as institutional "first responders" to sociopolitical crises. As the scope of their work broadened, questions emerged about the level of preparedness and resources designated for this expanded role, as well as the limitations of pedagogical support. This second theme will closely explore the role of sociopolitical factors as a catalyst for change in increasing demand for CIP, creating an expectation for space and support from the TLC, and positioning CIP as a tool for conflict reduction and respectability.

Catalysts for Change: Social Crisis Drives Demand for CIP

Many practitioners in the study engaged CIP practices as a necessary tool for responding to national and global sociopolitical issues like policy change, racialized violence, and social movements. Several participants observed that sociopolitical events and cultural crises serve as catalysts for institutional change, creating opportunities for CIP practices that were previously overlooked or ignored. As mentioned in Chapter Four, CIP practices first emerged at WCU in

reaction to the Movement for Black Lives and campus activism. After initially experiencing less interest and demand for CIP practices from faculty, Marie found that evolving contexts created greater relevance of these frameworks among faculty and university administration. She argued:

The socio-political context is creating more of a demand and is creating a space where more professors are like, yeah, I actually need to learn more. Versus, I don't even want to touch this. I don't need to learn anything else. I already know everything. And that demand can also help people in upper administration go, this is important. We need to put money to it...demand gives visibility to the need for funding and resources.

Marie described the lack of engagement and interest from faculty being disrupted by sociopolitical contexts that increased cultural humility from faculty desiring to improve their teaching. She also noticed a direct connection between faculty demand for CIP practices and resource allocation from university leadership. Throughout the interviews, participants pointed to several specific issues that increased demand for CIP. Nate shared some of the most frequently engaged issues for TLC staff, listing, “The murder of George Floyd and the reckoning that brought, the years of Trump's presidency and things that raised. I think, for [WCU], the [genocide and colonialism legacy] Report, and our own complicity.” In response to these issues, faculty often responded with resource requests. One of the most widely sought CIP resources was the inclusive teaching website. One of the TLC’s campus partners, Tyler, maintained the webpage and tracked demand following sociopolitical issues, asserting, “You can tell when certain issues come up because we'll see big bumps and page views...We could see different modules were being used by faculty members.” Collectively, these participants saw how sociopolitical contexts influenced faculty interest in CIP practices.

Several participants in the study also saw increased demand for CIP practices as a reaction to political influence and conservative backlash against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs and practices. These participants recognized that these practices were being

threatened. They thought the university had an important role in upholding their importance by expanding their utilization as a tool of resistance to protect academic freedom. Sasha, a past faculty participant, articulated how conservative policy changes threatened DEI programs but saw a role for CIP practices to serve as a tool in pushing back on these threats, stating:

I think that [CIP practice] is really important, particularly if the university is going to take a stand against things like Ron DeSantis and the idea that we can't even mention the word DEI, etc. If we're going to go the other way and say it's important to us to both educate and be accepting of a diverse body of students. Then it's important for the [TLC] to have that role and be loud about it and say we have the resources to assist you in fighting that fight. Because the fight against Ron DeSantis is not just a fight for equality and equity for students. It's also about academic freedom. And it's also about being able to do what you want to do as a faculty member to make the university and the world beyond the university meet more of your expectations, what society should be.

By suggesting the university has a view that upholds the value and educational imperative of diversity, Sasha identifies the stated values of the university as being in direct conflict with external pressures to undermine and remove DEI efforts. Further, given her understanding of the university's stated commitments and values, she argues that the TLC is responsible for being responsive to the sociopolitical contexts by equipping faculty with resources, tools, and strategies for transformative teaching. While Sasha saw threats to DEI programs as a call for resistance, other participants in the TLC shared concern that these threats would create a recoiling from CIP practices. Stephanie reflected on the TLC's search to fill the director of inclusive teaching position, where there were several candidates from Texas, where DEI initiatives had been recently banned. She stated:

We're searching for the next [Inclusive Teaching Director] and I noticed there's a handful of people that have applied from Texas. And so, I can't help but think to myself...the people who are doing this work are being fired, are having to find ways to do this work in secret.

Both Sasha and Stephanie tracked the influence of conservative pushback to increasing the relevance of CIP programming. However, they reached varied conclusions about what role the TLC might play as threats increase.

Kelly, a faculty member on faculty senate, similarly saw relevance and increased demand for CIP as a resource when responding to student complaints about campus climate. When Kelly reflected on the challenges facing university leadership, she described the TLC as an important resource in helping faculty navigate difficult conversations in the classroom. She explained:

Right now, what comes to mind is what's going on in the Middle East. The Israeli-Hamas war that's happening. And to an outsider, they might say, well, what the heck does that have to do with the Teaching and Learning Center? We've been having a lot of meetings because a lot of things are going on, and students are getting upset by things faculty say in the classroom. Students are getting upset by things that are said in the student newspaper. Faculty are saying, how do we have these conversations in the classroom? And so, how do we talk about difficult issues? That's where the [TLC] can really become involved.

While it may not have traditionally been considered a resource expected to interact with geopolitical issues, Kelly saw the TLC as an essential resource in responding to epistemic violence in the classroom. Their resources provide opportunities to improve faculty preparedness in fostering courageous conversations as students navigate the complexities surfacing in the campus community. As sociopolitical issues revealed variance in perspective and analysis, CIP practices were viewed as a tool to equip faculty to create educational opportunities for students to deepen their understanding, analysis, and perspective-taking.

Providing Space and Support

Although they collectively recognized the importance of being responsive, they frequently faced internal conflicts as they balanced immediate reactions to sociopolitical crises with deeper questions about meaningful impact, institutional constraints, and the potential for transformative change. This subtheme highlights the internal conflict faced by educational

developers who grapple with their responsibility to address sociopolitical crises. They often wonder if offering faculty the necessary support and space is enough to foster significant change or merely to alleviate conflict. For many TLC practitioners in the study, addressing evolving sociopolitical issues was a fundamental responsibility of their center. Remi asserted:

We're a really responsive center. We are constantly responding to new needs, new issues that come up, either one on one with folks across campus or nationally. So, when there are things happening across the country or across the world, we're responsive to that. We might do a lot of messaging or opportunities to support and connect folks, whether they're directly related to whatever's happening or not. For instance, the shit that's happening in Israel and Palestine, that sort of thing, we are responding to that in a way and providing space and opportunity for folks to come together, maybe distract from that, maybe focus in on that, things like that.

According to Stephanie, the TLC constantly balanced what was happening in the world and the national landscape, paying specific attention to “what is needed at the local level and where our faculty and students are.” It was important to not only track national events, but Stephanie also found particular importance in monitoring faculty and student reactions to these events to inform how the TLC might respond.

Similarly, for other practitioners in the center, while there were several opportunities for the TLC to offer response and support strategies, they did not always feel sufficient. Marie contextualized the role the TLC plays in response to national events, stating:

Certainly, when some event happens, that we are aware of how it's potentially having a big impact on students; whether it's yet another police shooting, something that happens in a school, or some big political decision that comes down, some of the recent rulings related to LGBTQ rights and whether or not we can talk about certain things in the schools. When those kinds of things happen, we often will, and I feel like this isn't enough. But we'll often at least try to include in our newsletter or send out sometimes a special email just with a little bit on maybe how to talk about this with your students. For example, since acknowledging that this thing has happened and that it will be on a lot of people's minds right now, how might you talk about that with your students?

Marie outlines a broad cross-section of issues from racialized violence to school shootings to policy changes. The center is expected to guide faculty on how they might approach those topics

with students in their classrooms. Their strategy emphasizes rhetorical support, highlighting tensions around how they create impact beyond mere words. Similarly, Briana reflected on the internal conflict she navigates when incorporating societal issues into her work. She stated:

The conflict in Israel and Palestine lately has been weighing very heavily...how am I contributing to making it better? These things are really important for me personally, how am I being a force for things to be better? And how am I helping promote justice? And I don't know, I feel sometimes like we're in a bubble. That's not a part of it. Yeah, I think it is central to our mission. We want it to be central to our mission, but it's so big and we get so caught up in the small things sometimes that it just feels separate.

Briana felt a disconnect when reflecting on the relationship between critical social issues and how she could contribute to social change through her work. While the range and complexity of issues the TLC is expected to respond to are significant, Marie and Briana questioned to what extent their response and proposed teaching strategies were sufficient.

CIP as a Tool for Conflict Avoidance and Respectability

For many participants, external political pressures and socio-political events transform classrooms into sites of ideological conflict, requiring new pedagogical approaches and institutional mediations. To move the campus community towards a more inclusive future, several participants argued that the TLC played a critical role in equipping faculty with tools to de-escalate conflict and respond to difficult conversations in the classroom. Although participants expressed a desire to reduce conflict, their methods and attitudes frequently supported an avoidance of conflict and respectability that aimed to preserve pedagogical harmony, which could inadvertently silence marginalized voices. While students might find themselves navigating conflict for various reasons, Kelly emphasized, “a lot of times these difficult conversations in the classroom are stemming from sociopolitical issues.” Often referring to sociopolitical issues such as racism, heterosexism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia as ‘hot button issues,’ participants saw CIP as a tool for fostering learning, community building, and

skill development that would help students and faculty better navigate difficult conversations.

Marie articulated the relationship between managing conflict and responding to sociopolitical issues in the classroom. She described:

As things get more contentious in the broader world outside of [WCU], that certainly is affecting how students show up in the classroom. That certainly means there have been more hot moments that happen in the classroom. There are more students that come into big conflict about things related to politics or how people are interpreting different things happening in the world related to racism and violence.

Marie believed there was a direct relationship between contentious issues in the world outside of WCU and how students came into conflict with one another in the classroom. Rhetorically, several participants referenced these issues and conversations as ‘hot button’ or ‘difficult’ but neglected to articulate for whom they are difficult or hot, raising questions about whether these moments are challenging based on white fragility or epistemic violence in the classroom.

In response, participants noticed increased rhetoric from university leadership that pushed students and faculty to foster more respectful and civil discourse. Kelly described how these messages often came across to faculty based on feedback she heard from the faculty senate. She shared:

Our chancellor is really pushing for civil discourse. And again, this is a part of this socio-political environment where there is so much uncivil discourse that goes on. And the faculty are pushing back on that term civil discourse, because, to them, it sounds like you want us to behave. And you don't want us or our students to have opinions.

Kelly noticed the increased rhetoric and directives towards civil discourse, tracing a direct connection to the broader sociopolitical environment. She described how faculty made meaning of this rhetoric as an effort to silence and limit their speech. Several participants echoed this perspective when describing a conference developed by the Office of the Provost in collaboration with Faculty Affairs and the Teaching & Learning Center. The conference theme focused on navigating hot moments in the classroom, which Patricia described as having increased relevance

since it took place “about 10 days after the attack on Israel, and therefore the conflict between Israel and Gaza.” She described how the conference was designed in anticipation of the upcoming national election cycle, where the provost was trying to prepare faculty for thinking about conflict in the classroom. She elaborated:

We had this wonderful opening keynote by one of our College of Ed faculty...and she spoke all about humanizing pedagogy as a way to minimize or reduce conflict in the classroom. That is if you create an environment in the classroom where faculty come to know the students as humans. As students come to know the faculty as humans, they come to know one another in a respecting regarding manner, that you are likely to have less conflict to begin with, and a more stimulating, more engaging learning environment.

Patricia described how humanizing pedagogy can reduce conflict and linked its utility to creating a more engaging learning environment. While both Kelly and Patricia described leadership efforts to reduce conflict and increase respect on campus, the ways these messages are approached can have humanizing and silencing effects.

Performative Commitments: The Gap Between Institutional Rhetoric and Practice

The current study sought to understand how racialized organizational contexts shape the operationalization of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices within teaching and learning centers. In describing their work, participants across the study described the institutional resourcing of CIP practices and the precedent-setting requirement for faculty to participate in the online inclusive teaching institute as a reflection of the institution’s commitment to equity. While these commitments were notable in WCU’s context and the national landscape, participants shared skepticism about their purpose, resourcing, and accountability. Participants reveal a gap between institutional rhetoric around equity and inclusion and the actual implementation of these values. Ultimately, participants questioned whether the institution's commitment to equity, both broadly and specifically through the teaching and learning center’s commitment to CIP, was performative rather than substantive. Participants in the study described challenges in

maintaining an institutional commitment to CIP practices within the TLC in three overarching themes: interrogating structural barriers to accountability, labor distribution and burden, and faculty capacity and well-being.

Interrogating Structural Barriers to CIP Accountability

Many of the participants in the study discussed the role of institutional requirements and accountability for faculty to utilize critical and inclusive pedagogies. As explored in the literature review in Chapter Two, TLCs often contend with institutional challenges to hold faculty accountable for changing their pedagogy and instruction. However, WCU sought to address this challenge by requiring faculty to complete an online inclusive teaching institute administered by the TLC. Despite this mandate, participants identified several structural barriers that restricted the depth and effectiveness of their commitments to equity. While many participants celebrated the institutional mandate as a symbol of progress and commitment, the implementation of this mandate imposed a labor cost on practitioners in the TLC, especially those leading CIP practices. In reflecting on the work she saw the inclusive teaching director take on to manage this initiative, Remi stated, “It looks like we're doing everything right because we have this one role, but they are drowning in the work because they are remediating all of these documents for faculty when that's not really their job.” As mentioned in Chapter 4, the new role was widely celebrated and thought of as providing CIP expertise. However, the maintenance of the online institute became overly labor intensive, reducing the work to correcting flaws and following up with individual faculty about missing documents. Further, in reflecting on managing this commitment for the inclusive teaching director, Nate added that the mandate sparked a more adversarial nature of the work, stating:

Here's a place where you've made a central mandate. Okay, great. And then what I'm getting. What I think she felt she was getting out of people often was either this reduced

capacity or this antagonism from it, or some people who said, I already know this. Why do I have to do this?

In recognizing that the one-size-fits-all mandate came with additional burdens, Remi and Nate acknowledged the challenging position their colleague was placed in to hold faculty accountable for completing the requirement.

Alongside the increased workload in managing the institute, TLC staff recognized the difficulties in holding faculty accountable for completing the module. While navigating the expectations of upper leadership within a hierarchical institutional context, Stephanie found it challenging to enforce participation in the inclusive teaching institute. This situation led to the TLC being perceived as policing faculty engagement through accountability efforts. Stephanie argued:

Mandated DEI work is problematic and we've kind of grappled with that. But the chancellor, that was a value for him... We want to be viewed as allies and partners, not as the accountability police. So, if people don't do it, then then they don't do it. And we don't want to be in the position to police it.

When pressed further about why the mandate was important for the chancellor, she elaborated, “How much of that is just performative? I like to think that it's not, but it is good as a person who's a leader to be able to say, I said this thing should happen, and it happens.” Stephanie acknowledged the chancellor's commitment but remained skeptical about its genuineness, considering the challenges faced by her team. Similarly, Nate reflected on the complexity of this challenge, acknowledging, “When people are forced to do this, we don't always get their best work, on the other hand, understanding that sometimes it takes policy to change a culture.” While Nate articulates the limitations of requiring faculty to complete mandatory training, he questions how necessary it is to foster culture change. Therefore, it is important to consider the unintended consequences of mandatory training.

Participants not only questioned the implications of mandating faculty engagement in this work, but they also criticized the insufficient structural expansion of this requirement. Many viewed this challenge as indicative of a lack of institutional policies that foster accountability, especially concerning tenure and promotion practices. Gretal, a senior faculty member, reflected on institutional rhetoric being disconnected from what happens in practice, arguing, “The message is always that we say teaching is important for career advancement. And then people can teach horribly and get tenure. So, we lie. So that's one of the barriers is that we're not serious about it.” William expounded on the lack of seriousness, further reflecting on the vast ambiguity of the teaching evaluation process, stating, “I was looking at rubrics here as a college for tenure-line faculty, and your teaching should be acceptable. That doesn't suggest a teacher-scholar model. Acceptable teaching and what is acceptable?” As mentioned in Chapter 4, WCU prides itself on being an R1 institution that values teaching often described through framing the “teacher-scholar” model. Gretal and William question whether the focus on teaching at the institution is just a superficial effort, considering there is minimal structural interrogation and accountability.

Several participants discussed the challenge of motivating faculty across various disciplines to take their teaching more seriously, particularly among tenure-line faculty. At a Research 1 (R1) institution like WCU, tenure-line faculty are expected to show high scholarly productivity mainly through impactful research publications, maintaining a solid teaching record, and contributing meaningfully to service activities within the department, university, and broader field. Despite this wide range of responsibilities, research is often viewed as the most critical element for tenure consideration, effectively prioritizing excellence in research over teaching and service. Participants described experiencing this pattern throughout the institution, particularly in

science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. For faculty, especially those in STEM, the research culture begins early for junior faculty with a strong emphasis on securing research funding. This dominant paradigm of faculty socialization compels junior faculty to focus their time on obtaining research funding and publication, creating a reciprocal pattern that is rewarded and reinforced over time. Austin, a tenured STEM faculty member, contended:

The emphasis on grants and publications to get tenure causes junior faculty to get sucked into this model. And once they've been doing it, because, you know, they have to deliver so that they can get tenure. So, by the time they get tenure, it's just normal to them, and they continue on. And so, the idea of being willing to forefront teaching or societal implications of that teaching or societal implications of one's research is a hard sell to tenure-line faculty because of the system.

Austin described how faculty socialization contributed to a cascading effect that broadly de-emphasizes teaching, particularly teaching and research that might interact with broader social issues.

Stephanie contended that the institution's emphasis on research alone "unintentionally diminishes the important work that teaching and learning centers do. Because oftentimes there's that idea of how teaching and learning centers do fluffy work and research is the important work." As a TLC practitioner, Stephanie identified a direct relationship between research emphasis and the delegitimization of teaching and learning efforts. Furthermore, this ideology undermines the contributions and workload of teaching faculty. Sharon, a senior administrator, aimed to review tenure policy across the institution, which raised several questions:

Do our promotion and tenure documents specify how one should show up and do this work? And does it have real implications for decisions like merit, raises, and promotions? And do we lift people up in recognition? So, I think that [WCU] in general is starting to do a much better job of celebrating not just scholarly accomplishments, but teaching and service accomplishments, and there's been a call for when we really need to have more formal recognition of people's investments in the DEI space and calling that out in its own right.

Sharon outlines the layers of policy and culture change needed at WCU by questioning the lack of specificity and teaching emphasis embedded in the promotion and tenure process. Similarly, Abby advocated for “more tools to show that this is really going to matter for annual reviews, tenure, promotion, campus culture, and celebration.” She elaborated:

There are places where that is changing and is becoming more visible, there are some of the colleges and schools that asked explicitly, what have you done this year in your classes to make them more inclusive, which is super cool. But I still think you can not do any of this work. The default is still not doing this work. And so, the more that we can shift to a place where everyone has to be growing, you know, everyone's not going to start or end at the same place, the better that would be.

Sharon and Abby surface the reality that it can be easy to evade implementing CIP due to the lack of accountability within review processes, which makes the work optional.

In response, participants reflected on the possibility of connecting CIP program participation to annual review processes but described a structural barrier tied to the decentralized nature of institutional operations. Like many participants, Sharon described WCU as a decentralized institution, “Part of the reason we don't mandate much is because each school or college or division really is led most strongly by the dean.” As a TLC practitioner, Nate struggled to serve a faculty population receiving various messages about what was most important. He shared:

There is a real lack of willingness to make real strong policy statements for the entire university. So, you may have areas where there's a commitment to this work. But those areas are small within the larger context. And it's hard to amplify that sometimes because some people can say, well, that's fine for your culture, but our culture over here and this other area of the university, we've got to be really focused on research.

Nate traced a disconnect in extending commitments that might push schools and colleges where CIP is less supported to have more tangible methods of accountability. Despite this challenge, Nate shared that this scaffolding of accountability happens in pockets of the university. Sharon reflected on one school where the mandate was buttressed with additional accountability. She

shared, “In social work...we actually put a place into our promotion and tenure and annual review processes, where people needed to speak to participation in [the institute], what they got from that and/or other similar efforts to develop themselves.” In this college, the faculty were not only required to complete the institute but also reflect on their participation within the context of their discipline. Sharon described this approach as having “some ripple effects out from it that in some ways may even be more impactful over the long term than the initial skill building itself.” Sharon emphasized how increased accountability can foster additional relevance for CIP within annual review processes, leading to more sustained faculty engagement and investment.

While there was broad agreement from participants that institutional change was needed to increase rewards and consequences for engagement and implementation of CIP practices, institutional power structures created limitations in their application. For TLC practitioners, it can be particularly difficult to communicate expectations of individual faculty or faculty departments. In describing a collaborative project with the inclusive teaching director to create a new anti-ableist attendance policy for faculty, William shared:

[Inclusive teaching director] raised, for [TLC], we have to be very, very careful about not looking like we're setting policy for faculty because that's Faculty Senate's job and the Vice President for Faculty Affairs. They were like, we don't have that purview. We would run into issues if it appeared like we were trying to write a policy for faculty and what faculty do in their classrooms.

Despite expectations for leadership in developing evidence-based practices, TLC practitioners were limited by the boundaries constructed around their work. William acknowledges the role of senior leadership and shared governance through the Faculty Senate as having more credibility and authority. Despite William’s assertion about leadership influence, Sharon further complicates and identifies the limitations of senior leaders in creating systemic change. She stated:

If you want to make systems change, you have to build these things into consequential decision-making. And you need folks who are in supervisory and leadership positions to

understand it and to use their supervision opportunities and other things like annual reviews. To point people, this isn't just a nice to have; this is a need. You need to do this work. So that's tricky. And it's extra tricky in a decentralized university where, again, I can't walk around out there and tell people what to do. But I can advocate, and I can give training to folks and try to bring them along. And then tools that can be built into systems to make sure it stays on the priority list.

Sharon describes her experience as a senior administrator as limited by decentralization and the autonomy of leaders across the institution. Much of her work is grounded in a practice of influence, but even in her leadership role, there is a limited ability to mandate or dictate policy.

Isolated and Siloed: Labor Distribution and Burden

While establishing a director role to lead CIP practices was widely heralded as a significant commitment made by the institution to advance these efforts, several participants in the study also acknowledged the high expectations and unequal distribution of labor proliferated in this work. These practitioners recognized that having a dedicated role supporting these efforts was a benefit but worried about following a similar pattern where inclusion-related work is often isolated and siloed as the responsibility of dedicated staff. Stephanie articulated that she wrestled with this dynamic when supporting her staff, stating:

Inclusive teaching is kind of a tricky thing. Because on the one hand, we view it as everybody's job, that everybody should be taking that lens to the work that they're doing. But it's also helpful to have a dedicated role to that work because I think the danger of embedding it is that becomes invisible. And then the problem with not embedding is that it feels like an add on. So, in some ways, you kind of can't win.

Stephanie describes a desire to embed inclusive teaching practices in all the work in the TLC. However, she feared the work would become indistinct and unrecognized if it was not explicitly structured within the organization. She also discussed the challenge of having inclusive teaching be perceived as an added-on approach to effective teaching. Abby agreed, cautioning, “There can be a danger when you have one person named for people to not take responsibility for doing this work...the [TLC] has to make sure they're spreading it around and embedding it in all the things

they're doing.” Stephanie and Abby understood that CIP programming could become isolated, siloed, and perceived as non-essential. As a result, they each discussed the importance of spreading out the work through values clarity and embedded practices.

Despite being aware of the need to embed CIP practices across the TLC, several practitioners identified gaps that contributed to heightened expectations of those directly leading CIP practices. TLC staff collectively agreed on the value of CIP practices; Remi shared, “[CIP practices] is definitely a part of all of our work. And it's definitely rooted in our values. But it's not always explicitly on our job descriptions.” She elaborated:

I think this work needs to be embedded or written and explicitly stated more in a lot of our roles, and not just the director of inclusive teaching. It is really cool that we have that role built into our office...But I know that they can feel like it's a very siloed and lonely experience navigating such deep complexities and issues alone or without strong partners written into it.

When Remi reflected on her support for colleagues in the inclusive teaching director role, several dynamics surfaced. First, she identified a disconnect between the TLC's values and operational structures defining CIP responsibilities throughout staff job descriptions. She also recognized the unique position the center is in by committing to the role, which can feel like progress within itself without further inspection of the nature of the experience for those leading the work. As a result, the director can experience isolation and siloing in navigating complex issues without formal support structures.

Several participants described the significant and demanding responsibilities and expectations placed on both past and future inclusive teaching directors. Often, these expectations have included immediate demands to produce work in accordance with leadership directives. While discussing the development of the online institute, Gretal, a faculty partner, noted:

[Past inclusive teaching director] was in charge of creating [the] online modules about inclusive teaching. And I tried to help her with some of that. Because it was, I mean, it was only her and another Person of Color, [past assessment & evaluation director] involved in that. But they had a very short window and a very heavy, like, superhuman lift. You know, sometimes the university is a little bit like kryptonite, like disempowering. That timeframe was Kryptonite, and they did a beautiful job.

Gretal described the process that past TLC staff members undertook to quickly develop content to support the institutional mandate for CIP engagement. Despite the stated commitment made by the institution, the expectations placed on staff did not align with the resources needed for implementation. Gretal highlights the resilience and brilliance these Staff of Color displayed in designing the new initiative despite these challenges. Similarly, Tina reflected on the unique position and high expectations associated with the director role, arguing:

What a job—difficult, raw, like—you better be ready. That job should come with therapy hours attached. Because if we expect that person to be the end-all-be-all, know all-inclusive teaching, and experience different identities, we're looking for a unicorn.

Both Gretal and Tina recognized the importance of the inclusive teaching director role and the significant challenges posed by siloing, high expectations, and the complexity of the work; consequently, they each pushed for changes in support structures and resources to enhance WCU's commitment to CIP practices. It is essential to recognize the mythological and non-human imagery expressed by colleagues, emphasizing the mental burden of this role and the dehumanization anticipated by the institution.

Within the TLC, several practitioners, particularly white staff members, acknowledged that the lack of professional development and efforts to raise racial consciousness among colleagues broadened the siloing of CIP across the TLC's operations. These participants felt that the staff focused too much on developing programs and not enough on expanding their own consciousness. Stephanie suggested, "We've thought a lot about how we provide [CIP practices]. But I think just talking to you is making me think about how do we make the space for us to be

engaging in that [work] as well.” Stephanie emphasizes that the primary focus on faculty development distracts the staff from prioritizing their own growth. She also highlights the interview process as a disruption to her thinking and provides an opportunity for future reflection and introspection. However, for other practitioners, it was a new experience to think about and address race within their work. Marie reflected on her discomfort in facilitating CIP practices, stating, “It was new to me to start engaging in conversations around inclusive pedagogy, to start engaging in conversations about race, to start engaging in conversations about white privilege. So, I was also just nervous...about what kinds of things might arise.” When asked to elaborate on the source of her nervousness, Marie described the pressure inherent in TLC practice to provide expertise on faculty development. She contended:

I think in centers, certainly in ours, and I imagine others, we can feel the pressure to come across as always knowing what the right answers are. Sort of like what happens in a classroom, I suppose too, where the professor feels it's important to always know exactly what the answers are. And I also think we do know a lot. And all of us, me included, in our space need to learn more, to keep learning. But I think it's also important to be willing to make mistakes and wade into spaces that we still have a lot of learning to do and model what it means to keep learning. So, I think centers have a role to play in disseminating knowledge and creating spaces where other people are learning more, but also a role to play in modeling what it means to keep learning about all of this. So, I think it's important not only for us to play as much of a leadership role as we can but also to model what it means to be a co-learner with everyone around this stuff.

While Marie’s assertion that the nature of TLC practice is rife with pressure to provide evidence-based practices is valid and relevant, it obscures the underlying white fear and unwillingness to disrupt white comfort that contributes to avoiding conversations about race. Marie’s reflection also reveals a manifestation of white liberalism, where the fear of making mistakes hampers engagement with issues of race and racism.

While some participants believed the center's lack of engagement with race stemmed from the focus and nature of their work, others attributed this challenge to the absence of conversation and dialogue about race and racism. Tina described:

Race and racism have not been brought up that often...we tried to do work around DEI, and we tried to do work around being inclusive, but talking about this with you now makes me think that there are probably ways that we, as a staff, could be talking about these things and centering this work a little bit more.

Tina noted a lack of engagement with race and racism among the TLC staff but acknowledged that there have been limited conversations about DEI in general and the practice of inclusion. This recognition underscores the challenges of addressing DEI in race-evasive ways that do not directly confront race and racism. Participants linked the absence of racial discourse and literacy to the lack of racial diversity in the center's staffing. Nate posed the question:

How do we keep questions of race and culture before ourselves in our work? When again, in our office, we're primarily white, middle-class people. I mean, we have two Colleagues of Color, and a couple that would identify in marginalized groups, either neurodiversity or sexual orientation. How do we recognize some of these issues that are showing up? How do we name them?

Nate questioned how the TLC staff could promote racial consciousness and tackle racial inequalities in their work, considering the limited racial diversity within the TLC.

Participants expressed concerns regarding how whiteness manifested in the perceptions and practices of the TLC. In considering the necessity to challenge whiteness and promote staff development, Stephanie highlighted:

I really don't want this office to be seen as a white space. I want to empower the staff to do the work, to think about the ways in which they make their own programs inclusive, and they examine their own power and privilege.

Stephanie was concerned that the perception of the TLC as a predominantly white space might limit the scope of its work. She believed that empowering staff to engage in self-reflection could address these issues. Although there was a strong desire to examine power and privilege and

deepen consciousness, some participants felt that the TLC staff could engage more intentionally. Briana described consciousness-raising efforts among her colleagues, stating, “We've had a few shared readings and things like that. In terms of conversations, I think we could be doing more.” Briana points out the limitations of professional development through reading and emphasizes that a more substantial approach is necessary. Briana’s critique highlights how white liberalism often responds to racial oppression and racialized violence with book clubs that maintain white comfort and do little to disrupt the status quo. Ultimately, the lack of racial consciousness across the TLC’s staff and operations further contributed to the isolation and siloing of CIP practices.

Faculty Capacity and Well-being

Several participants in the study also acknowledged that their work to advance CIP practices was threatened by the consistent and high-level labor expectations placed on faculty at WCU. These expectations often indicated that faculty lacked the capacity to enhance their teaching methods, which was partly due to a lack of well-being stemming from institutional pressures. On the one hand, practitioners experienced frustration from faculty resistance to CIP initiatives. However, on the other hand, they expressed empathy for the high demands placed on how faculty balance their time. Nate reflected on this tension, stating, “One of the [challenges] is this sense of this is important, but it's one among many things that seem to be important to faculty. Add that to an incredible amount of exhaustion and reduced capacity for things.” Nate elaborated on feedback he has heard from faculty:

We know we're supposed to do this. And yet, we don't feel like we have any space. And so, how do we operationalize a value so that it's not one more thing, but it's core to who we are and what we do. That I think is one of the biggest challenges we face with faculty. Because we hear from faculty, Yeah, I want to do that. I don't know how, and I don't have space to do one more thing.

Nate suggests that some faculty want to improve their pedagogy and integrate CIP into their instruction but feel overextended and burnt out from multiple competing pressures. Stephanie contextualized this complication further, reflecting on the impact of COVID-19, suggesting, “After the pandemic, there's still a lot of exhaustion, like we had to learn all these new things, and we keep having to learn these new things. And you're asking us to do more and more.” Nate and Stephanie raise a question about the nature of labor expectations to constantly engage in means of production for the institution, creating a challenge for faculty to have the capacity to engage in CIP learning and development.

Several participants in the study rooted this challenge in an inability to garner resources that support faculty well-being. Briana, for example, questioned WCU’s commitment, arguing:

Sometimes it can be performative too. It's like, hey, we want to do DEI work and then none of it is...really given the level of importance that it deserves. Our [TLC] is at the forefront of trying to do that work a lot of the time, but then not getting the support we need or not being able to give people stipends to do it, and folks forgetting that it's their job.

Given the lack of financial resourcing, importance, and departmental support, Briana wondered to what extent WCU’s commitment to advancing CIP was performative. Relatedly, Patricia acknowledged the lack of capacity but expanded the dynamic to consider challenges with faculty wellbeing broadly. She affirmed:

If [faculty] feel under duress at a high level, they are likely to be less leaning into inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms. So again, it's that infinity loop. If faculty are feeling more positive and more seen and held and embraced by the broader landscape, then I think that sense of well-being is going to contribute to leaning into inclusive pedagogy in the classroom... I do think external factors or internal factors of [WCU's] asking too much of our faculty. I think that can negatively impact our faculty members' proclivity towards prioritizing inclusive pedagogy. If they themselves don't feel well cared for, I think it's going to negatively impact the extent to which they are caring well for our students.

Patricia identifies a relationship between the breadth and depth of faculty workloads and their capacity to care for their students. Providing resources that could enhance faculty well-being and support the labor demands they shoulder can contribute to increased accountability and capacity to enact CIP. Collectively, these participants highlight the faculty's lack of wellness and the need to explore the impact of academic capitalism on their well-being.

Navigating Institutional Power: The Faculty of Color Experience

Most participants in the study viewed CIP as a tool for improving campus climate, fostering racial equity, and supporting racially minoritized students. Despite their shared understanding of CIP as a strategy for advancing racial justice, they often articulated a limitation when considering CIP practices as a tool for supporting the needs of Faculty of Color. Given the dominance of white faculty in composition and ways of being across the institution, Faculty of Color were often neglected, de-centered, and erased when designing, implementing, and assessing faculty development practices in the TLC. These feelings were related to four primary considerations for this work: *institutional racism and white fragility, pervasive whiteness in the teaching & learning center, racialized and gendered labor disparity, and strategies to move beyond survival to thriving*. This theme will provide an in-depth exploration of how Faculty of Color experienced and strategically navigated racism, white supremacy, and institutional power structures as they intersected with CIP practices.

Exposing Institutional Racism and White Fragility

Although TLC staff saw the value of engaging CIP practices within the scope of TLC practice, they also acknowledged the complexity and limitation of doing it in a racialized institutional context. Several participants acknowledged the university's investment in CIP practices as a sign of WCU's commitment to inclusion but often acknowledged how institutional

racism and white fragility made the work feel problematic. Racialized patterns emerged across the university, evident in departmental cultures, leadership practices, classroom interactions, and faculty advocacy. When reflecting on WCU's commitment to CIP practices, Nate acknowledged the following:

As a white liberal institution, what happens with that is, look, we did this work, isn't that great, you should feel like you belong. And then microaggressions still occur. And for Faculty of Color, especially, it's a double-edged sword. It's the institution saying, look at this work we've done, why don't you feel like you belong, and they're not feeling like they can own their own story anymore, or point out the problematic areas of the institution. Because the institution then responds with white fragility like, oh, wait, we're still not doing good enough.

Nate noticed the ease with which the institution used the TLC's advancements in CIP practices to the detriment and disregard of Faculty of Color critiques about their experiences at the institution. By doing so, he reveals a connection between white liberalism, white fragility, and dominant ideology, observing how the idea of 'look how far we've come' generates a chilling effect on viewpoints that compel the institution to assess how much further it needs to go to achieve progress and change. Stephanie saw a similar pattern regarding Faculty of Color experiences, stating:

Even though we are a university that is ostensibly really committed to this work, the lived experience of the Faculty of Color is very different...people feel like we have a lot to pat ourselves on the back for, but what does that actually end up feeling like in practice?

For Nate and Stephanie, the amplification of CIP practices incurs the cost of commodification, where the university sustains whiteness through celebrations of success and progress while failing to acknowledge critiques or alter the material structures that influence academic life for Faculty of Color.

Faculty of Color participants quickly recalled experiences navigating racism in their teaching, leadership, and promotion processes. Gloria, a full professor, reflected on her

experience organizing with other Faculty of Color and shared how she has “pushed on people in ways they don't want to be pushed” when resisting white supremacy at WCU. She elaborated further, stating:

We've pushed in spaces, and then we get shut out of spaces. And so that can be problematic until our own help to elevate us into those spaces. Sometimes we're seen as radical or activists on this campus typically. And so that can close doors for you... doors like being on university-wide searches can get closed off to you, or being on university-wide committees or doing a presentation at the provost conference because they think you're radical or they're not quite sure they can trust that what you'll say will align or won't align with the university's messaging.

Gloria's comment highlights the cascading effects of speaking out and resisting white supremacy. First, it acknowledges the shift in professional perception as radical, followed by the shutting out opportunities rooted in mistrust. Similarly, Alejandro, a mid-career scholar, described the material consequences of advocating for equity in his department:

I don't shut up and I talk about issues like this, and I don't think they would ever promote me. Honestly, I don't care. But at the same time, it makes me a little bit annoyed. Here you go, here you have someone who's not white that should be promoted probably at some point and will never do it and doesn't have any interest because of the politics involved in it.

Alejandro describes the toll speaking out has taken on his relationships with colleagues and his potential for advancement in the college. The racialized politics that he must navigate reduced his desire to participate and seek advancement in ways he feels deserving of. Gloria and Alejandro highlight how expectations for faculty collegiality are rooted in whiteness, where Faculty of Color are punished and reduced for wanting to be seen.

Institutionally, faculty at WCU have an opportunity to influence policy through faculty senate and shared governance. Despite the presence of a formal advocacy structure, participants described pervasive whiteness in senate practices broadly and particularly when advocating for

racial justice and anti-racist policy. Kelly described tensions that manifested when Faculty of Color shared feedback about the faculty senate, stating:

It's been a struggle. FOCA, which is the Faculty of Color Association, said to me, and this has been very hard, and I've been trying to work with them, but they said to me, I don't feel like Senate is the place where we get things done for us. We don't feel like we have an important voice. The Senate voice is more about faculty broadly, which at this university is mostly white faculty. We want to have a direct line as FOCA to the administration, to the board... And I think that's another example of where thinking about race and racism and anti-racism is hard, it's really hard. I think it's super important and really hard, and we are not in a good place. We're not in a good place, even with the best of intentions of so many people.

Kelly describes a pervasive pattern of erasure and invisibility that was shared across contexts when describing the Faculty of Color experience. Even when stating a desire to support these colleagues, Faculty of Color are still de-centered and erased from the dominant white norm. Although Kelly's assertion regarding the challenge of addressing racism and anti-racism is common, it is crucial to investigate who finds the consideration of racism difficult and to examine how whiteness influences the Senate's approach to anti-racism.

Faculty of Color also experience institutional racism and white fragility in enacting CIP in their classrooms. While all faculty were encouraged to utilize critical and inclusive pedagogy, participants described how Faculty of Color were more likely to have their efforts critiqued, undermined, or marginalized. In reflecting on the challenges Faculty of Color navigate at WCU, Abby contended that racism and white supremacy shape “what a faculty member will look like and sound like and the way their expertise will be valued and interpreted.” In navigating a predominately white campus environment, Gretal describes how Faculty of Color are constantly “trying to negotiate the perception of our white students about us. And so, it makes us hesitant, sometimes.” Abby and Gretal highlight the impact of the white gaze on pedagogy and instruction

and the hesitancy to take on more critical approaches for Faculty of Color. Gretal expounds further, uplifting the experiences of junior Faculty of Color:

I've been working on [CIP] for a very long time. Can my early career faculty members do it of whatever color in a predominately white university? Early career scholars are struggling in their classroom in a different way. So, for instance, I had a Latino faculty member who was teaching an economics course and started to talk about the economics in a Latin American country in which we invaded, and four white students, white male students just got up and left. And this happened every time they started to include information that was not US-focused or had some kind of critique or information about how those economics work.

Gretal highlights the resistance encountered by Faculty of Color when diversifying their curricula and teaching from critical frameworks. Similarly, Remi described a consultation she led with a faculty member experiencing racism in his department and from the students in his class:

I was talking with him about how he's navigating that, and really, all he feels he can do is just talk about it with folks. He doesn't feel like he can go through the channels that are supposedly there to actually have any change happen and have any support for him. Honestly, it feels like the leadership is taking the side of the students. I recommended that he attend this learning community. Afterward, he was just blown away by how much support he received. And that's a really beautiful thing. It is a space for him and other folks like him to talk through these issues and to name these issues. You know, justice might look like what comes next? What if we took this small group of learning experiences and that actually informed change? That actually informed new processes that supported these faculty members when a white student complained about their teaching. Like, what could be built for them that could actually create some sort of justice for their racial identity?

Remi highlights the perilous position junior Faculty of Color experience when navigating racism and a lack of institutional trust. They have limited outlets and resources for addressing their concerns. This compilation of experiences raises the question of how and to what extent faculty development efforts attend to the needs of Faculty of Color across ranks.

In addition to experiencing institutional racism external to the TLC, several participants described how racism and white supremacy affected Faculty of Color when engaging in TLC

programs and practices. Stephanie shared that the TLC is often perceived “as a white space.” She elaborated further:

There's a lot of white women in these types of leadership roles, which I think about a lot. And I feel like, based on the sort of the work that I have done in the past and the work that I'm trying to continue to do, we all need to be thinking about our positionality. And we need to be thinking about the faculty that we're serving.

Stephanie acknowledged the perception of the TLC as a white space, in part due to the composition of their staff. This perception has not only manifested in the present but has been shaped by prior faculty experiences with the TLC. Sharon reflected on the historical reputation of the TLC as a perpetrator of racist practices on campus when she described:

I don't think that every person feels as comfortable working with the [TLC]. In part, that group has evolved over time. I don't think it was always as good at attending to [racial equity] issues in a way that was expert and helpful enough. I'm trying to be delicate here. But colleagues of mine who have been at this institution for a very long time had some bad experiences, historically, with that office and those experiences were related to their identities. I think we're doing a lot better now, but there's some repair work that had to be done.

Unlike the more transient student experience, some faculty members have a long life cycle and memory when reflecting on institutional practices. Sharon acknowledges the impact of this history, requiring reparative engagement with longstanding faculty, particularly Faculty of Color.

Reflecting on the challenge of engaging in repair work as a white practitioner, Nate shared:

I'm not always sure how to help change the narrative or the work. I can say I empathize, or maybe I sympathize is the better term. Because I haven't experienced the same things, and I want it to be better. And I constantly ask myself, keep asking this question when I engage, especially with Faculty of Color, what can I do to be supportive? And I think that's an important question to ask. But that puts more work sometimes on Faculty of Color.

As a white TLC practitioner, Nate reflects on the narrative he and his colleagues inherited from past faculty experiences with the TLC and the extent to which they continue to be complicit in

sustaining whiteness. While he understands the need to engage more supportively going forward, he identifies an additional burden placed on Faculty of Color to improve TLC practice.

TLC staff acknowledged limitations in their scope when catering their programming to a predominantly white faculty. Several practitioners identified the challenge broadly but saw the issue manifest most visibly when assessing their CIP programs. Most participants framed CIP practices as a tool to reduce bias against students with an underlying assumption that faculty were discriminating against students. However, Stephanie shared a need for the center to consider a paradigmatic shift in their programming. She stated:

So having not only capacity building for white faculty to do this well in the classroom, but providing support structures for Faculty of Color, who are in primarily white departments and serving primarily white students and experiencing microaggressions in the classroom. So, it's not all about people who are micro-aggressing against their students. It's about how do you navigate being micro-aggressed against or macro-aggressed against in the classroom.

Stephanie recognized the need to expand CIP practices beyond a lens that centers on the educational needs of white faculty and embraces an approach that acknowledges the racism encountered by Faculty of Color inside and outside of the classroom. She advocated for a broadened approach that would provide Faculty of Color with tools and skill-building to respond to challenges when they might experience microaggressions. Remi noticed a similar dynamic emerge as the TLC approached candidate interviews for the inclusive teaching director role.

It was really interesting thinking about the questions we were asking them... a lot of the questions were, you're working with a white faculty member, and this instance comes up. So, it's a lot more about helping teach white faculty, because we are predominantly white, how to navigate hot moments in the classroom. And what happens when there are microaggressions in their classrooms and a lot less of a focus on how we're going to support our Faculty of Color. Because there are a lot less of them, and we do have a hard time keeping them in higher education.

Remi noticed that the dominant centering shaping the work also affected the competencies the TLC staff assessed for candidates to lead CIP practices. Several participants pointed to the need

for the TLC to address this concern and offer programming that prioritizes the needs of Faculty of Color. Ultimately, these experiences illustrate how institutional racism and white fragility within TLC practices are intrinsic to their design and conceptualization.

Pervasive whiteness in Teaching & Learning

Participants pointed to the lack of consideration Faculty of Color received in terms of how CIP practices were developed and conceived. The lack of consideration and recognition of Faculty of Color perpetuated a pervasive whiteness and erasure evident in faculty development programs and practices at WCU. Tensions arose in areas such as program design, assessment practices, faculty retention, and departmental decisions. Some participants saw this dynamic emerge in faculty development practices broadly. In describing her experience as a Mestiza faculty member, Gloria stated:

Faculty development is generally geared toward white faculty because that's the majority of the faculty on college campuses. So, there's typically not an intentionality about saying, but what's different for Faculty of Color? What's different about their experience? What's different about their needs? What do they want to see reflected in the training? It's more geared toward the middle, which is white. And so, I think that's the reality that [TLCs] face. How do they provide opportunities for all faculty while being intentional?

Gloria points to how faculty development efforts cater to the dominant center of faculty experience on most college campuses and advocates for more intentional approaches that prioritize the needs of Faculty of Color. A core goal of the TLC is to support faculty across their lifecycle at the institution, but their approach often mirrors this broader challenge. When considering how the TLC assesses the faculty experience, Remi shared:

We're not using any assessment measures to figure out if we are supporting [Faculty of Color], or if they do feel like they belong here and things like that. We look at those things in general. Do faculty feel like they belong at [WCU]? Does our programming contribute to their sense of belonging at [WCU]? And then we will kind of break that up on demographics and look at our Faculty of Color as compared to our white faculty and things like that. But I would say it's less prioritized explicitly than it probably should be or could be.

Remi describes how assessment and evaluation efforts are often constructed in a race-neutral manner, which lacks prioritization and explicit consideration of how the TLC supports Faculty of Color.

This dynamic rose in the collective consciousness following the public departure of three Black faculty who left the university, as Nate described, “due to issues of racism.” Stephanie described the experience further, stating:

[Psychology] lost three Black faculty in the space of a year, and they were interviewed on [public radio]. They were very thoughtful about the way they spoke about it publicly. But I think a lot of it came down to some of the old guard being unwilling to change...higher ed is just really weird, and people get away with shit that they would never get away with in any other sector. And so, on the one hand, it's the space that's very progressive and on the cutting edge of lots of things, but then it's also very traditional and very slow to change.

Stephanie highlighted how the departure of these faculty was due to the racism faculty experienced in their department and pointed to the lack of accountability and support structures as a contributing factor. She also pointed to the impact of the “old guard,” which other participants also noticed. Austin described the power old guard faculty are able to maintain in his STEM department. He stated:

But a lot of the old guard tenured faculty do not care. They are the ones who control the department...So, the obstacle is that elitist attitude that only I, with my 20 years of technical research in [STEM discipline], can say what the right way of doing [science] is, and the only people that can disagree with me are my peers. And even then, they're probably wrong, and I'm right. That level of arrogance and egotism is a major roadblock to making change.

Austin outlined the broad control tenured faculty have in his college in dictating culture and defining whose ideas have value. He problematizes this behavior as a reflection of arrogance and elitism, which are power-laden attitudes.

Participants recognized this gap in the TLC's programming and operational focus and started questioning why this pattern existed. This question was a primary focal point for Esther, a TLC Staff of Color, upon her arrival at WCU. Esther reflected:

When I was coming in, there was a huge coverage of how there were some Faculty of Color leaving [WCU], and there was news coverage. They had gone on the news talking about their experiences. And I was curious; I knew what I was getting into because this was a PWI. I know what that's like. But also, I was having a hard time talking to folks in Faculty of Color affinity groups, and I wanted to figure out what was going on. And my question that I started asking was, well, why isn't there a group for Faculty of Color?

Through media coverage, Esther learned that there was a retention issue among Faculty of Color rooted in negative experiences navigating racism at WCU. She immediately sought to understand better how these challenges manifested and recognized a need to develop programming upon her transition to the TLC. As TLC staff sought to address these challenges and develop new programming opportunities to improve retention, they described several barriers to their development. Esther started receiving responses to her inquiry about Faculty of Color engagement and shared the response she received from leadership at the time:

Oh, we've tried, and we failed. So, it doesn't work at [WCU]. I was like, no, no, no, go back. What do you mean by this? Apparently, they had spent quite a lot of money during the pandemic to hire one person to open up a Faculty Learning Community. This was before I was hired, FLC for Faculty of Color. And then here's where the white people's influence comes in. They wanted it to be inclusive. So, they said, we didn't want to seem divisive. So, we opened up the group to everybody. So then, what do you think happened? All the white people came in, and all the People of Color left. So, it was a disaster. Nobody was left at the end of it. So, they were out a lot of money. The group was just dissipated. And so, they're saying, oh, it doesn't work at a PWI. So, I said, no, that's because you did it wrong.

Esther identified several issues when attempting to address this programming gap. She initially encountered disbelief in the effectiveness of Faculty of Color outreach given previously failed initiatives. When seeking to learn more about the limitations of the last programming effort, Esther recognized how attempts to broaden participation were rooted in upholding white

comfort. It further connects to Harris's (1993) theory of whiteness as property, in which whiteness functions like a form of property, granting white individuals unearned societal advantages and privileges. The pressure faced by TLC staff to expand the group to include white participants demonstrates how whiteness exerts power over access, influence, and opportunity in faculty development practices.

This pattern of race-evasive resistance to identity-conscious faculty development efforts continued as she sought to develop programming that would center the needs of Faculty of Color. Esther described the resistance she faced when designing a new faculty learning community (FLC):

I started pitching the idea that you need to separate people; you need to segregate people. And I got called a lot of names... They said that I was basically promoting racism because I was trying to segregate people. The only way I got my idea to go through was I got my white bestie to work with me, where we had co-created an FLC that was gonna run concurrently but separately...I think they were just trying to be cautious. But also, I'm like, listen to me. What we're trying to do was create a curriculum and space that would allow very open-minded quote, unquote, white people, for lack of better words, to have a space to participate in a program if they wanted. But also provide a separate space for Faculty of Color so that we don't interfere with one another. And that was the only way that the administration would approve of this idea.

Esther shared how institutional actors discredited the need for Faculty of Color to have a space for themselves, obfuscating these efforts as a form of racial segregation. She then added a layer explaining how conforming to whiteness by code-switching made her programming efforts more acceptable. I asked Esther to expand on the role of her 'white bestie' who led inclusive teaching programs for the TLC. She described her support as being essential in the process, stating, "She was the one that helped me navigate white people. Like, let's frame it as we're doing this concurrently. So, we hold the spaces together. So, she helped me sort of do that. Speak white, if you will." Esther described how her efforts were only allowed to move forward by leveraging

her white colleague's voice, perspective, and identity, who she saw as a key accomplice in supporting this work.

Revealing Racialized and Gendered Labor Disparity

For many participants in the study, navigating the labor of implementing critical and inclusive pedagogy in the classroom fell most heavily on Faculty of Color, particularly at the intersection of race and gender. On the one hand, participants welcomed new and broad participation from faculty to enact CIP in their teaching and instruction; however, participants were concerned about an erasure of the labor some Faculty of Color have long committed to these efforts. Participants collectively expressed frustration with the inequitable labor patterns and insufficient recognition and rewards for teaching and service-related work. Abby reflected on this tension when she asked, "Who will do the service work, the mentoring work, and the support and care work of an institution? All of these things are deeply racialized and gendered." Sasha highlighted this tension by drawing a direct connection to CIP when she stated:

Because it's gendered and because it's race-related. [Women of Color] are the people who are doing the work on inclusive [teaching] practices. It is not the white male professors who have to engage in that or who feel that it's their responsibility to engage in that. We're lucky if that happens...I have many colleagues who are excellent and who believe it's part of their responsibility. But the people who are really doing the bulk of that work it's the women and it's the People of Color.

By identifying CIP as a racialized and gendered practice, Sasha surfaces the disparate labor expectations she experienced as compared to her white and male colleagues. Even when those colleagues engage CIP as an aspect of their responsibility, they tend to be celebrated and rewarded.

Several faculty participants in the study wanted to see more of their colleagues take up these efforts and felt frustrated when they did not step up. Sasha, for example, elaborated further on her experience to describe how the invisible labor of CIP manifests in a law context:

My other colleagues, with the exception of one new colleague, have chosen not to address rape anymore. And that is partly because it's difficult. And maybe because they have gotten some negative feedback about the way in which they approach rape in their class. And so, they've just like said, 'Well, you know what, I'm a full professor. And frick it. I don't want to do it; I'm not going to do it. I don't have to cover that.' And so, they're not. But that has meant that when I'm off, when I am on sabbatical, or when I'm not teaching criminal law that year...that there's 300 students or 250 students, for a couple of years, who don't get any rape law, they don't get any access. So that's terrible, right? Especially when 50% of our entering class is female. And so, I do it. And I do it, even though it's hard. And it's hard for me, and it's hard for the students. And sometimes students leave because it's emotional. And sometimes, male students object because they find it uncomfortable.

For Sasha, it was tough because men colleagues were unwilling to teach about rape in the law, and she felt forced to carry the weight almost independently. She highlights the learning loss for students and implications for society when considering the future of law practices led by her students.

The disparate labor dynamics amongst faculty colleagues extend beyond the classroom to diversity and inclusion-related service and committee work. Alejandro discussed how tokenized underrepresented faculty bear the additional burden of service work in STEM departments. He shared:

As an underrepresented faculty, you are working really hard and then asked to participate in everything because you're underrepresented. So, it's like, can you be on the JEDI committee? Can you go represent us here? Can you go talk to these schools, and so you end up having a bigger service load, you end up having other issues, you're sort of responsible for the wellbeing of all underrepresented students in your department. And those are the things that are not being counted when it's time for tenure and promotion at the university.

Alejandro described various forms of invisible labor imposed on Faculty of Color, contributing to inequity in tenure and promotion review processes. This labor remains unacknowledged and unrecognized. As a senior administrator, Sharon noticed this disparity; she stated, "Service is unfairly shouldered by Faculty of Color and women faculty." She pondered further, "How do we help folks make that more visible and get credit for it and support those in more supervisory

positions to make space for that explicitly and honor it in things like promotion and annual review.” Sharon and Alejandro highlight the variance in service expectations for Faculty of Color and identify a need to uplift this service as labor that must be compensated. Alejandro saw the impact of these disparities while serving as chair of his department. He described the process for annual raises and promotions, stating:

The way that raises work at a university, generally, is that you as a department have a percentage of your faculty salary as a pool. So, the only way to reward someone higher is to take away from someone else. Well, guess who's going to perform best in your department? Typically, your traditional faculty, so you will give them slightly higher raises, and it might be half a percent, or a percent. But what people don't understand is basic math. And if you give someone a percentage increase in their salary, this is an exponential growth of salary over time. And so, their salaries are going to balloon a lot higher than all of your other faculty. And so, your traditional people are going to accelerate, get paid more than your nontraditional people who are working at a slower pace, because they have all these other requirements, unwritten requirements on them. As I became the Chair, I discovered how big that problem is because I got to see everyone's salaries. And I was like, oh, I see. I see. I see what's been going on. And there are huge disparities between people's salaries.

Alejandro analyzes the trickle-down effect of disparate labor dynamics and their role in reproducing faculty hierarchies through significant pay inequities between dominant groups of faculty and underrepresented faculty over time. These pay inequities were among the primary issues cited in media coverage that motivated Black faculty to leave WCU. Participants identified several efforts taking place at WCU that sought to address these inequities and foster institutional change, which is explored further in the next section.

From Surviving to Thriving: Finding Agency in Academia

As a final consideration, several participants across the study identified opportunities for change to foster an environment where Faculty of Color could actualize their power and agency so they could survive and thrive at WCU. They expressed a desire for transformation from merely surviving in academic institutions to genuinely thriving through collective empowerment,

fostering agency, and cultivating community. These participants saw faculty development as a key element of this change process. Participants saw faculty development as particularly useful in expanding the cultural capital of Faculty of Color in the academy, Gloria emphasized, “Faculty development is key, especially for Faculty of Color, because it's part of building their cultural capital to help them be successful in the academy and to know what's coming their way. To me, it can be very empowering to bring people the knowledge they need to be successful.” To be successful and navigate challenging systems in the academy, Gloria saw the development of cultural capital as a tool for fostering agency for Faculty of Color. Similarly, Gretal saw faculty development as necessary for enhancing agency that could then be used for Faculty of Color to claim their power in the classroom. She argued:

Fire me, go ahead, fire me. I can get another gig at another university like that. I think helping faculty engage their power. Protect themselves with the other aspects of their job so that they can engage and negotiate their power in the classroom. So they can be who they need to be and imagine themselves to be a scholar-teacher in the classroom. It's really important. And that's what the [TLC] must also think about. What does it really mean to be a scholar-teacher, not just a teacher, scholar-teacher?

Gretal projects a fierce resistance to fear that might reduce her agency in the classroom by uplifting her agency through her ability to leave the university. She argued that this mentality allows faculty to protect themselves and negotiate their power more effectively. Finally, she advocates for the TLC to focus development for Faculty of Color on realizing their roles as both a scholar and a teacher, uplifting their expertise and knowledge.

Despite resistance and challenges, TLC Practitioners were committed to fostering more opportunities to work alongside Faculty of Color and support their evolving needs. Remi acknowledged the unique nature of the Thriving Faculty of Color Learning Community, which was “designed for them and with them.” The desire to cultivate an academic experience focused on thriving was an intentional effort to change Faculty of Color experiences from a pattern of

survival to one of thriving. Esther led this effort, drawing from her own experiences as a faculty member. She reflected:

I felt like, in my entire career, I was really good at surviving... And I was like, I'm so tired of surviving was the thought that came up. Why do I need to survive? I have survived all this time. That's why I'm here. And then I kind of had to put on the emergency stop button because I was like, oh, wait. That's all I've been doing. Like, I am so white proficient. I know how to survive in a white-majority society; I know how to do the white academy thing. That's why white people like me, right? Like, that's why I'm here. They never made me feel like I belong. They always remind me of it as if I don't belong, but they allow me a space to be here. So, I should be thankful for it because I've survived this.

Esther reflects on her experience navigating whiteness and how she learned to survive in academia by code-switching to appease white interests and maintain white comfort. Her self-reflection was precise and pointed, motivating her to question whether that represented the limits of what she and other colleagues of color could experience academia. She elaborated further:

Why can't I thrive? And it made me think about all my [colleagues] of color. They do so much more work. Even when we know that's not equitable. We do so much more service. We know it's uncompensated, but we shut our mouths. Why? Because we need to survive. I think we need to stop that. I think we need to thrive. Because when we survive, we're not really happy. Yes, happiness is overrated. But why is happiness the realm of white people? Like why can't we mark this as our territory? Why? Why do we need white people's permission to sit at this table that is rightfully ours? So, I think that we all should thrive.

For Esther, supporting a culture where Faculty of Color can thrive was a direct response to labor disparities and offered a rejection of this pattern as an established norm worth maintaining. Like Esther, many participants acknowledged that as they work towards creating change through CIP practices, they must also question the status quo and create conditions for thriving.

A few participants valued developing opportunities for Faculty of Color to be uplifted through faculty development programming as an important step in increasing their retention at WCU. For Patricia, a senior academic leader, it was important to cultivate programs that would shine a spotlight on the accomplishments of Faculty of Color. Patricia shared:

I am seeking to celebrate the accomplishments of our Faculty of Color. Why is that? Because I want to signal that I see, value, embrace, and celebrate our Faculty of Color. Because I'm seeking to create an environment in which individuals can see [WCU] as their home, as their professional home. As where they can thrive and grow and achieve the goals that they have for themselves. And so, I've been hosting a series of teacher-scholar lectures. We value the teacher-scholar, the dynamic relationship between the two. And I've been leaning in significantly to celebrating our Faculty of Color in that lecture series because I wish to signal how much the university, how much I, my office, celebrates the work of those teacher-scholars within our community. And I think other matters like faculty awards, or times when the provost or the chancellor can use their voice to celebrate the work of our Faculty of Color, our women faculty, our women Faculty of Color. It can be a shot in the arm of our faculty, who then feel like this is a place where they can thrive.

Patricia recognizes the power of her position and the resources at her disposal to uplift and empower Faculty of Color, fostering great awareness and recognition of their contributions.

While it's past time to elevate the achievements of Faculty of Color, Patricia's intent to support them reflects a white saviorism that may have unintended consequences. For Esther, empowerment was driven by fostering community among Faculty of Color within the learning community. She described her goals for the community to develop meaningful relationships, stating:

Friendship, not a colleague, not just a work relationship, but a friend that you can count on. And I think when you have those breathers, I call them breathers. Human breathers are just a little piece of people or a place or space on campus where you can actually breathe a little bit. I think that really enhances the quality of life. And I see that magic happening with these people... And I really, really hope that when you have these breathers in different spaces on campus, that it changes how you approach work. And I'm hoping that I or [the TLC], or my program, or people that they meet through my program, could be that one change agent to make them less miserable.

For Esther, community building was a crucial strategy for colleagues to thrive and breathe life into one another. While developing community as a form of resistance is significant, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of epistemic asphyxiation (Okello, 2022), where Faculty of Color navigate an academic environment that leaves them breathless. Sharon validated this belief, acknowledging, "I've heard so many phenomenal things about how, like literally people

saying, I'm still at this university because I had a connection to that group.” Through a collaborative effort both within and outside the TLC, these participants recognized the transformative potential of placemaking (Hunter et al., 2016) for Faculty of Color, beyond the concealments of whiteness.

Summary

This chapter described participants’ approaches to understanding, interrogating, and engaging critical and inclusive pedagogical practices within TLCs. As demonstrated throughout the chapter, participants provided varied understandings of CIP, often shaped by their organizational contexts, positionalities, and philosophies related to teaching and learning. Four main considerations emerged from participants’ experiences that highlight their understanding, critiques, and hopes for the work. The first theme interrogated tensions between critical and inclusive pedagogy, where participants defined critical and inclusive pedagogy as a concept in disparate ways, often decoupling critical pedagogy from inclusive pedagogy. This pattern highlights the challenge of advancing collective efforts to implement CIP without a common framework and shared aims. The second theme of teaching & learning centers as first responders: the limitations of pedagogical support explored the level of preparedness and resources designated for the increased expectation to respond to sociopolitical crises, emphasizing the limitations of pedagogical support. The third theme examined performative commitments: the gap between institutional rhetoric and practice, where participants reveal a distance between institutional rhetoric around equity and inclusion and the actual implementation of these values. Finally, the last theme examined how Faculty of Color navigate institutional power due to pervasive neglect, de-centering of their perspectives, and erasure in faculty development practices. In the following chapter, I expand on how each of these themes connects to critical

race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), critical consciousness (Freire, 1998), and the theory of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019) and conclude with recommendations for teaching and learning center practitioners and faculty developers more broadly.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I provide a discussion of the study findings. I will discuss how the four themes — 1) *interrogating tensions between critical and inclusive pedagogy*, 2) *teaching and learning centers as first responders: the limitations of pedagogical support*, 3) *performative commitments: the gap between institutional rhetoric and practice*, and 4) *navigating institutional power: the Faculty of Color experience* — relate to critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), critical consciousness (Freire, 1998), and the theory of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019). I then provide an overview of how the findings connect to the original research questions:

- How does a teaching and learning center operationalize critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within its organizational structure?
 - In what ways does a teaching and learning center engage in and promote critical and inclusive pedagogical practices?
- How do sociopolitical contexts shape the operational mission of a teaching and learning center?
 - What internal and external factors shape how a teaching and learning center makes meaning of critical and inclusive pedagogy in its practices?

I will then offer implications and recommendations for recognizing and challenging racialized structures embedded within higher education institutions, teaching and learning praxis, and future research on critical and inclusive pedagogical practices. I conclude with a reflection on my journey throughout this research and learning process.

Theoretical Discussion

This study is framed by critical race theory (CRT), which accounts for issues of race, gender, and class oppression. Through its application, I uncover how to promote greater equity

and social justice for People of Color by challenging dominant ideologies that perpetuate racialized inequities arising from hegemonic educational practices (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). While CRT positions race and racism as core elements, Victor Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations (TRO) advances this goal with a more focused lens on racialization within structured organizational theory. To understand participants' approaches and strategies for comprehending, negotiating, and engaging with critical and inclusive pedagogical practices, I utilized Ray's (2019) framework for analyzing racialized organizations, as described in Chapter Two. Ray delineates the racialization process across three primary levels: macro, meso, and micro concerning organizations (2019). This study explored how teaching and learning centers (TLCs) navigate the meso level within broader institutional and societal contexts at the macro level. Additionally, at the micro level, I explore the racial consciousness of individual TLC staff, faculty, and senior administrators within the system to elucidate the mechanisms that reproduce racial equity or inequity (Ray, 2019). I employ Freire's (1998) concept of *conscientização* – deeper consciousness or critical consciousness – to discern how participants reflect critically on their sociopolitical environment and take action toward change.

By examining how TLCs incorporate critical race theory (CRT) and enhance critical consciousness in their work, this study describes how critical frameworks shape strategies for implementing inclusive pedagogy programs. The study conducts a meso-level organizational analysis to investigate how racialized organizational contexts influence and inform critical and inclusive pedagogical practices. Guided by critical race theory (CRT), the theory of racialized organizations (TRO), and critical consciousness, I exposed how racialization manifests within structured organizational contexts that seek to integrate faculty development focused on critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks. While critical and inclusive pedagogy is an important

framework for disrupting pedagogical hegemony, if institutions neglect race-conscious pedagogies, fail to disrupt structural racism shaping faculty life, and overly rely on performative applications of inclusion in institutional culture and practice, attempts at using Tuitt's (2003) framework may lead institutions to uphold systemic racism, neoliberalism, and academic capitalism. This study contributes to the literature by uncovering how faculty development initiatives underutilize critical frameworks in historically white higher education contexts, thereby expanding our understanding of the complexities, limitations, and liberatory potentials involved in enhancing critical consciousness among faculty.

Interrogating Tensions between Critical and Inclusive Pedagogy

In describing their experiences of developing, coordinating, and/or supporting formalized programs to expand the use of critical and inclusive pedagogy (Tuitt et al., 2016), TLC practitioners and partners reflected diverse levels of engagement and understanding of the work. Overall, participants considered CIP to be a core part of teaching and learning praxis, and their collective efforts contributed to fostering a campus ecosystem where critical and inclusive pedagogy could be better understood, supported, and enacted. However, despite their shared articulation of values, their understanding and application of CIP frameworks often varied aligning with prior educational development research (Haynes & Joseph, 2016). The theme of *Interrogating Tensions between Critical and Inclusive Pedagogy* refers to the tension in how participants understood critical pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy as two disparate concepts that were related to each other but sometimes conflicted. This theme addressed the first research question and expanded our understanding of how a teaching and learning center operationalizes CIP frameworks. Specifically, this theme explores to what extent the conceptualization of critical and inclusive pedagogy is employed to produce race-evasive maintenance of the status quo or

spark transformation and liberatory praxis. I apply critical race theory and critical consciousness as a guide for shedding light on the ways in which racialized contexts and race consciousness shaped the understanding and application of CIP. These critical frameworks helped expose how inequities stemming from hegemonic educational and organizational practice shape critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in definition, rhetoric, messaging, and actions by institutional and university agents.

A critical race theory framework can shed light on how TLC practitioners and their partners make meaning of CIP practices, identifying the racialized structures, deficit ideologies, and white interests that undergird their development and application (Koro-Ljungberg, 2007; Shine, 2011). Throughout the findings, participants made meaning of critical and inclusive pedagogy in two primary ways: as a tool for cultivating belonging and community for all students and as a disruptive pedagogy that relied on systemic and structural analysis. For example, in the interview with Marie, a TLC practitioner, she described CIP as a framework intended to create space for all students to feel like they could be seen and supported in the classroom. Instead of understanding CIP as a framework designed to critique power, Marie understood CIP as a tool that could cultivate belonging for all students. In congruence with the first tenet of CRT, which argues that racism is endemic to American culture, the classroom, therefore, like all racialized structures, cultivates white supremacy (i.e., normalcy, advantage, privilege, and innocence) (McFarlane, 1999). As Marie reflected further, she paused to consider the extent to which her framing of “belonging for all” without a structural analysis perpetuated harm when thinking about belonging for students who are marginalized as soon as they enter the campus environment. It is important to critically examine the implications of focusing on

belonging for “all” students as an approach that uplifts the rhetoric of all, which often serves to appease white interest.

In alignment with McFarlane’s (1999) emphasis on deconstructing how racialized structures shape classroom spaces, it is important to understand what shapes belongingness, curriculum, and the academic environment more broadly. As Laura shared in her interview, she saw inclusive pedagogies as “empty” without a systems analysis. Laura warns that inclusive pedagogy is insufficient to advance more equitable learning in the classroom. As Haynes and Joseph (2016) emphasize, critical pedagogues must question the political neutrality of curricula, pedagogy, and education systems, seeking to develop students’ sociopolitical consciousness through co-investigation, problem-posing, and dialogue. Freire (1998) describes this process as *conscientização*, or “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 35). Gloria, a faculty member, emphasizes this point, arguing that applications of CIP require self-reflexivity and the interrogation of white supremacy. Abby, a senior administrator, recognizes the necessity of critical pedagogy as a means to deconstruct structures and roots. However, she also points out the institutional resistance to a more radical and transformative approach to pedagogy because it demands a critique of neoliberal structures within the institution. Such an approach would disrupt majoritarian narratives about the institution being an inclusive environment (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

These conflicting understandings of CIP parallel Stewart’s (2017) language of appeasement, in which institutional diversity and inclusion efforts serve to placate dissent and uphold the status quo. Remi, a TLC practitioner, attributed this disconnect in understanding CIP to how the broader university prioritizes diversity and inclusion efforts over justice and

transformation. While participants recognized the theoretical value and relevance of critical pedagogy, the majority noted a lack of engagement and application of critical perspectives in CIP practices. A widespread belief emerged that promoting inclusion was challenging enough, leading to complacency regarding deeper and more systemic critiques of power. This belief conflicts with the inherent nature of critical pedagogy that prioritizes steps to facilitate greater dialogue, critique, counter-hegemony, and praxis (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Findings align with what is often lacking in postsecondary classroom teaching practices, which allows for interest (di)vergence to undermine this approach (Braa & Callero, 2006; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007). Similarly, Sharon, a senior administrator, acknowledged the institution's support of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, particularly at the individual level, but signaled a skepticism to more extensive efforts to advocate for racial justice and transformation, underscoring the impact of white liberalism within campus culture and practice.

These conceptual patterns also manifested when analyzing the curriculum of CIP practices, where participants described the TLC's CIP programming efforts as color-evasive. This critique surfaced most prominently when examining the impact of universal design for learning (UDL) initiatives. As Annamma et al. (2017) describe, race evasion contributes to multiply-marginalized Students of Color being the outflows of dysfunctional education ecologies. As demonstrated in the findings, several participants in the study outlined how UDL lacks cultural responsiveness and norms whiteness, highlighting the erasure of multiply-marginalized students through the proliferation of UDL. Participants also navigated tensions in considering what developmental strategies would be most accessible and applicable for faculty, often avoiding more critical and intensive learning opportunities. Findings aligned with Bok's (2006) assertion that faculty in higher education institutions do not emphasize pedagogy enough,

focusing instead on course logistical concerns rather than discussing the best pedagogical approaches to effectively teach a particular course and achieve educational goals. Bok (2006) maintains that faculty members are often reluctant to modify their traditional ways of teaching and learn new skills. Relatedly, the TLC faced pressure to modify its approach due to the neoliberal structures of the institution that consistently prioritized faculty productivity over learning and development.

Despite the prevalence of resistance to critical pedagogy, several participants were able to envision a more critical approach. These perspectives came exclusively from Faculty of Color, who also use critical frameworks within their research. These faculty offer counternarratives, which Solorzano & Yosso (2002) describe as tools that capture the social knowledge of groups that would otherwise be defined by the perspectives and experiences of those with power. As these participants made meaning of CIP practices, they questioned the neutral goal of “good teaching” devoid of deeper introspection and examination, adding to the literature on faculty development. Collectively, their understanding aligned with the teaching of critical pedagogues that advocate for an embodied, liberatory, and self-reflexive approach to pedagogy (Freire, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). As a form of resistance, critical pedagogues employ behaviors in their classrooms aimed at dismantling and redistributing the structure of power in their classrooms, originally being maintained by the perpetuation of racial hierarchies (Koro-Ljungberg, 2007; Shine, 2011). These participants approached the disruption of power and racial hierarchies in how they questioned assumptions about the classroom, rejected deficit ideologies, constructed knowledge collaboratively with their students and colleagues, and applied these approaches to teaching to their scholarship. When faculty develop the awareness and self-reflection of their social position, it leads to applying this analysis not just in their teaching but

also in their discipline, research, and departmental, university, and community work. Kishimoto (2018) emphasizes that anti-racist pedagogy, in particular, is used as an organizing effort for institutional and social change that is much broader than classroom teaching. Therefore, this study offers a central finding that it is imperative that TLC practitioners find ways to seek input and prioritize perspectives from critical and anti-racist pedagogies that can inform their approach to CIP practices.

This study sought to understand how a teaching and learning center operationalizes critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks within its organizational structure and practices. Based on interviews and data collected from the organizational documents, the operationalization of CIP was influenced by contested and conflicting understandings of CIP frameworks. While several participants centered their understanding of CIP as an approach for cultivating community and belonging in the classroom, findings revealed tension when considering the goal of fostering sense of belonging devoid of structural analysis. Attempts to promote CIP practices prioritized inclusive pedagogy and neglected critical pedagogical approaches that would critique neoliberal and racialized structures. This represents a significant finding and contribution to the literature—when attempts to promote CIP are enacted without critical pedagogy, TLCs can operationalize race-evasiveness and maintain pedagogical hegemony that avoids disruption of the status quo. In the recommendations section of this chapter, I offer suggestions using critical pedagogical frameworks in support of more critical approaches to faculty development.

Teaching & Learning Centers as First Responders: The Limitations of Pedagogical Support

Participants in the study also discussed how evolving sociopolitical issues and local, national, and global contexts increased demand for CIP learning and engagement. Ray (2019)

argues that “organizations are racial structures that reproduce (and challenge) racialization processes” (p. 27). Similarly, teaching and learning centers are organizations within a broader racialized institutional and societal context. The theme of *Teaching & Learning Centers as First Responders: The Limitations of Pedagogical Support* refers to how the TLC was often called into action when relevant social justice issues arose to help faculty better understand how to engage students, particularly in navigating difficult classroom conversations. This theme addressed both research questions and expanded our understanding of how a teaching and learning center operationalizes CIP frameworks and responds to sociopolitical contexts. Specifically, this theme adds to the literature as it explores how sociopolitical crises expand the function of TLCs as institutional "first responders" expected to heal, put out fires, and police behavior. These practices reflect Ray’s (2019) assertion about the influence of external factors in shaping policy and practice in racialized organizations. In order to better understand the implications of the scope of their work broadening, CRT, TRO, and critical consciousness are employed to examine resource allocation and utilization, limitations of pedagogical support, and framing CIP as a tool for conflict resolution.

Ray (2019) identifies three interrelated external factors that alter the racialization of organizations: social movements (Bell, 2014), changes in macro-level policies such as immigration (FitzGerald & Cook-Martin 2014), and the degree and relative level of organizational reliance on the state. Participant responses reflected these first two factors when they described how the expansion and relevance of CIP practices increased as a response to national and global sociopolitical issues like policy change, racialized violence, and social movements. Throughout the findings, sociopolitical crises shaped the development of new opportunities for CIP practices, boosted faculty participation, and increased funding of the TLC.

Many participants, including TLC practitioners, saw the TLC as having a responsibility for responding to social movements and national and global sociopolitical crises. Kelly, a member of the faculty senate, described how students experienced epistemic violence when discussing issues with their peers and faculty. This challenge was met with an expectation for the TLC to develop programming or consultations to resolve these issues and prepare faculty to manage difficult conversations more effectively. While these pedagogical interventions have the potential to spark learning and greater perspective-taking, they do little to change the racial distribution of power in the classroom, similar to most diversity policies and interventions (Ray, 2019).

While participants like Remi, Briana, and Marie collectively recognized the importance of being responsive, they frequently faced internal conflicts as they balanced immediate reactions to sociopolitical crises with deeper questions about meaningful impact, institutional constraints, and the potential for transformative change. Even when developing CIP programming to challenge and create a supportive space after oppressive incidents, several participants in the study expressed the same concern raised by Ray (2019): that, despite their intentions, their methods may not extend far enough beyond individual acknowledgment to engage participants effectively in structural analysis. Ultimately, they questioned whether providing faculty with the necessary support and space is sufficient to foster significant change. While providing space and support is needed to offer affirmation and acknowledgment, Prince and Igbineweka (1995) argue that faculty need to transform their consciousness to understand that knowledge creation must have a liberating purpose rooted in an analysis of their positionality. However, most practitioners did not explicitly outline methods for facilitating consciousness-raising that encourage action through their pedagogical response strategies.

While participants across the study did not offer many concrete suggestions for raising consciousness in response to sociopolitical crises, they did express a clear desire and need to diffuse conflict associated with these events. Many participants found that external political pressures and socio-political events turn classrooms into sites of ideological conflict, necessitating innovative teaching methods and institutional mediations. Extending Bonilla-Silva's (2018) color-blindness theory, Annamma et al. (2017) theorized color-evasiveness to describe the active process employed when seeking to avoid discourse on race, racism, and racial inequities to maintain white supremacy. Throughout the study, participants often referred to sociopolitical issues such as racism, heterosexism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia with the coded language of 'hot button issues' or 'difficult conversations'. In doing so, race-evasive rhetoric obscured the specificity of oppressive issues and neglected to describe for whom these issues were difficult and why. By employing racially neutral language, their efforts sought to maintain white interests. Interest convergence, which describes how social policies designed to redress racial injustices are strategically crafted to maintain white dominance (Bell, 1980); surfaced when participants described how CIP practices designed in response to racialized violence sought to maintain white interests through conflict avoidance and respectability. Participants recounted how institutional rhetoric and directives calling for civil discourse created a chilling effect and limitation on speech. Patricia, a senior leader, described one relevant programming intervention focused on humanizing pedagogy, which was shared as a tool that can reduce conflict and linked its utility to creating a more engaging learning environment. While several participants described leadership efforts to reduce conflict and increase respect on campus, it adds to the literature by highlighting the ways these messages are constructed, framed, and approached, creating humanizing and silencing effects.

Performative Commitments: The Gap Between Institutional Rhetoric and Practice

The theme of *Performative Commitments: The Gap Between Institutional Rhetoric and Practice* raised questions about whether the institution's commitment to equity, both broadly and specifically through the teaching and learning center's commitment to CIP, was performative rather than substantive. This theme addressed the first research question and expanded our understanding of how racialized organizational contexts shape the operationalization of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices within teaching and learning centers. A central finding across participants' experiences was the need to interrogate accountability structures, labor distribution and staff readiness, and faculty capacity to engage in CIP practices, directly reflecting the fourth dimension of Ray's (2009) theory of racialized organizations. Like most of the participants in the study, Ray (2009) acknowledged that "commitments made to equitable practices often serve only as a ceremonial, public relations function but do little to change the racial distribution of organizational power as most diversity policies lack the formal enforcement measures" (p. 42). Participants reflected this concern throughout the findings as they shared their experiences promoting CIP with limited accountability mechanisms, inequitable labor distribution and burdens, and a lack of faculty capacity and well-being.

Throughout the findings, participants described the institutional requirements and accountability for faculty to utilize critical and inclusive pedagogies as a reflection of the institution's commitment to equity. The challenge of actualizing equity commitments in higher education is widely reinforced by scholars, particularly in faculty-facing work. A common critique of change efforts within faculty work is a lack of institutional accountability and support (Brownell & Tanner, 2012), which was broadly reflected by participants in the findings. WCU sought to address this challenge by requiring faculty to complete an online inclusive teaching

institute administered by the TLC. Despite this mandate, participants identified several structural barriers that restricted the depth and effectiveness of their commitments to equity. Ray (2019) describes how organizational rules designed to protect minoritized community members from discrimination are routinely broken, and racialized organizations are likely to apply rules differentially based on the race of the rule-breaker. Organizational theorists argue that practice is a reflection of decoupling, which occurs when there is a contradiction between existing organizational routines and policies adopted to placate external constituencies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Martin et al. (2012) extend this critique by emphasizing the role of hierarchy in shaping who is allowed to break the rules. By analyzing how the participants in this study perceived institutional mandates through the lens of racialized organizational theory, this study extends the literature on faculty development to understand the limitations of institutional mandates that lack accountability structures evident throughout faculty hierarchies.

Findings reveal that participants in the study identified the inherent tensions in enforcing institutional mandates for CIP learning and development within their teaching and learning practices. In navigating these complexities, findings add to the literature by troubling a one-size-fits-all approach, increased antagonism from non-compliant faculty, and lack of investment from individuals engaging in the curriculum only due to the requirement. While these factors hold significant weight, it is also important to consider the ways in which the practice of teaching has become antithetical to professional identity, particularly in the sciences (Brownell & Tanner, 2012). Throughout the findings, participants described WCU's commitment to the 'teacher-scholar' model, where teaching was believed to possess a similar level of value to research. Similar to prior research (Scott & Scott, 2016), they were left questioning the legitimacy of

institutional rhetoric given the lack of investment and accountability for teaching, delegitimization of teaching as compared to research, and a lack of structural interrogation.

In many cases, organizations adopt affirmative action, diversity, and anti-discrimination policies out of fear of government sanctions (Collins, 2011; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998) but retroactively claim benevolent intent. Similarly, participants questioned to what extent the chancellors' prioritization of this requirement was merely a performative gesture in response to campus climate concerns, given the lack of institutional accountability through tenure and promotion policies. Entwistle et al. (2014) examined how faculty can face difficulty adopting more effective teaching methods, citing underfunding, discrepancies in departmental policies, and institutional priorities (promotion is based on research instead of good teaching). These challenges were reflected in the findings where institutional practices resulted in a façade of teaching being an institutional priority given the lack of accountability and incentives that could be reinforced in teaching evaluation and promotion and tenure policies. These complexities were amplified by the institution's decentralized nature, where certain schools and departments developed accountability mechanisms, reflecting a fragmented approach to accountability that lacked institutional reinforcement.

In addition to the required training, establishing a director role to lead CIP practices was widely heralded as a significant commitment made by the institution to advance CIP. However, findings revealed high expectations and unequal distribution of labor proliferated in this work. Broadly, participants described a need for the CIP frameworks to be reflected throughout teaching and learning practices. Despite this acknowledgment, power relations influenced how the work was isolated, siloed, and lacked reinforcement throughout the organization due to the limited racial consciousness and preparedness of TLC practitioners. These experiences

reinforced that faculty developers within these roles must consider and seek opportunities to enhance their own awareness, skills, and understanding of positionality as they work with faculty to disrupt the potential for CIP practices to cause harm (Stanley, 2018). To disrupt the siloing of CIP practices to a singular role, findings add to the literature by highlighting the need to reinforce the value of infusing CIP frameworks across teaching and learning practice structurally through job descriptions, work expectations, and race-conscious curriculum development.

Participants such as Gretal and Tina observed the ongoing issues of isolation, siloing, and power dynamics while collaborating with colleagues who are leading this work. They described that the expectations for leading CIP practices required a ‘unicorn’ capable of a ‘superhuman’ lift given the pervasive and consistent challenges required of the role. One of the most prominent ways power relations are expressed and normalized through language is the process of metaphorization (Amideo, 2021). CRT can be useful in understanding and deconstructing dominant narratives and majoritarian language (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Harper et al., 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000). Metaphors are pervasive in everyday life and, far from being mere rhetorical phenomena, they enable individuals to conceptualize and make sense of their experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) maintain:

Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense, metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies (p. 156).

Dominant groups use metaphors to discriminate against marginalized groups, often involving the animalization of others (Amideo, 2021). While participants sought to highlight the importance

and significance of their colleagues' work, it is important to question to what extent institutional structures and resources shape the dehumanization of individuals leading these efforts.

As a final consideration, findings highlighted that efforts to advance CIP practices were threatened by the consistent and high-level labor expectations placed on faculty. As discussed in Chapter 4, WCU articulated a commitment to the public good in its mission and campus ethos. Despite this rhetoric, findings highlighted the institution's increased desire to expand its research infrastructure and output. Developing new teaching methods and programming takes time, which many faculty do not have when more time is demanded of their research and teaching loads increase for clinical faculty. Brownell and Tanner (2012) emphasize how teaching workloads, time constraints, and administrative difficulties all contribute to faculty motivation to engage with teaching and learning. Throughout the findings, participants emphasized the presence of these challenges at WCU and the TLC's efforts to foster well-being amongst faculty. While ideas and strategies for reducing burnout were shared, the findings emphasize the need to examine the factors that cause faculty to be unwell.

Participants highlight the faculty's lack of wellness and the need to explore the impact of academic capitalism on their well-being. Academic capitalism denotes the trend within higher education institutions to prioritize market-focused activities and profit generation over traditional academic values such as knowledge development and public service (Wright-Mair & Ieva, 2022). It is undergirded by neoliberalism, which projects a logic and set of ideas that regard higher education as a vehicle for revenue generation and competition rather than a public good (Antonio, 2013; Darder, 2012; Giroux, 2008; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Scholars highlight that academic socialization in the neoliberal university prioritizes academic success over wellness, influencing the psychological, physical, and emotional trauma some faculty members experience

(Wright-Mair & Ieva, 2022). As seen in the findings, these participants emphasized that faculty development work must continuously be constructed with an awareness and commitment to contend with and dismantle neoliberalism and academic capitalism. These implications have been found to exert an even greater effect on faculty who invest in resistance as a vehicle for change, facing an additional burden due to the draining mental, physical, and psychological impacts of participating in such resistance (Wright-Mair & Ieva, 2022). The final theme examines the particularity of these implications for Faculty of Color enacting CIP while navigating institutional power structures.

Navigating Institutional Power: The Faculty of Color Experience

The final theme of the study examined how Faculty of Color experienced and strategically navigated racism, white supremacy, and institutional power structures as they intersected with CIP practices. This theme addressed the first research question and expanded our understanding of how Faculty of Color are often neglected, de-centered, and erased when designing, implementing, and assessing CIP practices. Throughout the findings, participants defined CIP as a strategy for advancing racial justice but often articulated a limitation when considering CIP practices as a tool for supporting the needs of Faculty of Color. Drawing directly from the experiences of Faculty of Color, I will apply critical race theory, racialized organizations, and critical consciousness to explore the complexities and limitations of implementing CIP practices within a racialized institutional context. These critical frameworks helped expose institutional racism and white fragility, pervasive whiteness in teaching & learning, racialized and gendered labor disparities, and strategies for Faculty of Color to move beyond survival to thriving.

Throughout the findings, participants described how CIP practices were widely celebrated and seen as a sign of WCU's advancements in racial equity and inclusion. However, Faculty of Color experienced a disconnect between institutional rhetoric and lived reality. The very initiatives designed to promote inclusion often become weaponized when critiques of institutional racism from Faculty of Color were silenced or erased due to the progress achieved in faculty development. For participants like Nate and Stephanie, this pattern reflected an institutional manifestation of white fragility when they shared institutional resistance to critique framed as "Look at this work we've done; why don't you feel like you belong?". DiAngelo (2018) theorizes white fragility to describe the disbelieving defensiveness that white people exhibit when their ideas about race and racism are challenged. The growth of CIP practices created the impression that advancements in racial equity had occurred, even though only slight modifications in the overall racial structure of the institution were evident, which reflects a common pattern in racialized organizations (Ray, 2019).

Furthermore, when Faculty of Color raised critiques about hostile teaching climates, department culture, and inequitable promotion processes, they experienced erasure from decision-making processes, limited promotion prospects, and were labeled as radical. As Gloria noted, "We've pushed in spaces, and then we get shut out of spaces," revealing how advocacy creates professional isolation. Ray (2019) argues that racialized organizations shape a worker's influence over organizational policy and procedures, which diminishes the lower the worker is within the tiers of the hierarchy (Wingfield & Alston, 2014). For Faculty of Color, their challenges in advocating for institutional change or support when confronting discrimination reflected their position within the organizational and racial hierarchy of the institution. While this

experience was reflected broadly, particular attention and concern were given to junior and non-tenure-line Faculty of Color who navigate greater precarity within the institution.

Furthermore, as Abby, a senior administrator, noted, the institution exhibited a pervasive pattern of over-reliance on the labor of Faculty of Color for teaching, service, and the implementation of CIP in the classroom. These concerns were most prevalent when critiquing the erasure of Faculty of Color contributions, particularly Women of Color who have long committed to these efforts. In addition to having heightened expectations as compared to their white colleagues, Faculty of Color experience unique challenges when implementing critical pedagogies. Participants described patterns of tokenization, constant navigation of the perception of white students, student resistance to decolonized curricula, limited institutional support when experiencing racist student evaluation and complaints, and heightened scrutiny of teaching methods, often occurring at the intersection of race and gender (Crenshaw, 1991). These pressures create hesitancy among Faculty of Color to fully embrace the critical pedagogies that the institution claims to support. Critical race theorists challenge institutions to move beyond frameworks of individual responsibility and success to discussions that center on the unexamined institutional and systemic factors that leave oppressive power dynamics intact (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Patton, 2006). In applying a CRT frame, it becomes clear how disparate labor expectations and scrutiny for Faculty of Color contribute to inequity in tenure and promotion review processes. Recognizing the normalcy of labor inequities is essential for advancing equity and rejecting the use of CIP as a tool that reproduces racial hierarchies.

In addition to experiencing institutional racism outside the TLC, participants also noted that faculty development programs, including those focused on inclusive teaching, paradoxically exclude Faculty of Color. Bell and Hartmann (2007) argue there is an “assumed white center in

most discourse on diversity” (p. 908), with organizations expecting People of Color to conform to established (White) norms and standards. Throughout the findings, participants described how faculty development programs and practices catered to a predominantly white faculty who defined the primary issues and norms shaping faculty life to the detriment of Faculty of Color. In the third tenet of the theory of racialized organizations, Ray (2019) describes how racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources. Directly speaking to this limitation, several participants in the study wrestled with the TLC being perceived as a white space that lacked racial diversity in composition and consciousness. These participants recounted experiencing pervasive whiteness when engaging in CIP practices in ways that erased pedagogical nuances and neglected the needs of Faculty of Color. These experiences raise questions about who owns the space of a TLC, reflecting how the institution’s property interest in whiteness remained largely implicit, legitimate, and unnamed (Harris, 1993).

TLC practitioners recognized the need to expand CIP practices beyond a lens that centers on the educational needs of white faculty and embrace an approach that acknowledges the racism encountered by Faculty of Color inside and outside of the classroom. To address this need, Practitioners of Color created race-conscious programming for Faculty of Color to foster community, access support, and seek mentorship. As Esther, a TLC staff member, described, these efforts were labeled as promoting segregation and experienced pressure to include white faculty, further highlighting the institution’s property interest in whiteness through rights of use. It was not until a white ally legitimized the initiative by “speaking white” that programming efforts were allowed to move forward.

Faculty participants described the need to facilitate opportunities for Faculty of Color to realize and claim their power. Despite being conscious of the need to make these changes, TLC

practitioners were challenged to move their practices from awareness to action, a core component of critical consciousness (Diemer et al., 2006). One significant disruption of this pattern utilized a critical pedagogical approach to program design, where practitioners created programming “with and for Faculty of Color”. In doing so, they invited faculty into the process of co-learning and collaborative design, balancing power dynamics in teaching and learning practice. As the program came into development, designers reflected on their experiences navigating academia. They realized how often they were reliant on code-switching as a means of survival to appease white interests and maintain white comfort. For participants like Esther, this reflection motivated her to question whether survival represented the limits of what she and other Colleagues of Color could experience in academia. Her process reflects a rejection of whiteness being the sole possessor of joy in the academy (Harris, 1993). Ultimately, Esther advocated for the creation of a community where faculty could breathe life into one another, offering uplift and empowerment amongst colleagues.

While this notion reflects a depth of compassion, it is important to acknowledge how the navigation of institutional power structures can render Faculty of Color breathless and unwell (Wright-Mair & Ieva, 2022). Breathlessness reflects a sensation of suffocation, which Okello (2022) contextualizes by describing how Black knowledge producers experience epistemic asphyxiation due to the stifling or silencing of knowledge production stemming from systemic power dynamics and acts of epistemic violence. As Okello (2022) describes, epistemic asphyxiation must be countered through teaching and learning praxis by centering marginalized voices, challenging dominant narratives, and cultivating epistemic humility. Understanding and addressing epistemic asphyxiation can help create more equitable and inclusive spaces for knowledge production and participation, thereby enabling thriving in the academy.

This study revealed multiple themes and examples regarding how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, interrogated, and engaged within teaching and learning practice. The themes explored in this study illuminated how the implementation and potential of these practices are shaped by racialized organizational structures and practices. If institutions want to advance equity and racial justice through the expansion of CIP, intentional efforts to clearly define the framework, distribute labor across faculty development practices, reinforce accountability mechanisms, and address institutional racism embedded in institutional culture, structure, and faculty life must be enacted. The findings emphasize that meaningful institutional transformation requires recognition of invisible labor, appropriate compensation structures, race-conscious support systems, and intentional community building. By addressing systemic inequities, universities can create environments where all faculty members, particularly Faculty of Color, can truly thrive rather than merely survive.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented within teaching and learning centers (TLC). A single-site case study was conducted at a midsize private research university (R1) that features a stand-alone teaching and learning center dedicated to advancing transformative and inclusive teaching. The study design and data analysis are informed by critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), critical consciousness (Freire, 1998), and the theory of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019). Data collection occurred from September 2023 through January 2024, comprising nineteen interviews with senior administrators, faculty, and TLC staff, alongside observations during a campus visit, document analysis of TLC materials, and institutional website content. Interviews were conducted virtually on Zoom and were audio recorded. I

transcribed and analyzed each interview transcript. The next sections will address the research questions that guided this study.

How Does a Teaching and Learning Center Operationalize Critical and Inclusive Pedagogical Frameworks within its Organizational Structure?

Interviews and document analysis revealed that critical and inclusive pedagogical frameworks influenced the structure and operations of the TLC. In this study, the engagement and promotion of CIP practices were affected by conflicting and contested understandings of these frameworks. Focusing on CIP practices as a tool to foster inclusion and belonging appealed white interests in maintaining the status quo and decentered conceptualizations of CIP as a disruptive framework designed to transform pedagogical hegemony. Additionally, despite the institution's stated commitment and requirements for faculty to engage in CIP practices, these efforts were undermined by a culture that lacked accountability, disproportionately burdened TLC staff, and offered limited rewards and incentives for engagement. While the TLC expanded its mission and staffing structure to prioritize CIP practices, challenges arose in embedding these frameworks within their work and through consciousness-raising efforts for their staff. Finally, since CIP practices were intended to engage all faculty, their development often derived from pervasive whiteness, neglecting considerations and applications for Faculty of Color. Overall, while the institution has increased its focus on critical and inclusive pedagogy in recent years, challenges persist in fully operationalizing these frameworks across TLC operations and within a decentralized institution. The TLC must navigate institutional culture, faculty incentives, and broader sociopolitical pressures when promoting these practices.

How do sociopolitical contexts shape the operational mission of a teaching and learning center?

Interviews conducted in this study revealed that many of the institution's CIP efforts were developed in response to changing sociopolitical contexts, primarily linked to the Movement for Black Lives and campus activism. Furthermore, most of these programs and services were initially created by Staff of Color, with limited time allocated for their development. Their efforts were perceived as superhuman, implying a mythological and non-human existence, which underscores the mental burden and dehumanization required by the institution to function as first responders to sociopolitical crises. Most participants viewed the TLC as a vital campus resource responsible for guiding faculty in addressing local, national, and global issues as they emerged. While some participants regarded CIP practices as a form of resistance to anti-DEI rhetoric, many found greater value in using CIP as a tool for social-emotional support and conflict resolution. By prioritizing this approach, they aimed to uphold notions of civility and respectability that align with white interests and suppress disruptions to the status quo. Moreover, as Ray's first tenet in racialized organization theory describes, racialized organizations either enhance or diminish the agency (e.g., collective action) of racial groups. Echoing Ray's theory, participants noted that Faculty of Color often faced a greater burden in addressing sociopolitical contexts in their teaching compared to their white counterparts. Additionally, their efforts were frequently undermined by the white gaze, penalized by their departments, and went unrewarded in tenure and promotion processes.

Implications and Recommendations

The following section offers recommendations and suggestions for teaching and learning center practitioners and faculty developers more broadly to deepen race consciousness and enhance strategies for facilitating critical and inclusive pedagogical practices. The findings in this study can assist teaching and learning center practitioners and faculty developers in

understanding how racialized organizational contexts can influence strategies for facilitating critical and inclusive pedagogical practices. The implementation of critical and inclusive pedagogy represents an important advancement in higher education, and findings in this study can assist teaching and learning centers in offering clear definitions, accounting for sociopolitical crises, balancing labor dynamics, and identifying pathways toward more equitable and sustainable approaches. In the following sections, I will provide recommendations teaching and learning centers, higher education institutions, national organizations, and future research. Next, I offer recommendations for institutional policy.

Recommendations for Teaching & Learning Centers

Create a Shared Understanding of CIP

As a practical implication, this study reveals that understanding and applying CIP frameworks often vary among TLC practitioners and across institutions. TLCs seeking to advance this work should invest time in professional development to cultivate complex understandings of CIP and clearly define their approach to it. Existing literature argues that the professional development of faculty developers should expand awareness, skill development, and consciousness of one's positionality (Mighty et al., 2010; Siever, 2016; Stanley, 2018). This study builds on current literature, emphasizing the need for training and development efforts that ensure all TLC staff share a common understanding of CIP frameworks and promote a deeper consciousness of how power, privilege, and oppression influence faculty development and faculty life more broadly. By doing so, developers can examine how they uphold dominant norms, apply a structural analysis to their work, and disrupt oppressive dynamics embedded in their practices.

As practitioners develop and share a common language, it is important to interrogate to what extent notions of inclusive pedagogy or inclusive teaching are framed in ways that maintain race evasiveness, deficit ideologies, and a lack of structural critique. With a common and clear understanding of CIP, practitioners can then assess how CIP is applied and operationalized across their work. In alignment with McFarlane's (1999) emphasis on deconstructing how racialized structures shape classroom spaces, it is important to understand what shapes belongingness, curriculum, and the academic environment more broadly. As CIP practices are framed by the more neutral rhetoric of inclusion, belonging, and community, it is important to critically examine the implications of "belonging for all" devoid of specific support for marginalized students. Finally, TLCs can benefit from balancing their curricular approach to offer clear strategies for enacting both critical pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy in order to broaden approaches and dismantle pedagogical hegemony. These curricular efforts can be reinforced by moving beyond the rhetoric that CIP practices are the responsibility of everyone by embedding these practices throughout staff job descriptions and work expectations.

Develop Race-Conscious and Sustainable Practices

Critical and inclusive pedagogy is not merely a collection of classroom techniques but a transformative approach to education that questions fundamental assumptions about teaching and learning (Freire, 1980; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000; Tuitt, 2003). It challenges us to move beyond the rigid boundaries of academia to engage with communities, center marginalized experiences, and recognize diverse forms of knowledge and expertise (Anzaldúa, 1987; Giroux, 1992). This pedagogy begins with intentional questioning: What makes teaching truly inclusive? What makes it critical? What makes it "good"? These questions invite educators to examine their foundational beliefs and practices, pushing beyond generic definitions to articulate specific values and

approaches that center justice and liberation. As TLCs socialize their shared understanding across the institution, it is important to offer greater clarity when measuring teaching effectiveness and the goal of “good teaching”. Practitioners should explicitly define what makes teaching good or effective within faculty development practices. In accordance with critical pedagogy and anti-racist pedagogy (Freire, 1980; Kishimoto, 2018; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), TLCs must provide faculty with opportunities to cultivate an embodied, liberatory, and self-reflexive approach to teaching.

This study reinforced Ray’s (2019) assertion that sociopolitical contexts shape organizational practice. Practitioners in the study described how CIP practices were utilized as a tool for responding to national and global sociopolitical issues like policy change, racialized violence, and social movements. Despite the catalysts of these programs being often rooted in racial justice movements, these efforts have neglected and avoided direct discussion of race and racism. TLC practitioners must adopt a race-conscious approach that is responsive to broader social movements by bringing faculty into conversations about how they can interrogate race, racism, and whiteness in the academic environment (Annamma et al., 2017). Often, the main pedagogical concern raised focuses on de-escalating conflict. However, TLC practitioners can improve their approach by centering discussions and engagement on the core issues that cause concern and harm. For example, in the #SayHerName movement, activists brought attention to the pervasive erasure of violence against Black women. Practitioners could adopt intersectional pedagogical training that invites faculty to consider how their curriculum and instruction might disrupt patterns of erasure.

In addition to critical approaches for pedagogical development, TLCs can benefit from a thorough review and assessment of how race is engaged, evaluated, and manifested in their

faculty development practices. Ray's (2019) racialized organization theory describes how institutional agents, across various levels, are affected by and, in turn, exert influence in the creation and perpetuation of an organization's practices and culture. Rhetorically, TLC practitioners understood they all had a role in shaping and implementing CIP practices. However, they often acknowledged their lack of race consciousness, the siloing of CIP practices, and the disparate burden placed on the inclusive teaching director. As TLC leaders support faculty across rank and lifecycle, it is crucial to nuance their approaches from faculty orientation to retirement through a race-conscious lens. Practitioners need to assess the Faculty of Color experience and move beyond approaches that merely assess faculty experiences in the aggregate. Ray (2019) asserts that we should shift our questions about discrimination away from whether discrimination is occurring and begin with the assumption that discrimination, racial sorting, and the unequal distribution of resources are not unusual but rather foundational organizational norms. Working from that assumption, TLC practitioners must begin interrogating race-evasiveness and assessing all of their work through a race-conscious lens that seeks to disrupt assumptions and counteract racial inequities.

Coalition Building and Resource Sharing

As a final implication for TLCs, it is important to uplift the knowledge faculty, particularly Faculty of Color, bring to teaching and learning practice. This study highlighted how TLCs often design their initiatives in collaboration with faculty leaders and individual faculty. TLC practitioners can extend this approach through a coalition-building strategy designed to enact institutional change. TLCs can learn from approaches that build faculty development initiatives with and for faculty. These efforts were most clearly demonstrated in the development of faculty learning communities but can be extended and applied across CIP practices, course

design, assessment and evaluation, and SOTL initiatives. As a strategy for ensuring this labor is compensated and accounted for, TLCs can develop fellowships or partnerships with individual schools and colleges so contributors and co-designers can be appropriately compensated, acknowledged for their service, or receive a course release for their time and expertise.

Additionally, as TLCs navigate heightened political threats that may limit or obstruct their efforts to promote CIP, working in and across coalitions can serve as a tool to reinforce the validity of their work. Findings within this study highlighted the role of the faculty senate as a key coalition and partnership in advancing shared governance. TLCs should examine their role in supporting the senate and work in coalition to advocate for faculty needs and interests. In this process, TLCs can garner increased influence on faculty workload, teaching evaluation, and academic freedom issues that collectively can contribute to the advancement of CIP practices. As derived from this study, it is important that TLCs challenge senate leaders to think critically about the needs of the faculty and which faculty perspectives are excluded, marginalized, and erased in faculty advocacy efforts. Additionally, TLCs can sustain their work through coalitional partnerships with other institutions and broader professional networks, like the POD Network, where they can strategize alongside professionals who have previously navigated similar challenges. These collective bodies can disrupt patterns of isolation that might overly rely on individual biases, which may further distort and delegitimize these efforts.

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

Examine Faculty Workloads and Compensation Structures

While the TLC increased its focus on critical and inclusive pedagogy in recent years, there are still challenges in fully operationalizing these frameworks across the institution. Like many universities, WCU is a decentralized institution with schools and colleges having a large

amount of autonomy to set priorities, enforce policy, and shape academic experiences. The center must navigate institutional culture, faculty incentives, and broader sociopolitical pressures in promoting these practices. This study further illuminated that disrupting pedagogical hegemony requires structural change with a commitment to shifting culture and practice in support of more equitable approaches to teaching and learning. Existing literature highlights how TLC practitioners saw few examples of faculty promotions resulting from effective teaching (Forgie et al., 2018). However, many could give examples of bad teaching as the cause for not being promoted. For TLCs to maximize their effectiveness, institutions need to foster academic cultures where teaching and research should hold equal weight in the evaluation process. This study reaffirms that only when institutions and broader disciplines recognize the inherent value of such activities and provide structural support for their execution will widespread progress in equity, access, and inclusion be made (Haynes, 2017; Orr & Hammig, 2009).

Throughout the study, participants consistently shared how the faculty workloads were embedded with inequities. These inequities created challenges in the well-being of all faculty, labor disparities for minoritized faculty, and structural barriers to accountability and rewards. Ray (2019) challenges institutions to interrogate facially neutral bureaucratic processes, like hiring, promotion, and awards, for embedded racial schemas that perpetuate the inequitable distribution of resources. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the role of critical and inclusive pedagogies as an additional contributor to disparate labor patterns in higher education. Faculty of Color narratives highlight the increased expectations placed on them to help expand CIP, all while dealing with skepticism and delegitimization of their knowledge as they navigate the white gaze and biased evaluation tools. Institutions should examine compensation structures to identify and address compounding inequities. Administrators should

create visible recognition systems for the additional labor performed by Faculty of Color. These recognition systems could be manifested through tenure and promotion policy development and institutional recognition of their teaching and scholarly contributions.

Resource Capacity and Community Building Efforts

This study raised questions about whether institutional commitments to equity, both broadly and specifically through a teaching and learning center's commitment to CIP, were performative rather than substantive. Institutions can reaffirm their commitment to institutional change and transformation through resourcing, policy, and faculty retention initiatives. It is essential that academic leaders examine the disconnect between institutional declarations of commitment to equity and the structural realities that undermine these commitments through inadequate resourcing, accountability systems, and support. As equity commitments face challenges and erosion, ongoing investment in CIP practices can assure faculty of the significance of academic freedom, enabling them to design their pedagogy in ways that ignite learning and foster transformation. If faculty cannot see how the administration supports the TLC mission through budgeting, visibility, and reward, they are less likely to use the center's services. Institutions can support the advancement of CIP by financially supporting participation in development programs, fostering buy-in from departmental and school leaders, and supporting faculty involved in program and curricular design. Additionally, findings highlighted the role of faculty burnout in inhibiting participation in faculty development initiatives. Administrators should interrogate their reward systems and resource distribution to reduce pressure points that create barriers to participation.

In addition to strategies for capacity building focused on CIP practices, institutions should also invest in opportunities for faculty to build community. These community-building

efforts must be intentional in addressing isolation among faculty who most often navigate institutional power structures. Findings highlight the important role of affinity-based communities in fostering mentorship, empowerment, and validation, moving academic career experiences from mere survival to possibilities for thriving. Community-building efforts should be resourced as essential components of faculty retention and career development. Particular attention should be paid to the unique needs of clinical and junior tenure-line Faculty of Color that explicitly address the cultivation of cultural capital. Practitioners also emphasized the importance of equipping faculty invested in their teaching to develop scholarship on the evolution of these practices. Faculty who engage more deeply in the holistic analysis of their teaching and learning processes have often been the driving force behind linking the scholarship on teaching and learning (SoTL) to pedagogical changes related to diversity and inclusion (Ouellett, 2010). Novel efforts to weave SOTL initiatives with a focus on collaboration should be developed to foster community, develop research, and expand a culture of engaged teaching and learning practice.

Recommendations for National Associations

Reaffirm Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

As a final recommendation for practice, it is important to consider the role of national associations in supporting educational developers as they deepen their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. National associations, like the POD network, have established strategic goals for expanding support of diversity and inclusion initiatives and evidence-based practices (POD Network, 2016). These efforts were driven by extant literature that documents a lack of diversity among practitioners and a need to increase scholarly production of, and engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion topics (Banks et al., 2011; Grooters, 2014; Mighty et al.,

2010). This study highlighted how sociopolitical factors shape teaching and learning practices. As TLCs navigate challenges, national associations can serve as an organizing force to assist practitioners in weathering these challenges and developing strategies to maintain a commitment to CIP practices. This study further illuminated that disrupting pedagogical hegemony requires structural change with a commitment to shifting culture and practice in support of more equitable approaches to teaching and learning. Existing literature documents a lack of diversity among practitioners and an absence of research that allows them to tell their own stories (Stanley, 2001; Mighty et al., 2010). In response, national associations can serve as a leading voice that reaffirms the value of these practices through the scholarship they publish and produce, along with opportunities for training and development. It is imperative that these organizations take bold and evidence-based stances to protect academic freedom and utilize their platform to reassure educational developers of their professional responsibilities in promoting faculty development.

Provide Training and Development for Educational Developers

This study raised questions about the level of preparedness practitioners held to understand, promote, and implement CIP practices. Findings revealed how power relations influenced how the implementation of CIP practices was isolated, siloed, and lacked reinforcement throughout the organization. These disparate labor patterns reflected a siloing of CIP expertise and racial consciousness that must be expanded through professional development and training of all educational developers. These experiences reinforced that faculty developers within these roles must consider and seek opportunities to enhance their own awareness, skills, and understanding of positionality as they work with faculty to disrupt the potential for CIP practices to cause harm (Stanley, 2018). National organizations play a pivotal role in offering training and development resources that can expand capacity and consciousness of educational

developers. These associations can reaffirm their commitment to pedagogical change and transformation through resourcing strategic initiatives to advance CIP practices. Additionally, the findings highlighted the specific need to focus these efforts on developing racial consciousness. Participants in the study often reflected on the interview process as a rare occasion for personal and professional self-reflection, surfacing a challenge in navigating the everyday demands of their work. Conference and institute programming can provide developers with the space and time to engage in self-reflection, learning, and application to their institutional contexts.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights into the implementation of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in teaching and learning, several limitations indicate potential directions for future research. A single-site case study design was conducted at a midsize, private research one university (R1) with a stand-alone teaching and learning center. While the findings from a single site may benefit other institutions, it is recommended that future research consider various institutional types with diverse resource allocations for teaching and learning. The findings of this study may be reaffirmed across various institutional types or may vary depending on the level of institutional resources, research focus, and demographic makeup. Additionally, the development of staff roles focusing on critical and inclusive pedagogies is still emerging in higher education. A significant limitation of this study was the lack of representation of staff members in this role. Moreover, the extant literature on educational developers documents a lack of diversity among practitioners (Stanley, 2001; Stanley & Ouellet, 2000; Mighty et al., 2010), and future studies could look specifically at the impact of racialization shaping practitioner experiences across varying positionalities.

One goal of this study is to challenge the deficit ideology that underlies explorations of the academic performance of racially minoritized students by shifting the responsibility for academic performance from student aptitude to faculty development. In addition to understanding how racialized organizational practices manifest from the perspective of TLC staff, faculty, and documents, it is beneficial to learn from students how critical and inclusive pedagogies foster equity in academic environments. This study sought to disrupt the pattern of educational development research that focuses on training and developing faculty by examining the developers themselves (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Renn, 2012), yet important questions remain about which pedagogies are most effective in challenging pedagogical hegemony. Furthermore, future studies addressing the effectiveness of CIP practices should prioritize perspectives from Students and Faculty of Color. Understanding how students differentiate applications of critical pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy would be particularly useful. Additionally, it is recommended that future research examine the ways in which opportunities to foster critical discourse in the classroom expand student capacity to engage civically, speak effectively across differing points of view, and seek action to contribute to the broader public good.

Finally, this study identified labor imbalances in teaching and learning centers and faculty life more broadly. The extant literature on educational developers documents a lack of diversity among practitioners and an absence of research that allows them to tell their own stories (Stanley, 2001; Mighty et al., 2010). Future studies can further explore the experiences of Developers of Color. Because Whiteness is an implicit norm in much organizational research (Ray, 2019), further explications that interrogate whiteness in organizational practice can reveal embedded racial hierarchies in teaching and learning practice. Additionally, researchers should

place a greater focus on how organizations react to changes in national, state, or institutional policy in ways that enhance or diminish racial group agency. As restrictive, anti-DEI policies proliferate, it will be important to understand the impact of policy change on access to the professoriate, labor inequities, and infringements on academic freedom.

The anti-critical race theory and anti-DEI movements have only widened since the inception of this study, as an onslaught of state-level legislation and federal executive orders threatens the future of CIP practices and higher education more broadly (Moody 2023). It is important that future research explore the implications of these policy decisions. These efforts could examine how limitations on speech, restricting funding for research, and obscuring anti-discrimination efforts create limitations and barriers to initiatives that promote critical thinking, enhance research, and uphold the public good. All these issues shape faculty life and create additional barriers for student success. Finally, this study's findings highlight the critical role that Faculty of Color play in creating more equitable educational environments despite the barriers to promotion they face throughout their academic careers. Future research can examine efforts to diversify the professoriate and the impact of policy restrictions placed on funding and fellowship opportunities for doctoral and postdoctoral student success.

Personal Reflection

At the beginning of this dissertation, I shared my experience bearing witness to racialized violence, detailing the personal and professional impact of racial trauma. That day, along with many others that followed, instilled a deep commitment to disrupt the erasure of these social realities and uplift my own humanity. Reflecting on that moment and the start of my doctoral education, I dedicated myself to pursuing my doctoral journey in a manner that centered my humanity. I sought out a program and formed relationships with faculty who modeled and

exemplified the humanizing practices that I aimed to study. It was the first time in my 21 years of navigating educational environments that I felt my needs, interests, and gifts were embraced, nurtured, and celebrated. In many ways, I am profoundly grateful for the support and growth I've encountered throughout this journey. The support I received largely stemmed from a compassionate community of peers and faculty committed to racial justice and the dismantling of oppressive systems. My personal experience reinforced my curiosity about how similar outcomes could be replicated for students throughout higher education. While I was largely able to prioritize my own wellness, the persistent and continuous onslaught of racial violence remained as we navigated the global outcry against systemic racism and police brutality, a global pandemic with heightened consequences for People of Color, and a fierce and growing backlash to efforts aimed at creating equity and inclusion.

As I approached this study, I held both skepticism and idealized beliefs about the power of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices to spark transformation and liberation. As a social justice educator and faculty developer, I believe that this work can spark consciousness and want to believe these practices can contribute to the disruption of epistemic violence enacted on college campuses. While I think those possibilities still exist to a degree, this project deepened my understanding that approaches to advance inclusion often do little to shift structural inequities steeped in power. Through this process, I engaged more deeply with critical race theory, critical consciousness, and the theory of racialized organizations, which make clear the reality that racism and white supremacy are endemic and embedded in institutions and organizations. As Victor Ray (2019) notes, “racial inequality is not merely “in” organizations but “of” them” (p. 48). These frameworks have caused me to examine the racialized organizational contexts I inhabit. This process of examination has prompted me to think about my own

complicity and ask critical questions about to what extent my work has succeeded at the pace of white comfort.

In the last few months that I've been writing, there has been an authoritarian rejection and distortion of efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. I have watched friends and colleagues lose their jobs, face doxing and harassment, lose research funding, and be pressured to change their office or job titles. These efforts have raised questions about what all this means for the future of research, teaching, and administrative work that promotes these concepts and practices. My own work and professional life have been impacted by it, which led me to question whether I still wanted to move forward in advancing a project that utilizes critical frameworks. As I wrestled with my own fears, I thought deeply about my purpose, ancestors, and commitment to pursuing justice. In that process of reflection, I immediately thought of my grandmother Mercedes Johnson, who passed away at 95 this past year.

There is one memory that continues to surface as I've been navigating this current moment. As a young child, I was playing with my cousins on her block when one of her white neighbors came outside and yelled at us to go back down the street. We came home and told her what happened, and she rushed out of the house. We watched her approach the woman's house and scold her, saying that if she had a problem with her grandchildren, she needed to speak to her directly. She then hurried back down the street, sat all 10 of us down in her living room, and shared something I would never forget. She pointed at us and said, "Don't you ever let someone tell you where you belong when you have every right to be there". I've thought about that lesson a lot lately as I've felt pushed to make myself, my work, and my contributions smaller, quieter, and less bold to appease white interests. This project and doctoral journey have reaffirmed my resolve to take up space, be truthful, and (re)claim my humanity so that others can have the

opportunity to do the same. This work is precarious, power-laden, and risky, but I know that I come from a people and community that has a long and rich legacy of resistance, resilience, and abundance. It is alongside them that I pursue this work. As I wrapped up one of my final interviews, Gretal, a senior Scholar of Color, told me to keep going and that the work I was doing mattered. It was a small, fleeting moment, but it reminded me how important it is that we stand in the gap for one another and push our work into the collective consciousness within and outside the walls of the academy.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a discussion of the study findings alongside my theoretical framework and relevant literature. I then shared an overview of how the findings connected to the original research questions. I offered implications and recommendations for recognizing and challenging racialized structures embedded within higher education institutions, teaching and learning praxis, and future research on critical and inclusive pedagogical practices. Finally, I conclude with a reflection on my journey throughout this research and learning process.

This study revealed multiple themes and examples regarding how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, interrogated, and engaged within teaching and learning practice. This study revealed how racialized organizational structures and practices influence the implementation and potential of these practices. To advance equity and racial justice through the expansion of CIP, institutions must intentionally define a framework, distribute labor across teaching and learning operations, reinforce accountability, and address institutional racism in culture, structure, and faculty life. Further, meaningful institutional transformation requires recognition of invisible labor, appropriate compensation structures, race-conscious support systems, and intentional community building for faculty. By addressing systemic inequities,

universities can more effectively support the development and implementation of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices that promote transformation and advance learning as a practice of freedom.

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APPENDIX A: EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well! My name is Rob Brown, and I am a doctoral candidate at Colorado State University in the Higher Education Administration program. I am conducting a research study entitled: “Examining the Operationalization of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogical Practices in Teaching & Learning Centers” under my advisor, Dr. Susana Muñoz.

The purpose of this study is to critically examine how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in a teaching and learning center (TLC). As organizations dedicated to the advancement of faculty development within higher education, teaching and learning centers provide useful insight into strategies aimed at fostering critical and inclusive pedagogies. I am contacting you to request a recorded interview for this study given your partnership and support of Inclusive Teaching Practices programs at the University of Denver Office of Teaching & Learning. In my study, the institution and all individuals participating will be anonymous. The interview will take up to 90 minutes via zoom or in-person with a possible follow up interview based on evolving data collection needs. The interview will be audio recorded and the audio will be transcribed. The in-person interviews will all be conducted on the same day during a visit on the University of Denver campus. After transcription, a copy of the transcript will be shared with you to confirm accuracy and validity of the conversation.

My interest in this study stems from both my experience leading faculty development initiatives designed to improve classroom climates for minoritized students and a broader desire to create a culture of possibility where transformative education unlocks the full potential of all students as both knowers and learners. The outcomes of this proposed study can provide guidance to TLC practitioners, informing their organizational missions and practice-based approaches to advancing faculty, postdoc, and graduate student development related to critical and inclusive pedagogy.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Robert.brown2@colostate.edu or my advisor, Dr. Muñoz at Susana.munoz@colostate.edu.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for your participation in this study. The study aims to critically examine how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers (TLCs). This interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes and will include questions about your engagement with these practices.

For this study, critical and inclusive pedagogical-centered practices are defined as encompassing any formalized, departmental initiatives that examine topics related to critical and inclusive pedagogy through workshops, speaker events, dialogue spaces, certificate programs, consultation, and other programs.

Please feel free to skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering, and you may also ask me to stop the recorder or end the interview at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

TLC practitioner interview

1. Please describe your path to working at the center and the number of years you have been employed there. What attracted you to the role?
2. What are your core responsibilities?
3. What is the mission of the center, and who do you predominantly serve on campus?
4. Please provide a brief overview of the types of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices facilitated within your center.
5. What experiences have you had engaging in critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in the center?
6. What does critical and inclusive pedagogy mean to you? Can you share how you have come to your current understanding?
7. What does it mean to do this work within the space of a teaching and learning center? How do you perceive this work aligning with the aims of your center?
8. How do sociopolitical contexts shape the operational mission of a teaching and learning center? Why are these issues relevant to the center and program's curriculum?
9. What internal or external factors shape how engagement in critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are supported or diminished?
10. How do you identify racially? How have you come to understand your racial identity?
11. What effects has race and racism had on the institution of higher education as it relates to academic persistence? Faculty development? Faculty life broadly?
12. How are issues of race and racism engaged in your experience as a practitioner? Why are these issues relevant to your center and program's curriculum?
13. How are faculty of color prioritized in your programming?

Senior Leadership interview

1. What are your core responsibilities? How do they support the mission and operation of the teaching and learning center?

2. What is the driving purpose and mission of the institution?
3. What do you believe is the mission of the center and what purpose does it serve?
4. What experiences have you had promoting and encouraging faculty development?
5. How would you describe the value of engaging critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in the center?
6. What effects has race and racism had on the institution of higher education as it relates to academic persistence? Faculty development? Faculty life broadly?
7. Why are these issues relevant to your center and program's curriculum?
8. What internal or external factors shape how engagement in critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are supported or diminished?
9. To what extent is the institution, and by extension its faculty, responsible for promoting social change as it relates to equity and racial justice?

Faculty interview

1. What are your core responsibilities? What role do you play in advancing the mission and operation of the teaching and learning center?
2. What do you believe is the mission of the center and what purpose does it serve?
3. What experiences have you had promoting and encouraging faculty development?
4. How would you describe the value of engaging critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in the center?
5. What effects has race and racism had on the institution of higher education as it relates to academic persistence? Faculty development? Faculty life broadly?
6. What barriers or challenges exist in relation to encouraging engagement in critical and inclusive pedagogical practices?
7. To what extent is the institution, and by extension its faculty, responsible for promoting social change as it relates to equity and racial justice?

Campus Partner interview

1. What are your core responsibilities? What role do you play in advancing the mission and operation of the teaching and learning center?
2. What do you believe is the mission of the center and what purpose does it serve?
3. What experiences have you had partnering in promoting and encouraging faculty development?
4. How would you describe the value of engaging critical and inclusive pedagogical practices in the center?
5. What effects has race and racism had on the institution of higher education as it relates to academic persistence? Faculty development? Faculty life broadly?
6. How do sociopolitical contexts shape the development and implementation of critical and inclusive pedagogical practices? Why are these issues relevant to the center and program's curriculum?

7. What barriers or challenges exist in relation to encouraging engagement in critical and inclusive pedagogical practices?
8. To what extent is the institution, and by extension its faculty, responsible for promoting social change as it relates to equity and racial justice?

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Colorado State University Consent to Participate in Research

Title of Study: "Examining the Operationalization of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogical Practices in Teaching & Learning Centers"

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Robert Brown, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Leadership program in the School of Education at Colorado State University and the co-investigator of this research study alongside my faculty advisor and P.I., Dra. Susanna Muñoz. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. The purpose of this study is to critically examine how critical and inclusive pedagogical practices are understood, promoted, and implemented in teaching and learning centers (TLC). As organizations dedicated to the advancement of faculty development within higher education, teaching and learning centers provide useful insight into strategies aimed at fostering critical and inclusive pedagogies.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct an interview with you at a time and location of your choice. The interview will include questions that explore your career history, racial consciousness, contributions to the center's policies and practices, perspective on resource distribution, and views on the aims of TLCs and the role of CIP practices in the work. It should last up to 90 minutes. With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the in-person interview or audio-visual record virtual interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be recorded, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being recorded but feel uncomfortable or change your mind for any reason during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. If you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time. Following the interview, I will engage in member checking by asking participants to review their interview transcript and the preliminary findings of the study to provide feedback.

Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. It is hoped that the research findings can be used by TLCs to inform future initiatives for improving faculty development.

Risks/Discomforts

Some of the interview questions may make you uncomfortable as they ask your opinions and observations about the racial climate for students, staff, and faculty at your institution. You are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop the interview at any time.

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk.

Confidentiality

Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used. You will pick a pseudonym or one will be assigned for you. Information will be collected and stored according to pseudonym. The only linked list will match real names to pseudonyms. This list will be kept in a secure location by the P.I. only and this list will be destroyed within 2 years of the study's completion. I will identify pseudonyms to use in place of real names on all field notes, interview notes, transcripts, and other documents and materials. The institution selected will also be given a pseudonym as well.

I will transcribe the audio recordings as soon as possible after the interview, and then destroy the audio recording. When the research is completed, I will save the transcriptions and other study data for possible use in future research done by myself or others. I will retain these records for up to 2 years after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data. We may be asked to share the research files with the sponsor or the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee for auditing purposes.

Compensation

There is no compensation for taking part in this study.

Rights

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer any questions or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me at Robert.brown2@colostate.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights or treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the Colorado State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at: e-mail CSU_IRB@colostate.edu .

CONSENT

Do you consent for your interview to be audiotaped?

- Yes
- No

Do you consent to being contacted if a follow-up interview is needed?

- Yes
- No

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

Participant's Name (*please print*)

Participant's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF COOPERATION

8/1/2023

Colorado State University
Institutional Review Board
321 General Services Building
Campus Delivery 2011
Fort Collins, CO 80523-2011
Attention: IRB Office

Dear IRB;

I am aware that Robert Brown, a graduate student in the School of Education at Colorado State University, is conducting a research study entitled: “Examining the Operationalization of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogical Practices in Teaching & Learning Centers,” and he has shared with me the details of the study. I understand the parameters of this work, the nature of the study, I feel comfortable that the participants in this study will be adequately protected, and I give Robert permission to conduct this study at our [REDACTED] at [REDACTED].

To participate in the study, our center agrees to: (1) authorize consenting staff members to participate in a 60-90 minute interview in-person or virtually, based on the participant’s preference, (2) share relevant organizational documents related to critical and inclusive pedagogy-centered practices at the center such as annual reports, proposals, virtual modules, program planning documents, etc., and (3) review quotes or relevant analyses that may be used in the final report. Our human resources office will provide Robert with an email listing of our employees in order to send them an email invitation to participate in the study.

The [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] requests that the office and institution’s name and identifiers of its employees be kept confidential in the research results. Robert has agreed to provide my office a copy of the CSU IRB approval document before beginning recruitment.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Signature

[REDACTED]