

# Racial Equity in Seminars and Curriculum: Teacher Interviews Six Months After Professional Development Seminars

Jaden Schutt, Departments of Criminal Justice and Criminology; and History, UNC Charlotte  
Scott Gartlan, Ed.D., Executive Director, Charlotte Teachers Institute



## Introduction

Research suggests that PK-12 curriculum focused on racial equity and social justice themes are important to attaining greater achievement by students (Liou & Rojas, 2018). Additionally, research supports that the integration of race-conscious dialogues should be prominent in the public administration education sector because it promotes racial and social justice (Lopez-Littleton et al., 2018). What this study works to reveal are how teachers' and professors' perspectives on these experiences relate to effective professional development within implementing racial equity curricula. This study examined six public school teachers who participated in professional development seminars led by university professors, including a written curriculum project based on racial equity research and existing PK-12 classroom standards.

## Research Questions

**RQ1:**  
How did professional development seminars support teachers to write new racial equity focused curricula?

**RQ2:**  
How did professional development seminars contribute to the growth of teacher confidence to teach racial equity curricula?

**RQ3:**  
How did teaching teacher-written curriculum focusing on racial equity influence student engagement?

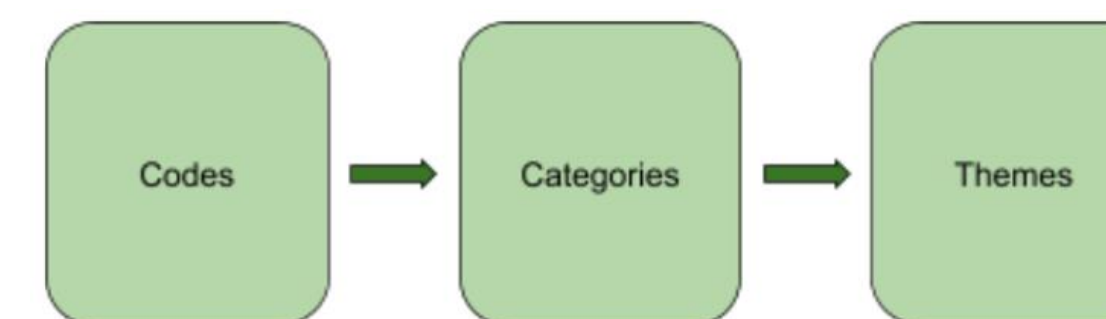
## Methodology

Six months after the teacher's professional development seminars, six teacher interviews were recorded over zoom and transcribed for analysis. Four elementary teachers, one middle school teacher, and one high school teacher who completed professional development seminars were interviewed. The audio of the interviews were transcribed into written form, which was then coded using the application NVivo20. Using the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006; Crotty, 1998) and constant comparison method (Crotty, 1998); codes, categories, and themes were identified first individually, then among all six interviews to identify common themes with the goal of identifying an emergent theory on racial equity in seminars and curricula. The resulting codes were then exported to a Google document, where they were organized into a table for further analysis. They were examined and used to identify categories, which were then compared to each other to create common themes. Each interview transcript resulted in its own set of themes and through comparison of each set with the others, new overarching themes were created, resulting in five themes.

## Collected Data

Using the constant comparison method (Cohen, 2006), the codes were read and compared to each other until a common association was identified and categories were created. Through axial coding, these categories and their corresponding codes were further analyzed to generate themes within each interview transcription. The emerging themes of each interview were then compared to each other and similarities were found to create five overarching themes.

**Figure 1.** Grounded theory and constant comparison were used to identify codes, categories, and themes.



## Results

Through data analysis a total of 845 codes were created. Then, a total of 69 categories were developed and 16 themes emerged. Then, through constant comparison and data analysis 5 themes emerged from the 6 interviews. The results below answer the research questions with three major themes and two minor themes that emerged across all six interviews.

### Themes

- T1: A Collaborative Seminar Experience
- T2: A Confidence Surge in Teaching Racial Equity
- T3: A Positive Student Impact Experience
- T4: Modifying Standard Curricula to have a Racial Equity Lens
- T5: A Place of Continuous Learning for White Teachers

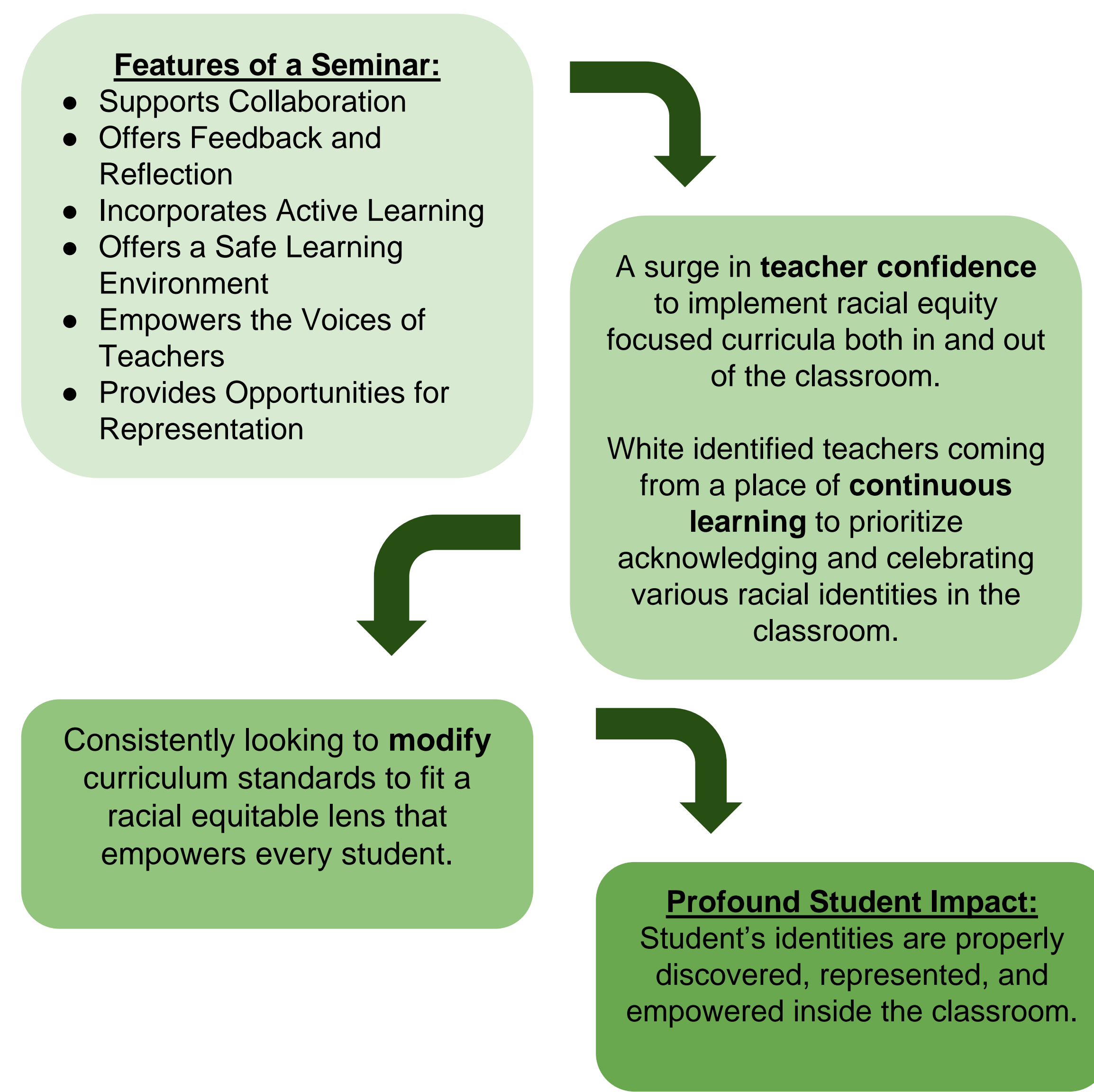
### Teacher Testimonials

<b>T1</b>	"So that is one thing I can say truly about this program is that it educates, it empowers, and like I said it creates room for you to have a voice, as well as representation and it also provides opportunities." - Brianna, Black High School English Teacher
<b>T2</b>	" I am feeling much more confident to the point that I have already talked to my principal about plans for this next year and things that we want to implement." - Rebecca, White 3rd Grade Elementary School Teacher
<b>T3</b>	"I had a really quiet Asain boy and when we had a hero that was an Asain man... I showed the picture and he jumped out of his seat and was like "he looks like me!" And I was like "does this excite you?" And he said, "yes I love learning about people that look like me, I hope he is a hero because he looks like me!" Another Asain boy jumped in and said, "it is really cool to see people that look like you doing good things."- Evelyn, White 1st Grade Elementary School Teacher
<b>T4</b>	" Now my lens is how can I make this equitable for every student that is reading it... how can I switch it up to make sure each child can see themselves in a positive light? How can I switch this curriculum or modify or supplement this curriculum to be anti racist and to have a good racial equity lens?"- Lily, Mixed Race 3rd Grade Elementary School Teacher
<b>T5</b>	" I think my responsibility as a white person is to lean on others to direct me into listening to others and to recognize when it's my place to, just being very conscious of which voices I am centering and how I am approaching the writing from a place of continuous learning." -Eva, White 8th Grade Middle School Teacher

## Conclusions

The evidence suggests that teacher professional development seminars supports teacher collaboration, provides a safe environment to learn, and empowers teachers. This seminar experience leads to a surge in teacher confidence in racial equity topics and equips white teachers with a new level of understanding. It is with this new mindset that teachers begin to look at their curriculum standards to see where they can modify it to have a racial equity lens that empowers every student. This leads to a profound student impact that ignites students to learn further about their identities as well as the identities of their friends (See Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** The emergent theory of the relationship among features of a seminar, teacher confidence gain related to racial equity, the value of modification to fit racial equity into curriculum, and positive student identities.



## References

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