

CRITICAL MINDFULNESS IN THE SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
CLASSROOM

by

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative dissertation examines teachers' perceptions of integrating mindfulness practices in secondary English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms, emphasizing urban schools with a significant number of Black and Brown students. The study addresses the gap in existing research examining if mindfulness is aligned with culturally-based pedagogies to support Black and Brown students effectively. The central research question is: What frameworks do ELA teachers use to deliver mindfulness within the curriculum and pedagogy to support Black and Brown students in urban secondary settings? Using a phenomenological intuitive inquiry research design, this research analyzed interviews of seven secondary ELA teachers across five cycles of analysis. The findings reveal the nuances of various mindfulness applications in the ELA classroom. Key themes emerged, such as the use of mindfulness to enhance social-emotional learning (SEL), and its impact on student well-being by providing strategies to manage stress and emotions. Teachers perceived improvements in student engagement, and a decrease in disruptive behavior attributed to mindfulness. In the final analysis cycle of the teachers' interviews, two lenses were identified: the (in)visibility of white supremacy in mindfulness instruction and cultivating consciousness: the gap in culturally relevant mindfulness. Findings suggest teachers perceive mindfulness as a tool to enhance student achievement

and well-being, but the implementation often lacked cultural-based frameworks, thus not fully supporting students. Instead, mindfulness was primarily used as a classroom management tool rather than leveraging its full potential. Additionally, findings show these teachers used deficit language that reinforced systemic biases by ignoring the socio-political factors that impact students experiences and needs. Further, the teachers in the study did not make any culturally relevant adaptations to the mindfulness curriculum and instead relied on generalized programs devoid of an acknowledgment of the unique cultures of Black and Brown students. This study emphasizes the need for an anti-oppressive framework that is culturally-based explicitly in the mindfulness curriculum. The implications of this study suggest that for mindfulness to positively impact Black and Brown students in secondary ELA settings, it must go beyond generalizable applications and be deeply ingrained with culturally-based teaching pedagogies.

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DEDICATION

To my son- I am proud of you too.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In the last ten years, initiatives in mindfulness (Berlia, 2015, Forbes, 2019) have become more common and integrated into practices in urban K-12 schools across the United States. Many teachers see mindfulness tasked with creating a classroom setting that will reduce negative classroom factors that influence student achievement (Berlia, 2015; Forbes, 2019). With promises of reducing mental health problems while improving psychological levels of resilience, attention, and happiness by focusing on self-improvement, scholars (Forbes, 2019) see mindfulness as a solution to help Black and Brown student populations in urban school settings. Programs like Mindfulness-Based Wellness Education (MBWE) (Sarlo, 2020), Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) have entered the educational landscape providing strategies and pedagogical considerations for teachers in classrooms (Rempel, 2012; Forbes, 2019). While some scholarship may help teachers apply these strategies effectively within the classroom, much of their focus largely lacks acknowledgement of the racism and oppression in mindfulness practice (Berlia, 2015).

Critics of current mindfulness use in educational settings (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Hyland, 2009; ; Kuyken et al., 2013; Mah y Busch 2014; Desbordes et al. 2014; Berlia, 2015; Polinska, 2018) argue that mindfulness self-improvement practices currently being used are not integrated into culturally responsive framework, practices that have been proven to empower Black and Brown students (Berila, 2015). Critics in opposition to the use of mindfulness in the classroom trace the lack of culturally responsive pedagogies being used to the cultural appropriation of Buddhist teachings and the disregard of its transformative, liberatory, and anti-oppressive origins (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2019;). In response to the growing use of mindfulness in schools, there is a movement in mindfulness communities to bring awareness to what is being referred to as

“Mcmindfulness” (Forbes, 2019), defined as an emphasis on individual responsibility for psychological conditions instead of dismantling the institutional practices from the teacher, school, or society that created those conditions (Forbes, 2019; Purser 2019).

Other researchers examine how the messages of individual responsibility in mindfulness reflect Eurocentric and white supremacist messages of pathologized student emotions and behavior instead of teachers addressing the conditions that created those issues through the classroom curriculum (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2019). Critics like Forbes (2019) argue that when mindfulness is taught to students, the pathologized messages teach students to cope using individual management tools to address sociopolitical inequalities instead of undoing the pedagogical decisions, practices, and rules that create the inequalities. Mindfulness programs like Black Zen (Black & Fernando, 2014) emphasize the need to frame mindfulness in a social justice-oriented way that addresses issues of race/ism; however, much of the research is focused on universities, individual mindfulness practice, psychological research, adult learners, and workplace wellness necessitating an investigation of practice in schools (Forbes 2019; Purser, 2019).

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to provide insight on mindfulness curriculum that are culturally responsive or healing in urban settings with Black and Brown students in English Language Arts classrooms. This study contributes to the gap in scholarly literature on mindfulness in K-12 urban school settings. The main research question and sub questions that guide this study are:

Main Research Question

What framework does an English Language Arts (ELA) teacher use to deliver mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy to their Black and Brown students in urban secondary schools?

Sub Questions

1. What is the English Language Arts teacher's understanding of critical and social mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy?
2. How do English Language Arts teachers in secondary school settings describe the mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy used in their classrooms?
3. How do English Language Arts teachers understand the impact of their mindfulness pedagogy and curriculum on Black and Brown students?

Research Design

Using a qualitative research design, this study intends to provide insight into mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy being used in secondary urban classrooms by ELA teachers.

Mindfulness curriculum has been delivered in the English Language Arts classroom as a trauma-informed or healing centered approach to support students who have been affected by personal traumas, generational traumas, and academic stressors (Broderick, 2021). Intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 2000), a phenomenological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018) was used to identify the pedagogical and philosophical considerations English educators use methodologies the teacher considers a mindfulness approach with the Black and Brown student population they serve. The ultimate goal of this research is to examine the pedagogical and methodological considerations of English educators' use of mindfulness to identify what is culturally responsive and healing-centered. Additionally, phenomenological interpretive approach (Creswell & Poth,

2018) helped describe and interpret the unique perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of the participants on how they designed and delivered mindfulness instruction in their English language arts classrooms. In addition, researcher examined the different mindfulness curricula to conclude the different experiences around using mindfulness pedagogically in urban high schools (Berlia, 2016).

In this study, an intuitive inquiry methodology (Anderson; 1998, Anderson, 2000; Anderson, 2004; Anderson, 2006) was employed by the researcher to join intuition and intellectual analysis of data within a hermeneutic process of interpretation (Anderson, 2000). Intuitive inquiry allowed the researcher to express their joy for the topic, honored the researcher's lived experiences, and invited not only a transformation of the research topic but also transformation of the researchers' life (Anderson, 2000). Further, the explicit use of the researchers' intuition combined with the traditional analytical methods, which are often omitted in education research, reconnected the study to indigenous and spiritual roots (Anderson, 2000), especially through the meditative practices during data collection and analysis phases. The spiritual and indigenous roots of mindfulness which are embedded in the various modalities of mindfulness worldwide (Kabat-Zinn, 1994), underscore the importance of this approach. The analysis was articulated through the creation of DJ mixes that bridges the gap between intuition and science. The process of analysis and the five major cycles of intuitive inquiry data analysis are detailed in Chapter Three and Four.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms are used to provide context and attention to in the research paper:

- **Culturally Based Pedagogy:** Culturally Based pedagogy is a method of teaching that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically through the use of students own cultural knowledge in the educational practices, and teaching practices that allow for multiple forms of expression that create a bridge between student's home and school (Pasternak et. al, 2017).
- **Black and Brown students attending school in an urban setting.**
 - **Black:** The term "Black" is used throughout this research when discussing individuals with African heritage. "Black" will be capitalized throughout this research to indicate the racial, cultural group of people in the act of empowerment to the group of people who are historically marginalized (Orelus, 2012).
 - **Brown:** The term "Brown" is used throughout this research when discussing people who are seen as different from whiteness in the United States. This definition includes mixed, Latino/a, Asian, and indigenous racial identities. The term "Brown" is used due to the group's separation from the treatment of Black people because whiteness deems Blackness as its antithesis (Orelus, 2012).
- **English Language Arts (ELA):** The term English Language Arts, or English refers to the teaching of topics, skills, and content of ELA at the secondary level in the United States (Pasternak et al., 2018).
- **Mindfulness:** In popular culture, "mindfulness" is defined as Kabat-Zinn (Nhất Hạnh, 1987) learning how to pay attention a certain way without judgment. The term "mindfulness" is used throughout this paper when discussing the integration of meditative practices to develop attention, awareness, or conscious thought process.

- **Mindfulness Curriculum:** The term "mindfulness curriculum" is used throughout this research when discussing the inclusion of mindfulness and mindfulness meditation principles into education content and instructional practices (Berlia, 2015).
- **Mindfulness Pedagogy:** Mindfulness pedagogy, also commonly known as contemplative pedagogy, is a pedagogical approach as applied science to measure qualitative and qualitative approaches (O'Donnell, 2015). In the classroom, mindfulness pedagogy is an approach to teaching that engages the students in person-first activities like meditation, mindfulness, journaling, community circles, and others to allow for the teachers, in this case, to examine themselves (O'Donnell, 2015). By reducing the psychological factors that can impede learning, mindfulness practices can promote lifestyle changes for students and increase learning in the classroom (O'Donnell, 2015). Mindfulness pedagogies focus on incorporating students' lived experiences and approaches to learning. Students are engaged in a curriculum that encourages them to be more aware of their internal state and learn their own values, meaning-making, and relationships with communities, peers, and the world around them (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2023) emphasizes the need for English educators to implement healing-centered teaching approaches, like mindfulness in their classrooms to help reduce the negative factors that impact student achievement by addressing the trauma that students experience. Ginwright's (2015) concept of healing-centered care offers a comprehensive framework for this study to understand the different ways that communities of Black and Brown people heal, and endure internalized, interpersonal, and institutionalized traumas from what he describes as an ecosystem of structural oppression that harms their

communities. The goal of healing-centered teaching is to help Black and Brown students return to a sense of collective and individual hope to help heal the students (Ginwright, 2016) through a framework that is composed of four tenets: 1) an emphasis on building a student awareness of injustices/politics in the world that affect Black and Brown students, 2) viewing healing as a restoration of cultural identities, 3) focusing on student assets, and 4) an emphasis on the collective nature of well-being, which views health as a result of political priorities, and decisions made by institutions who also need healing. Additionally, Ginwright's framework does not emphasize the need for social-emotional literacy but instead theorizes the role and use of emotions in student learning as a source of restoration, and empowerment through the educator's teaching (Ginwright, 2016). This theoretical framework will serve as a theoretical lens for this research study, examining participants' experiences designing and teaching mindfulness to students in English language arts classes, and expand the understanding of their pedagogical experiences. Specifically, this framework in this study is useful in designing the questions in the data collection procedure and theoretical data analysis process.

Significance

The current study is significant because it offers contributions to the growing conversation concerning culturally responsive practices, and healing-centered pedagogies such as mindfulness. Moreover, this dissertation sheds light on existing scholarship on the holistic needs of Black and Brown students. Teachers that use pedagogical strategies that reflect their student's culture are more successful in terms of academic and social achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1993). The teachers' own cultural knowledge, however, is based on their own cultural frameworks (Ladson-Billings, 1993). This research shows that educators struggle to use, implement, and adapt culturally responsive strategies into their practice despite the success of the

research. Culturally based teaching calls for the integration of the student's common cultural behaviors (Ladson-Billings, 1993). The work in this dissertation further can increase awareness and insight regarding English Language Arts (ELA) teachers' use of mindfulness interventions in classrooms so that the instruction aligns with culturally based practices.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the need for further research about the experiences of English Language Arts teachers who use mindfulness in their classrooms. Further, this chapter highlighted the need for further inquiry in mindfulness practice to address the appropriate pedagogical considerations and appropriateness of mindfulness interventions. This study will use a phenomenological qualitative design using intuitive inquiry to examine ELA teachers' understanding and practices of mindfulness with their Black and Brown students. Chapter Two will provide an expanded overview of the literature on how Black and Brown students are affected by race/ism and white supremacy in the educational system and in ELA, the current literature on mindfulness in education, and literature defining culturally responsive practices in healing centered pedagogies that provide a framework that teachers can use. Chapter three will explain the phenomenological qualitative research design used for this study. The final two chapters will report the results and implications for ELA teacher training and directions for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a summary of relevant research related to the implementation of mindfulness curriculum for Black and Brown students. Therefore, this literature review will address white supremacy and anti-blackness in education, schools as racialized spaces, naming the harm to Black and Brown students, consequences of harm, white supremacy in English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms. This chapter provides an overview of the different pedagogies and frameworks used in the educational settings and considerations for Black and Brown students including mindfulness pedagogy. Finally, there will be an analysis of the benefits and considerations for the implementation of mindfulness curriculum for Black and Brown students.

White Supremacy and Anti Blackness in Education

A body of literature (Crenshaw, 1994; Ladson-Billings 1998) examines the normalization of white supremacy in education and its intent to maintain the status quo of a deficit-based education for Black and Brown students (Valencia, 2010). White Supremacy is defined as the explicit and implicit cultural system wherein white superiority and inferiority get reproduced throughout societal norms granting white people special rights while restricting the rights and resources from Black and Brown people (Crenshaw, 1994; Ladson-Billings 1998). White supremacy promotes whiteness as the ideal for humanity (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). White supremacy in racial spaces, such as schools, upholds the white norm of education which advantages white students, while failing to acknowledge an equitable education for Black and Brown students as a property right (Crenshaw, 1994; Ladson-Billings 1998). For example, Valencia (2010) contends that a white dominant rhetoric in schools seeks to blame Black and

Brown students for their lack of academic success positing that their racial identity is to blame for school failure, rather than the white normed system of schooling.

Blaisdell (2020) argues that school based white supremacy is incomplete without an analysis of anti-blackness. Anti-Blackness is the behaviors, attitudes, and practices of people and institutions that work to dehumanize Black and Brown people in order to maintain white supremacy (Blaisdell, 2020). This definition extends to the structures of the institutions, such as schools, and the educational curriculum and instruction that is found in U.S education. For example, in a culture of anti-blackness, teachers use rules and policies of the school organization to legitimize actions of punishment and discipline against Black and Brown students, leading to a rationalization that Black and Brown students are inherently bad. These constructs allow for white supremacy to show up in daily school practice as the accepted way of doing school, to include classroom management practices, dress codes, and rules of expression, and what gets taught (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Blaisdell, 2020).

Anti-blackness in education is hidden through individual and institutional racial acts of psychological abuse such as racial gaslighting that maintain, perpetuate, and uphold white supremacy through normalizing the pathologizing of Black and Brown people who resist (Davis & Ernst, 2019). Racial gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation that makes Black and Brown people question their own experiences of racism (Davis & Ernst, 2019). Davis and Ernst (2019) emphasize the need for a framework to discuss racial gaslighting students experience through an interrogation of covert acts of racism in the classroom such as *microaggressions*.

Microaggressions are statements, actions, or incidents of discrimination that are indirect, subtle, or intentional acts of discrimination against members of a minoritized group. For example, in education this might look like an educator learning or mispronouncing student

names, setting low expectations for student learning outcomes or “dumbing-down” the curriculum, and denying the lived experiences of minoritized students by questioning the validity or credibility of their understanding of their communities (Blaisdell, 2020). Black and Brown student attempts to express or expose the microaggressions can leave students exposed to harm through the invalidation or denial of the person's experience through the use of three secondary microaggressions expressed verbally and one that can be expressed behaviorally (Davis & Ernst, 2019). Secondary microaggressions are defined as microaggressions that occur in response to the first microaggression the minoritized individual or group experiences by the teacher (Davis & Ernst, 2019). The first type of verbal microaggression is victim-blaming, defined as rhetoric that blames people for their own misfortunes in an individual or collective manner as a way of undermining the credibility of their experience. As a result, this type of microaggression blames victims for their interpretation and response to the negative behavior leading some people to use the victims' display of emotions against them through the reinforcement that the victim is “too angry” or “too emotional” despite the context of the situation or the rights of a person (Davis & Ernst, 2019). Last, a form of verbal microaggression is 'splaing' where an individual in the dominant white group speaks for the historically marginalized group about topics of oppression, white supremacy, race/racism, etc. (Davis & Ernst, 2019). Whitesplaining gives more weight to white perspectives through a white validation process through the white person giving their opinion as factual or absolute truth.

Education researchers (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2000) assert that white supremacy and racism operate in schools just like it does in society. For example, when discourse about Black and Brown students' performance in academic settings is discussed, researchers contend that the centrality of racism gets muted and reframed through a discourse of

race-neutral policies and practices, again, placing the blame for lack of success on Black and Brown students and their families, rather than on the system (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Valencia, 2010). Colorblind racist ideologies illuminate this dismissal of racial discrimination and racism through justifications that allow whites to hold power. Color Blind Racial Ideology (CBRI) provides a framework for understanding this racial dynamic (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). CBRI acknowledges that whites dismiss racial discrimination through the widely held, but false, belief that skin color does not play a role in policies, practices, and/or interpersonal interactions (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). CBRI also finds that racial discourses in society and schools perpetuate false narratives through racial colorblindness justifications such as victim blaming, viewing racial inequities as non-existent, and/or the minimization of overt racism (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). Bonilla-Silva (2011) organizes these colorblind ideologies in three different frames: *abstract liberalism*, *cultural racism*, and the *minimization of racism*.

Abstract liberalism is when people use political and economic liberalism arguments to excuse racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is explained as not existing but rather the result of the free market or free will (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). This tends to represent a laissez-faire view of inequities. Lewis and Diamond (2015) discuss the notion of opportunity hoarding in education which also acknowledges that U.S. whites have a history of hoarding opportunity and goods by establishing school systems that provide inferior education to Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans. Opportunity hoarding involves not only efforts to control access to the highest levels of education but also speaks to limiting access to the highest levels of education, such that Black and Brown students do not have the same quality of educational opportunity as their white peers (Lewis & Diamond, 2015). Opportunity hoarding in schools is

an example of abstract liberalism as it is based on rationalizing the lack of Black and Brown students in higher level courses as one of choice.

The *cultural racism* frame operationalizes the “blame the victim” ideology. Justification for racial inequities is explained as the result of the minoritized lack of effort, poor work ethic, or inappropriate values, rather than racism in the system. *Cultural racism* lives in deficit-based school cultures where it is routine practice to blame the failure of Black and Brown students on a poor work ethic, rather than on low quality teaching and learning.

Lastly, the frame of *minimization of racism* seeks to erase racism by blaming the culture, class, poverty, or lack of social capital –the reason racial inequities is anything but racism (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). Bonilla-Silva’s (2011) third frame, the *minimization of racism* presents in schools when teachers, who are majority white female (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011), do not believe that the social standing of minoritized people is a result of racial discrimination, but instead believe that culture, class, families history of enslavement, segregation, lack of social capital, poverty, and so forth impede the educational progress of Black and Brown students (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; McFarland et al, 2019).

The CBRI frames are important to understanding inequities in education as the frames identify justifications used by educators to explain away the teacher’s disposition toward the achievement of Black and Brown students. For example, deficit-based models of schooling perpetuate that Black and Brown students are deemed as deficient in intelligence, rather than blaming the educational system for ineffective instructional approaches and assessment practices (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Valencia, 2010). This situation furthers the false narrative that when Black and Brown students fail to meet academic and behavioral expectations, the students become the reason for failure, not the education system. These CBRI frames can be used to

explain the overshadowing of racial biases in education, such as, standardized testing racial achievement gaps, zero-tolerance policies that overrepresent Black students in negative behavior incidents, and the underrepresentation of Black and Brown students enrolled in advanced courses and gifted and talented programs (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Racial inequities reflect racist policies and practices embedded in the system that seek to maintain the privilege of whiteness in education while oppressing and marginalizing Black and Brown students.

Schools as Racialized Spaces

Organizational theory scholars argue that anti-blackness organizations are also designed under the premise that they are race neutral (Ray, 2019). In race neutral organizations, such as schools, Black and Brown bodies get perceived as criminal and thus are pathologized or identified at an earlier and higher rate than their white peers for special education, behavior violations, and removal from school (Blaisdell, 2020). Therefore, the presence of Blackness in the white normed school system is a perceived threat to educators. Ray (2019) argues that organizations, such as schools, are indeed racialized structures that create and perpetuate racial inequality. “Racialized organizations expand or inhibit agency, legitimate the unequal distribution of resources, treat whiteness as a credential, and decouple organizational procedures in ways that typically advantage dominant racial groups” (Ray, 2019, p. 46). It is also founded by organizational researchers that white organizations are seen as normal, however non-white organizations are stigmatized and viewed as deviations from the norm (Ray, 2019).

Naming the Harm to Black and Brown Students

The research of Valencia (2010) further speaks to the harm done to Black and Brown students as they labor in schools that perpetuate a history of oppression and marginalization. The historical constructs of a deficit-based system of education are blaming the victim, oppression,

pseudoscience, temporal changes, educability, and heterodoxy (Valencia, 2010). Each of these characteristics seeks to hold white dominant normed systems in place, while consciously or unconsciously marginalizing Black and Brown persons (Valencia, 2010). When the education system employs rhetoric, pedagogy, or practices that *blame the victim* it is based on the historical practice where those in power blame the innocent for their conditions or situation (Ryan, 1971). Valencia (2010) contends that the appeal of *blaming the victim* lies in its simplicity and safeness as an explanation. The author (Valencia, 2010) emphasizes that this strategy ignores the complexity of the organization which engages in inequitable and exclusionary practices. *Victim blamers* use the identification of social issues and comparative studies of disadvantaged and advantaged groups to define racial differences as the cause for social problems. An example is the historical practice of educators that attribute higher intellect and work ethic to students of higher socio-economic status while blaming students of poverty for lack of work ethic, discipline, and intellect (Valencia, 2010).

Oppression is the cruel and unjust use of authority and power to keep those that are not members of the white dominant norm in their place. In education, racial oppression is largely practiced through marginalization, rather than exploitation and is also a characteristic of deficit-based thinking (Valencia, 2010; Young, 2002). However, marginalization is a form of oppression that results in entire groups of people being expelled, excluded, deprived, and in extreme cases exterminated (Young, 2002). In American schools, Black and Brown students are more frequently marginalized in comparison to their white peers as they are often not proportionately represented in aspects of schooling; often overrepresented in negative aspects of schooling and underrepresented in the aspects of schooling that support social mobility (Young, 2002). At the root of oppression is the historical understanding that some people have power and wealth

because of the exploitation of other's labor (Young, 2002). The plantation owner's wealth built on the backs of free Black slave labor is one such example. When a group is powerless, they are situated to take orders from others with little to no authority to exert any authority (Young, 2002). Young (2000) also speaks to cultural imperialism as a form of oppression. This is when the dominant group is not able to see the privilege and power of their group yet feels comfortable stereotyping those that are different as the Other (Young, 2002). Lastly, systematic violence is a form of oppression. Members of marginalized groups must fear random, unprovoked acts on their person or property as a way of living. These acts are with the intent to humiliate, damage, or destroy the person (Young, 2002).

Pseudoscience is the process of promoting a false assumption or belief based on faulty or unsound scientific premises (Valencia, 2010). Guided by false assumptions, pseudoscience attempts to confirm the dominant groups thinking to support alleged white superiority (Valencia, 2010). In education, *pseudoscience* historically has been used to falsely explain achievement gaps as inherent intellectual differences between Black and white students. Furthering this characteristic of deficit-based thinking is the characteristic of *educability* which serves as a rationale to lower or modify expectations based on a false assumption that certain groups, such as Black and Brown students, are not as educable as their white peers (Valencia, 2010). This deficit-based characteristic of education provides the rationale for Black and Brown children to be marginalized in schools through the harmful practices of sorting by ability, remediation, labeling, segregating, suspending, expelling, and excluding.

Temporal change speaks to the use of current ideological and research climates to shape the deficit thinking climates. For example, American schooling is normed on success being measured by how quickly students acquire knowledge, rather than honoring that learning is

developmental and that it is normal for same age peers to learn at different rates. Overall, deficit-based models of schooling, seeks to maintain the dominant white system of schooling as the norm while continuing to marginalize and oppress non-white students.

Consequences of Harm

Black and Brown students experience more punitive school discipline, disproportionate representation in special education, lowered learning expectations, and lack of access to the highest levels of learning (Blaisdell, 2020; Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Educational research asserts that educational settings, such as schools, have oppressive racist practices that are often described as ways of making the school's daily operations easier for the white normed educators instead of these practices being identified as impositions of white supremacist power (Blaisdell, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2000). The ever-present white supremacist power in schools perpetuates harm through established practices and policies that are white normed. The voices of Black and Brown students, their parents, and their community are not included in school centric environments where both visible and invisible authority maintains the white normative (Khalifa, 2020).

Dillard et al. (2000) contends that indigenous knowledge and the spiritual voice of minoritized people are omitted in education through a lack of representation. The cultural norms of Black and Brown people such as spirituality, contemplation, and/or meditation are central to their worldview and their resistance to racism and white supremacy. Bettina Love (2016) echoes these same concerns as she argues that white supremacy and anti-blackness are upheld by educators' spirit-murdering pedagogies. Love (2016) argues that the 'Spiritual murdering pedagogies' desensitize Black and Brown students to the daily humiliation of implicit and explicit attacks on Black and Brown bodies, ideology, thought, voice, ways of knowing and

being, or movement. Daily spirit murdering pedagogies dehumanize and criminalize Black and Brown children from the moment that the students enter the school building through oppressive and marginalizing practices that seek to maintain the white dominant culture (Love, 2016).

The CBRI frames inform the disruption that needs to happen in education for all students, regardless of race, to receive an equitable education as afforded to their white peers (Neville, Gallardo, & Sue, 2015). It is thought that in the absence of this disruption, white supremacist ideologies and practices will maintain the status quo of oppression of Black and Brown students in education (Neville, Gallardo, & Sue, 2015). When Black and Brown students are oppressed, their experience of racism silences their voices and racial experiences. For Black and Brown students to develop a healthy racial identity they need an education where racial identity and racially diverse perspectives are valued and leveraged to improve and enhance learning (Neville, Gallardo, & Sue, 2015). Denial of race and racism in education perpetuates the myth that all children receive the same education. In addition, it allows educators to blame Black and Brown students for academic failure and behavior in schooling, while allowing white educators and students to live in ignorance, naiveté, and innocence, regarding their dominant privilege and power (Neville, Gallardo, & Sue, 2015).

Black and Brown students suffer from mental fatigue and physiological and psychological stress as a result of enduring the ongoing racial discrimination, also referred to in literature as racial battle fatigue (Andrews & Tuitt, 2013). Racial battle fatigue explains how Black and Brown students' academic self-concept, confidence, and mental efficacy become diminished by the ongoing exposure to racism (McGee & Stovall, 2015). Racial battle fatigue theorists argue that the energy that Black and Brown students spend fighting racial stereotypes and threats can have detrimental effects on students (McGee & Stovall, 2015). It is assumed, in

white dominant school cultures, that Black and Brown students should be able to have the capabilities to cope with racism; they should have high-levels of resilience, perseverance, and grit as solutions to counter the ongoing problem (McGee & Stovall, 2015). Education scholars contend that the use of such explanations for Black and Brown students' behavior are flawed because once again the educator is pathologizing the Black or Brown student as the problem, instead of executing a plan of action to combat racism and anti-blackness in school systems (McGee & Stovall, 2015). For example, McGee and Stovall (2015) found that high achieving Black students had higher levels of stress and anxiety from prolonged exposure to racism in society and in schooling which contributed to toxic coping skills that lead to further psychological harm.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the effects of Black and Brown students using active coping methods to combat racism they encounter on a daily basis (Ginwright, 2016; McGee & Stovall, 2015). Active coping methods include, confronting racist remarks, sharing experiences with other same-race colleagues or friends, looking for community support, feeling a sense of responsibility, adhering to a religious or spiritual practice/ideology, and having a critical understanding of how race/racism operate in U.S society, including education contexts (McGee & Stovall, 2015). These active coping strategies also are based on the understanding that it is better to confront or deal with racism when it occurs, rather than being passive (Ginwright, 2016; McGee & Stovall, 2015). The problem with this strategy is that it does not attempt to understand the cultural buffers or strengths that are needed for Black students to actively address racism, nor is it their responsibility (Ladson-Billings, 2014; McGee & Stovall, 2015). Additionally, there are adverse mental health outcomes for Black students that seek to actively cope with racism (McGee & Stovall, 2015). Active coping strategies are also

based on the expectation that the Black or Brown student has the “grit” to take on racism in their schools. Grit is often discussed as a racially neutral term that implies grit or hard work is an effective strategy for all students. Little research exists that supports the effectiveness of grit in mitigating the harmful effects of racial stereotypes, microaggressions, insults, and racial assaults that are commonplace in U.S. schooling and society (McGee & Stovall, 2015).

Whiteness in English Education

Education researchers (Berchini, 2019; Borsheim-Black, 2018; Brosheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Butler, 2017; Haddix, 2015; Johnson, 2018; Pasternak et al., 2017) argue that it would be helpful to examine how white educators make sense of their interactions with Black and Brown students when they are teaching. More specifically, Berchini (2019) studied how whiteness operates and is maintained in English education classrooms. Berchini’s (2019) study looked at how English educators are complicit in maintaining racist structures in the classroom by failing to respond to or address topics like race/ism, diversity, and oppression. Berchini (2019) argues that white privilege frameworks are at the core of how whiteness and inequality get reproduced in English education.

In 2017, the NCTE Black Caucus released a statement urging the field of English Education to re-imagine a curriculum that would work against the dominant white cultural frames and literacy practices often found in the traditional English classroom using the Critical Race English Education framework (Baker-Bell et al. 2017). Critical Race English Education (CREE) pedagogy calls for English education to transform by embracing Blackness, rather than rejecting it. The purpose of the CREE framework is to push teachers to unlearn, engage, and transform conversations about "anti-Blackness, anti-Brownness, homophobia, and other forms of xenophobia" in English education (Baker-Bell et al. 2017, p. 123). To accomplish this, CREE

calls for an examination of how language and literacy promote existing power relations, where whites are advantaged in English education, while students of color are marginalized or oppressed. When the white dominated English curriculum and instruction does not affirm the different cultures, languages and literacies of the students and people in society, it is reproducing damaging narratives that can lead to further harm for non-whites (Baker-Bell et al. 2017). It is the responsibility of English Educators and English teacher preparation programs to continue to strive towards creating spaces that honor the cultural backgrounds of their students (Baker-Bell et al. 2017).

Additionally, a position statement by The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2022) echoed Berchini's concerns and advocated for the use of antiracist pedagogy in English teachers' classrooms curriculum and instructional practices as a solution to combat the white dominant curriculum. This position statement called for all teachers of English to undo institutional racism in their pedagogies and practices and move toward English education as a place of racial literacy. According to NCTE's (2022) position statement, racially literate English educators interrogate the role of white supremacy in education. To do this, NCTE asserts that teachers are called to reflect on their positions in society, curricula, assessments, discourse, and classroom practices contribute to advantaging white students while marginalizing students of color. Further, the statement emphasizes the need for English teachers to reflect on how their racialized perspective on expectations, discipline, and assessments affects the wellbeing and self-actualization of Black and Brown children (NCTE, 2022). The development of the English teacher's racial literacy is intended to enable critical self-reflection on racist views and how this impacts the type of education a Black or Brown student will receive in their classroom in regard

to student expectations, curriculum that may be reproducing racism, and racial stereotyping of students leads to low school expectations (NCTE, 2022).

Teachers in English education need to have experiences that will prepare them for the diversity of the students in society and in their classrooms, therefore, they need to have racial, cultural, linguistic, sexual, and economic competency (Berchini, 2019; Brosheim-Black, 2018; Brosheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Butler, 2017; Haddix, 2015; Johnson, 2018; Pasternak et al., 2017). Boyd et al.(2009) asserts that one of the indicators of a quality literacy instruction that shows a positive correlation to teacher success is their preparation to teach diverse students (Boyd et al. 2009). When English teachers are able to differentiate students' assets, rather than deficits, traditional, white normed classrooms can be disrupted. To be a culturally responsive English teacher, it is important to be prepared and capable of drawing on a student's cultural and linguistic knowledge to support instruction (NCTE, 2022).

English Educator Culturally-Based Pedagogy

Research shows the positive impact that urban teachers have when equipped with an understanding of the cultural context of their students' lives (Evans & Gunn, 2011). There is a growing need for teachers to learn how to employ culturally based pedagogies that can address the needs of the culturally diverse classroom. Research in English teacher pedagogy suggests that culturally based teaching practices have only led to small gains in changing the face of education while other culturally based researchers argue for its effectiveness (Brosheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Sarigianides, 2019).

There are varied definitions and uses of the term “cultural” in describing education pedagogies and practices intended to be responsive to all students (Pasternak et al., 2020). Hammond (2015) describes culture as three different levels: surface, shallow, and deep. The first

two types of culture, surface and shallow, relate to the cultural rules and traditions that are accepted in society. Deep culture refers to the funds of knowledge that are essential for community well-being through the lived histories and cultural histories of Black and Brown students (Hammond, 2015). Similarly, Pasternak et al., (2020) argue that culture is defined by the perceptions of sociocultural, political events, and discourse that led to the development of culturally based frameworks. Culture research shows that teachers need to understand the cultural context of the Black and Brown students' lives through the emphasis of the asset nature of the cultural experiences through the use of culturally-based practices (Pasternak et al, 2020).

Ladson-Billings (2000) defined culture, in the field of education, as culturally relevant pedagogy, a method of teaching that empowers students in an intellectual, social, emotional, and political way using cultural references to teach students knowledge skills, and attitudes. Culturally relevant pedagogy helps students understand their own culture and cultural knowledge as an asset to interpret the world around the students (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Ladson-Billings (2010) outlined three foundational components of culturally relevant pedagogy: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness, all of which respect the earlier definition of the word culture (Hammond, 2015).

Paris and Alim (2016) brings more specificity to beliefs of culturally relevant educators by describing ways in which they reflect differently from the traditional educators. Culturally relevant educators (1) can identify their own privileged and marginalized positions in the system and understand the systemic nature of racialized and intersectional inequalities in the system; (2) have an understanding that education participates in and often perpetuates racial disparities, though it can also disrupt them; (3) have a knowledge of the ways deficit approaches have historically and continually perpetuated racialized inequalities, and an understanding of asset

approaches and how to disrupt them; (4) have an understanding that cultural assets improve academic achievement (5) have an understand that humanizing student relationships of dignity and care are fundamental to teaching and learning of Black and Brown students (Paris & Alim, 2017).

Problematic to culturally based pedagogy is that educational researchers find fault in the implementation of culturally based practices in the classroom (Sleeter, 2017). Sleeter (2017) argues that the superficial interpretation of culturally-based pedagogy employed by teachers results in ineffective classroom practices that manifest in different ways: cultural celebration, trivialization of culturally responsive pedagogy, essentializing culture, and substituting culture for political analysis. In addition, Hollie (2012) argues that culturally based teaching has become a superficial “cliche” " that leads to incongruity in the implementation of the practice in districts, schools, and classrooms, therefore making effectiveness hard to measure. Ladson-Billings (2014) stated that she was dissatisfied with how teachers have translated culturally responsive pedagogy into superficial notions of culture and limited understandings of culture. For example, the emphasis of 'cultural celebration' by teachers separates culture from the academic instruction, rather than embedding cultural learning experiences into the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Sleeter (2017) explains that the superficial experiences of culture in the classroom ignore the issues of power and equity that are maintained, perpetuated, and influenced by educators and the system (Sleeter, 2017). In addition, the trivialization of culturally-based pedagogy reduces the high-level learning experiences that are a result of teaching and learning that connects the student's community and culture to the learning every day (Sleeter, 2017). Sleeter (2017) further argues that teachers also assume fixed and homogenous conceptions of cultural characteristics of Black and Brown students, which signal an anti-Black ideology that affects Black and Brown

students. For example, when educators hold negative stereotypes about the academic abilities of Black and Brown students, it has been shown to influence underperformance for Black and Brown students (Steel et. al., 2010).

Education researchers argue that the curriculum that English teachers and other educators currently use reflects a Eurocentric and colorblind racist ideology that perpetuates sameness between racial differences, instead of emphasizing the cultural assets and differences amongst students (Thein et. al., 2014; Brosheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019). In English education, racism is perpetuated in the curriculum through the Eurocentric messages in the language, literacy, and literature historically taught at the expense of Black and Brown students. There is a growing need for teachers to learn how to employ culturally based pedagogies that can address the needs of the culturally diverse classroom (NCTE, 2022). The research of Haddix (2015) contends that discussions of fiction and multicultural literature in the English classroom can serve as a strategy for increasing English teachers' racial literacy development. Additional research suggests English teachers have an obligation to dismantle narratives, practices, and curriculum that upholds white supremacist pedagogies and replace them with culturally-based strategies (Brosheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Haddix 2016, Pasternak et al., 2017). Although English educator pre-service teachers may learn the appropriate racial discourse, pedagogies, or dispositions required of them to be racially literate educators, this doesn't always translate into practice in the English classroom (Pasternak et al., 2017).

Healing Centered Pedagogy

Another pedagogy that has been introduced into classrooms intended to raise the achievement of Black and Brown students is called trauma-sensitive pedagogy. Rather than centering culture, this pedagogy centers the socio-emotional needs of the child as integral to the

teaching and learning experience (Ginwright, 2016). This pedagogy is built on the premise that traumas may impede students' abilities to learn. Teachers who implement trauma informed practices use holistic approaches to address the emotional, social, ethical, and academic needs of students in an integrated format for supporting Black and Brown students (Ginwright, 2016). According to Ginwright (2016), trauma sensitive teaching integrates teachers' knowledge of student stressors to create a learning environment that will help students learn, is welcoming to students, and that is supportive to student needs. Problematic to trauma sensitive pedagogy is that trauma is situated, and maintained by the traditional normed system of educators that view trauma as something that can be fixed or relegated in the student, not the system (Ginwright, 2016).

Healing-centered frameworks and pedagogies are a direct response to criticism of trauma-sensitive pedagogy that incorporates indigenous healing, activism, mindfulness, culturally based teaching, and indigenous ways of knowing and healing (Ginwright, 2016). The concept of healing-centered frameworks and pedagogies reflects a need to decolonize education research methodology against the traditional white supremacist practices in educational systems through the centering of practices that bring hope to Black and Brown communities (Ginwright, 2016). A significant point of this ideology is that healing and restoration are crucial to Black and Brown communities thriving in hostile environments (Ginwright, 2016). A vital feature of this work is an integration of indigenous cultures' long-standing practices of healing that help preserve their cultures (Ginwright, 2016).

As explained by Ginwright (2016), the concept of healing-centered pedagogies reflects a need to decolonize the white supremacist practices in educational systems by incorporating indigenous healing that is to collectively heal and build hope. The overarching pattern of these

healing pedagogies is that healing/restoration is crucial to Black and Brown students' educational environments by embracing more holistic approaches to help communities process and recover from racism as well as other institutionalized forms of oppression (Ginwright, 2016).

Ginwright (2015) argues that a framework for healing must include “healing justice” to transform the educational institutions and relationships in the educational system that are responsible for the harm. People who work towards healing justice have an awareness that prolonged exposure to trauma can create changes to communities and social changes (Ginwright, 2010). Therefore, the teacher’s job in a “healing justice” classroom is to take ownership for their role in creating a community that promotes well-being (Ginwright, 2010). Ginwright (2010) describes the process for building individual capacity and the capacity of people in the communities to engage in radical healing (Ginwright, 2010). First, it must be acknowledged that it is the social and socio-political context in the school and outside of the school as the explanation for the student’s emotional state (Ginwright, 2010). Secondly, radical healing is dependent on the collective’s capacity to develop a sense of belonging to the community (Ginwright, 2010). The third level social-emotional practices must be developed by using mindfulness or reflective practices that center the experiences of Black and Brown people’s social conditions that include building awareness, consciousness, and sustainable action to change the systemic conditions that are impeding social emotional growth (Ginwright, 2010). Ginwright (2016) theorizes that without a sustained daily reflective practice that encourages an analysis of these issues, students are susceptible to the internalization of white supremacist messages, toxic behaviors that create self-blame for not fixing the conditions. Lastly, the collective nature of well-being is viewed through the lens of well-being as the result of harm

reduction through changes made in the socio-political context of the system of schooling (Ginwright, 2016).

Mindfulness as a Pedagogy

Eastern mindfulness originated from ancient eastern and Buddhist religious thinking and meditative practices and has the goal of removing suffering (Bishop et al. 2004; Wilde, 2019; Nhất Hạnh, 1987). Mindfulness was introduced to western culture by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990) who defined it as learning how to pay attention in a certain way without judgment (Bishop et al. 2004; Ford, 2019; Nhất Hạnh, 1987). Kabat-Zinn founded the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School which is where he merged eastern mindfulness practice with western science and developed Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which has been crucial to the popularity of mindfulness in American culture and its use in the field of education (Ackerman, 2017). The clinical application of MBSR is described as a group program designed to treat patients struggling with life's difficulties and physical and/or mental illness (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). While Kabat-Zinn's (2005), original model was based on Buddhism, his transition to the MBSR model was also a shift from a religion to a secular approach, which emphasized mindfulness as a universal approach that could be used across many disciplines, to include the field of education.

Kabat-Zinn (2005) defines mindfulness as a reflective process that happens through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, without judgment. In modern-day, others describe mindfulness as an awareness, process, and/or practice of freeing the mind (Bishop et al. 2004; Wilde et al., 2019; Nhất Hạnh, 1987). Overall, mindfulness is the ability to free one's mind to cultivate present moment awareness (Bishop et al. 2004; Kuyken et al. 2013; Rempel, 2014). There are two central tenets of mindfulness: the *cultivation of present moment awareness* and

insight meditation. The first tenant, *cultivation of present moment awareness*, trains students to choose an object to focus on and return to it when they get distracted from developing awareness. This object can be as simple as the students' breath, an item, or even music. Through sustained practice, the students learn how to focus on the present moment and to limit the distractions from stimulants outside of their mind (Bishop et al. 2004; Wilde et al., 2019; Nhất Hạnh, 1987). When a thought passes through the student's mind, the idea is acknowledged, and then the student's focus is brought back to the item. The practice of attention regulation helps mental processing so that students develop the habits that distract them from their learning (Bishop et al. 2004; Wilde et al., 2019; Nhất Hạnh, 1987). The distractions that lower the engagement in the present moment habits include rumination, concern for past or future, anxiety, and excessive preoccupation with thoughts (Bishop et al. 2004; Kuyken et al. 2013).

The second tenant, *insight meditation*, trains students to attend to the thoughts that arise in the stream of consciousness without becoming affected by those thoughts or reacting to them. Students are encouraged to recognize the emotional and cognitive patterns of their consciousness. Students are taught to understand the cycle of thoughts and feelings as they arise in the present moment, then notice the sensations of judgment that arise, and then notice the feelings they have developed around each thought (Bishop et al. 2004). This process allows for a deeper understanding of individual consciousness through encouragement to investigate, unpack or become curious about those thoughts and life. Insight meditation's overall intent is to move from cognitive processing like intellectual effort thinking, reasoning, and remembering to non-cognitive experiential processing like motivation, integrity, and interpersonal interactions. The overall goal of this type of meditation is through the insights cultivated; the student would be able to shift their way of being if necessary.

Mindfulness practices in schools are also grounded in the concept of striving to eliminate ruminating thoughts that lead to pain, suffering, and anxiety (Carboni et al., 2013). Advocates of mindfulness practice in classrooms practice argue that teaching students' mindfulness skills and strategies can lead to increases in on-task behavior, healthy responses to stress, lower cortisol levels, lower reports of self-harm, and prosocial behavior which would result in better student performance (Carboni, et al., 2013; Felver et al., 2017). Many of the programs focused on mindfulness instruction that taught students how to detach from the negative thoughts which lead to decreases in anxiety plus improvements in depressed moods. Some mindfulness studies also report a decrease in the rumination of negative thoughts, depressive symptoms, and negative emotional reactivity in the classroom setting (Mendelson et al., 2010; Saltzman, 2014; Tilahun & Vezzuto, 2014). Mindful Schools (2010) defines mindfulness as the ability of the student to maintain a moment-by-moment awareness of their thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment with openness and curiosity (Mindful Schools, 2010). This includes attending to and noticing sensory experiences such as, sound, touch, smell, or taste, thoughts, and emotions without reacting (Mindful Schools, 2010).

There are two different mindfulness approaches commonly used in classrooms that are aligned to Kabat-Zinn's (2005) Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) model which is an individual based program model, and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), which is a group-based mindfulness program. Research finds that both MBSR and MBCT programs are associated with decreased stress levels in students, which can have positive effects on students' overall wellbeing, which then theorizes that students can better perform in the classroom (Bluth et al. 2015; Kuyken et al., 2013; Tilahun & Vezzuto, 2014). This decrease in stress levels is attributed to mindfulness practices that cultivate student awareness of one's bodily sensations,

their surroundings, and the environment when stressful situations occur (Bluth et al. 2015; Kuyken et al., 2013; Tilahun & Vezzuto, 2014). The practice of mindfulness in the classroom means that students engage in regular mindfulness practices, such as body scans, sitting, movement, and walking meditations. These awareness-building activities are a way to teach students self-regulation during highly emotive times in their school day, which has stress reduction as a by-product (Bluth et al. 2015; Kuyken et al., 2013).

Mindfulness practice in the classroom has also shown increased metacognitive awareness, or the awareness of one's own thoughts and student learning outcomes through increasing the understanding of one's thought process (Henricksen et al., 2020). The theory behind the increase in metacognition is that if students learn to become aware of their consciousness and learn not to internalize all of their experiences, they can learn to better cope with stress, depression, and anxiety (Henricksen et al., 2020). Mindfulness has also been shown to improve cognitive performance, self-concept, and engagement for participants who learn non-attachment through the practice of metacognition (Zenner et al., 2014; Schonert-Reichel et al. 2015; Felver et al., 2014). Similar studies also found increases in emotional wellbeing and self-compassion among the student study participants (Viafora et al., 2014, Edwards et al., 2014). The focus of mindfulness practices then is on changing student's relationship with the inner thoughts through an emphasis on the ideology that emotions do not represent reality but are just thoughts (Zenner et al., 2014; Schonert-Reichel et al. 2015; Felver et al., 2014).

Interrogating Mindfulness's Success in Education

Researchers in the field of mindfulness education advocate for the use of mindfulness in education, but caution that teachers need to interrogate the type of mindfulness curriculum used and the teacher's pedagogy to ensure that the messages in the curriculum do not further harm

students (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Keng et. al., 2011; Spear, 2014). Critics argue that mindfulness practices in schools teach students how to develop individual management tools to cope with inequalities in a broken education system (Forbes, 2019). Teaching students' individual management tools is problematic because it has the potential to perpetuate deficit models of schooling that look to fix the student, rather than the system (Forbes, 2019; Valencia, 2010). Detrimentially, mindfulness practices directly blame the student and teaches students how to blame themselves (Forbes, 2019). For example, students are taught to look within to fix problems, when the environment has not been vetted as a contributor to the problem (Forbes, 2019).

Britton et al. (2014)'s research interrogates the effectiveness of mindfulness programming curriculum integrated into an African history course offered to 6th grade Black and Brown students. The treatment group in this study participated in mindfulness meditation within the history curriculum, and the control group received only the curriculum. The researcher found that the intervention group had lower levels of self-harm and suicidal urges compared to the control group according to a clinical psychology scale (Britton et al., 2014). Surprisingly, the control group showed growth in lowering the amount of self-harm and suicidal urges despite not receiving any mindfulness meditation sessions (Britton et al., 2014). Given that the control group also had some success, the researchers questioned if they could make a correlation between the mindfulness practice and the lack of self-reported harm (Britton et al., 2014). Additionally, students who completed the mindfulness segment held a better perception of the curriculum of the class including the program's overall credibility. The authors of this study emphasized that education practitioners should use a mindfulness model that is culturally responsive which

commands a cultural match to the student populations' cultural background and lived experience (Britton et al., 2014).

When questioned about the success of mindfulness practices in school, Kabat-Zinn (2013) said he is cautious about saying that mindfulness practices and traditions lead to higher levels of morality or better behavior from the students. Kabat-Zinn (2013) warns that educators who use mindfulness in classrooms continue to perpetuate the narrative that students need to "pay attention" instead of addressing the bigger question: which is, why do students lack attention in schools? Instead of mindfulness being used as a tool to help students cope with the bigger issues in their life, mindfulness has become another misused tool for social-emotional learning (SEL), self-awareness, and self-management, in that it again perpetuates an emphasis on student responsibility for systemic problems (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Kabat-Zinn warns that the emphasis on student individual responsibility deflects from educational questioning through deflecting issues onto the student's lack of "mindfulness," instead of interrogating the systemic conditions of the school that also contribute to the student's overall well-being (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). He argues that much of the confusion around the purpose of mindfulness may be attributed to the removal of the mission or ethical principles such as kindness, empathy, compassion, gratitude, joy in the good fortune of others, inclusiveness, acceptance, and equanimity in modern day mindfulness teachings (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Kabat-Zinn (2015) also argues that a weakness in mindfulness-based research for students is that the interventions continue to promise sound effects for adult populations but there are still limited treatments for student populations as much of the research on effectiveness focuses on adult populations.

Semple et al., (2017) also critiqued mindfulness use in schools due to a lack of rigorous standards and quantitative data for mindfulness evaluation . Schools that practice mindfulness as

a part of their curriculum report having students who are "primed" to pay attention and are more aware of when they need to pay attention, but the authors of this study found that none of the forms of mindfulness used in schools evaluated mindfulness outcomes with rigorous standards (Semple & Droutman, 2016). The mindfulness techniques used also did not have a longitudinal study to ensure that the programs worked with the other initiatives within the building (Semple & Droutman, 2016). In many areas where mindfulness is used, educators are using it to solve all of the students' problems (physiological, psychological, behavioral, and social) without looking at the neurological changes with quantifiable metrics.

Hyland (2017) argues that one key issue with mindfulness in schools is the prescriptive nature of mindfulness practices, which states that more mindfulness is needed for students who are struggling, making it easy to create a deficit minded understanding of Black and Brown student behaviors. Further, these critiques are devoid of educational systems' impact on student behaviors. Hyland (2017) states that teachers should be critical of whom education systems support, victimize, and marginalize while engaging in mindfulness activities. For example, if students do not achieve a certain goal, they are prescribed more mediation time because they are labeled as less mindful instead of a criticism of the teachers' practices, the curriculum, school environment or other factors (Hyland, 2009). Hyland (2017) asserts that K-12 schools should do investigations to analyze the correlation between the use of mindfulness interventions in schools and the critical incidents that happen in school through the analysis of critical incidents in the building, student writing, concept mapping, examination of student life histories/histories of others, repertory grids, and seeing if this also increases student participation in social action in communities (Hyland, 2009).

Warren and Wray-Lake (2017) question whether Kabat-Zinn's initial mindfulness program or adult study can be recreated with the high school or adolescents, thus they advocate for mindfulness practices that include scaffolding for different age groups. The researchers (Warren & Wray-Lake, 2017) assert that the field of education and mindfulness has yet to prove that there is a correlation between a person's age and the amount of mindfulness that can be quantified in a pre or post mindfulness intervention program study. The lack of correlative data warrants further investigations into the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors in their participation in mindfulness programming, which are commonly said to influence students' mindfulness levels (Warren & Wray-Lake, 2017). In the study, Warren, and Wray-Lake (2017) interviewed parents and students, using the self-determination scale, and value-behavior concordance (VBC) measurements for intrinsic motivation for the analysis of the students' responses pre- and post-mindfulness instruction (Warren & Wray-Lake, 2017). The researchers found a positive correlation between the mindfulness practices and the students' intrinsic motivation, but extrinsic motivation did not increase after participating in the programming. Warren and Wray-Lake (2017) argue that students that self-reported higher levels of mindfulness were less likely to act on their extrinsic motivations like achievement, power-resources, power dominance, because they deemed those as less desirable traits. Students internalized the idea that displaying those "extrinsic" behaviors are negative, because it can make other students feel bad (Warren & Wray-Lake, 2017). With the diverse population that schools serve, it is important to consider whether or not these practices are culturally responsive to the population's unique needs (Warren & Wray-Lake, 2017).

Another study by Scheinman et al., (2018) focused on whole school mindfulness programs, examined how mindfulness can be used in K-12 schools as an intervention for

students when integrated in the school's daily curriculum. The study conducted included 646 students aged 9-12 through a whole-school approach, wherein all students in the building received mindfulness instruction for two years, then had a year where the school didn't have any implementation of a mindfulness curriculum to compare the impact of the mindfulness work post-treatment (Scheinman et al., 2018). Scheinman et al., (2018) argues that the term "mindful" had been co-opted as a training tool to teach the "appropriate" physical behaviors throughout the school day such as staying awake in class, keeping hands to yourself, talking volume, or standing in line in the hallway instead of the original intention of promoting mental awareness or presence. In the study (Scheinman et al., 2018), students learned how to be "mindful" in line, during instruction, etc., but there was little contemplative work or instruction to investigate how the students' inability to display the appropriate physical behaviors is connected to their emotions or mindfulness curriculum (Scheinman et al., 2018). The research found that girls were more likely to apply the mindfulness techniques or strategies to their everyday lives than boys (Scheinman et al., 2018). One limitation of the study was that there was little significant data to state that the mindfulness intervention study was responsible for the little change in the students' behavior versus other variables like curriculum, age, and social environment (Scheinman et al., 2018). Another limitation was that they didn't show the effects on the students learning in the classroom for the student population served in the study (Scheinman et al., 2018).

Teachers' Professional Development and Mindfulness Curriculum

Montgomery and Bergman (2017) advocate for teachers who use mindfulness to participate in professional development focused on effective mindfulness implementation and daily personal practice. The researchers (Montgomery & Bergman, 2017) emphasize that the structure of teacher professional development must actively work to create teachers who have

higher levels of emotional intelligence and regulation by emphasizing that teachers also participate in sustained or daily mindfulness practice (Montgomery & Bergman, 2017). The authors argue that teachers who have a sustained mindfulness practice can disrupt other harmful pedagogies by embracing their emotions in relation to the school environment (Montgomery & Bergman, 2017). To do this, teachers must first resist reflective practice that encourages personal achievement and instead focus on collaborative reflective practice which encourages action by planning, writing, and reflecting together, to disrupt the ongoing harm to Black and Brown students (Montgomery & Bergman, 2017). Additionally, researchers contend that the teachers' continued mindfulness professional learning should create opportunities for teachers to tap into their own emotions and bodily responses in conversations with/in ideology, power, and oppression so teachers can change practices that harm Black and Brown students (Montgomery & Bergman, 2017). The authors theorize that when teachers get in touch with their own body's reaction, it will allow them to learn how to teach students to grapple with power systems' effect and advocate for changes (Montgomery & Bergman, 2017). Educators must be ready to support their students by modeling the appropriate responses by creating a welcoming environment which will allow for students to communicate their needs (Montgomery & Bergman, 2017).

Similarly, Berlina (2016) argues as mindfulness initiatives have become more common and more visible, mindfulness teacher education should move to more of an engaged pedagogy that provides a framework to help Black and Brown students unlearn systemic oppression in their teaching education in what she calls an anti-oppressive pedagogy (Berlina, 2016). Integration of an anti-oppression pedagogy seeks to bring change to the politics of educational systems (Berlina, 2016). She posits that educators need to understand how to implement mindfulness into the traditional school system through improving teachers' social-emotional skills, ideology, and

perspective on student behaviors through emphasizing frameworks that dismantle oppressive teaching practices (Berlina, 2016). She argues that teachers need to embrace the varied forms of student resistance as informing instead of punitive, so that teachers may address the concerns of students leading to changes in the classroom (Berlina, 2016).

Jennings (2015) argue that in addition to mindfulness training, it is imperative that mindfulness teachers learn how to implement mindfulness programming from a place of personal reflection prior to applying it to students. As a result of the sustained practice, the researchers contend that this type of professional development and/or training teachers will prepare them to use mindfulness curriculum, pedagogy, and practices in their classroom (Jennings, 2015). The researchers posit it would help if teachers engaged in their own mindfulness practice to experience developing their own coping mechanisms and healthy ways of dealing with stress, instead of focusing on student behaviors (Jennings & Siegel, 2015; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Meiklejohn et al., 2012). In the literature, personal teacher practice of mindfulness is an essential part of the effectiveness of mindfulness wherein the best practices reflect teachers sustain at least an 8-week training for 6 hours a day, group mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) class, then 30-45 minutes of daily formal practice (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Khoury et al. 2015). Other research suggests that there are benefits in having short-term mindfulness training for twenty minutes a day for five days (Tang et al. 2007).

The teachers who sustained mindful practice in their daily lives enhanced their emotional self-regulation and had higher levels of adaptability with students or the ability to adapt to student needs in the classroom while teaching (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). Teachers who practice mindfulness can increase their self-efficacy, manage classroom behavior, and have better positive relationships with students (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). The relationships and classroom

management that the teachers gain through this study lead to higher student achievement (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). The authors provide a rationale for offering mindfulness to increase teachers practice mindfulness and to create a better connection to the students inside and out of the classroom (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). The practice in the classroom then becomes more student-focused with an emphasis on present-centered learning objectives instead of past/future-focused (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). One of the challenges is that there isn't a current model for mindfulness-based programs with K-12 students that allows for a comparison of student outcomes (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). The authors conclude by stating that there needs to be a measurement that looks at only the student mindfulness outcomes (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

Schwimmer and McDonough (2018) argued that teacher training of mindfulness should move beyond using mindfulness as a behavior management tool to manage student behavior because some teachers use it as a disciplinary tool, which causes more harm to students (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). Students observed in the study learned how to be "mindful" in line or during instruction to keep students from creating excess noise or disruptions (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). The researchers note in classes there was little instruction for mindfulness practices (like meditation, journaling, or body-scans) or opportunities to investigate if the students' unsavory behaviors are related to the teachers' instruction or pedagogy (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). Instead, the students were reminded to be "more mindful," but the teachers moved onto other lessons (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). Teachers observed in this study which taught mindfulness strategies frequently had higher levels of success in the classroom (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). The authors also found that mindfulness was used to make students sit silently instead of allowing students to write or connect to the materials in their coursework (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). A similar

study, Renshaw et al. (2015), echoes Swimmer's (2012) findings and emphasizes that teachers identify the aims of using mindfulness curriculum before implementing it in the classroom or as a school-wide initiative. The researchers provide a call to action for educators to reflect on the type of intervention, desired group, the level of intervention delivery/frequency, and the type of problem the teacher faces before using mindfulness in the classroom (Jennings, 2015).

Stress Regulation

Researchers Kuyken et al. (2013) found that mindfulness is more effective in the reduction of stress for teachers when it is implemented into the school socialization structure. This study used the MiSP Method otherwise known as the 'mindfulness in schools' program from the United Kingdom as a way of helping the students in the class cope with stress (Kuyken et al., 2013). Although the students enjoyed the mindfulness strategies, the researchers also understood that the teachers did not use mindfulness as an intervention but only as self-selected practice or enrichment (Kuyken et al., 2013). The school used mindfulness practices as the daily operations of all classes and encouraged teachers to embed mindfulness practices as a part of the class structure (Kuyken et al., 2013). One limitation of the study is that some students may already come to school with higher levels of resilience or mindfulness making them so it is unclear if more was developed as a result of the mindfulness techniques integrated in the school day (Kuyken et al., 2013). Additionally, the researchers noted another limitation of the study is the other variables such as time of year, or teacher use of a culturally-based curriculum which should be considered when determining the success of a the mindfulness programming (Kuyken et al., 2013).

Other studies focusing on mindfulness in education examine the effectiveness of mindfulness as an intervention in classroom settings to decrease student stress levels (Kuyken et

al., 2013; Zapolski et al. 2019; Desbordes et al. 2014). Through this body of literature, researchers interrogate the existing mindfulness research and the limitations for Black and Brown student populations regarding decreasing stress. Much of the research regarding this topic is limited to college and adult populations leading many to call for more research on implementing mindfulness with Black and Brown students (Kuyken et al., 2013; Tucker et al., 2013; Desbordes et al. 2014). For example, Zapolski et al. (2019) found mindfulness has positive effects on limiting the stress and anxiety levels for Black and Brown students on college campuses when combined with psychotherapy throughout 8-weeks. The use of direct racialized messages that reflect the students' cultural identity or are culturally responsive to the students' needs and the frequency of the mindfulness treatment is significant to decreasing the student stress levels (Tucker et al., 2013). The researchers caution against a mindfulness curriculum that teaches students to cope emotionally with the existing educational system by using this psychological tool instead of raising critical questions about the educational system itself and acting on those conditions (Tucker et al., 2013). Students who had a teacher who promoted the values of the dominant culture and color-blind ideologies through the curriculum didn't have the same gains as the students who had teachers who implemented both through critical discourse (Tucker et al., 2013). Students who had a higher level of racial socialization were more alert to their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations (Tucker et al., 2013). High levels of racial socialization also created an issue where students couldn't accept the messages of acceptance versus judgment, suggesting that racism may not be fully related to the same parts of the brain that process the other messages (Tucker et al., 2013).

Mindfulness, Dominant Racial Frames, and Racism

Mindfulness researchers argue that mindfulness perpetuates dominant racial frames and racism through interrogating the use of silence and color-blind messages (Berlina, 2016). For example, the use of silence (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Castagno, 2008; Fine, 1987) has long been identified as a tool with which whites legitimate and defend their white privileges, thereby "impede[ing] movement toward progressive, anti-racist education" (Haviland, 2008, p. 40). Castagno (2008) examined how teachers respond to the topics of diversity and power, arguing that white educators silence and ignore topics related to race, diversity, and oppression out of discomfort and a desire to maintain "the established order" (Castagno 2008, p. 315). In this study, teachers are silent about race and racism and demand silence from their students. Teachers, she found, "exhibit an overwhelming aversion to acknowledgments that race exists or matters" (Castagno, 2008, p. 329). Furthermore, Castagno interprets silence as a form of color muteness—how teachers "delete" (Castagno, 2008 p. 31), that is, mute and silence words on race. Teachers' silence(s), in the end, legitimizes whiteness (Castagno, 2008). The author argues that the prescription is significant, concluding that "in [teachers'] prescriptions for color muteness, educators can maintain the legitimacy of meritocracy, which serves to protect the status quo and the interests of white people and communities" (Castagno 2008 ,p. 329). Whether teachers' silence, silencing, or evasive behaviors are un/intentional Castagno (2008) asserts that stopping these pedagogies begins with an interrogation of teacher pedagogy and practices.

Womack and Sloan (2017) investigated the connection between mindfulness and the racialized socialization messages given to Black and Brown students. The study looked at 300 Black and Brown college students' perception of the racial socialized messages that the students received or lack thereof in the academic setting. Racial socialized messages can help offset the

negative effects of racial content or stressors that foster a connection to the common heritage that alleviates the negative effect of perceived racism directed towards the Black or Brown student (Womack et al., 2017). Womack et al, (2017) argues that when Black and Brown students learn coping strategies with racialized socialized messages this can lead to lower levels of stress, but he studies warns that without a full understanding of each one of the messages significances embedded the students cannot fully develop traits of self-efficacy (Womack et al., 2017). Instead, the students develop maladaptive behaviors which promote the values of the dominant culture and color-blind ideologies (Womack et al., 2017). The quantitative analysis showed that students who had a higher level of racial socialization were already more alert to their own thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations (Womack et al., 2017). Students who had high levels of racial socialization couldn't accept the messages of mindful acceptance without judgment suggesting that racism may not operate in the brain as a spectrum of experience (Womack et al., 2017). The authors suggest that these moments might not fit into the mindfulness practice, but more research is needed in this area (Womack et al., 2017).

Polinska (2018) examined the history of mindfulness and some of the challenges associated with mindfulness meditation used as an intervention for white ignorance about the social conditions of historically minoritized groups. Polinska found that white, affluent females were the highest demographic trained in mindfulness strategies, but white participants lack the culturally responsive practice to implement it to serve the communities the teachers aim to change (Polinska, 2018). Through using recent work on the epistemology of white ignorance wherein white people perpetuate ignorance for their lack of racial literacy instead of taking personal accountability for their actions when micro and/or microaggressions occur (Polinska, 2018). Through this examination, he argues that prejudice in institutions impacts Blacks and

whites through both a physical manifestation and a psychological manifestation that maintains inequality (Polinska, 2018). The author concludes that there are certain strategies that maintain white ignorance that facilitates this knowledge wherein white mindfulness practitioners are not held accountable for their knowledge acquisition or practice (Polinska, 2018). If used without a racialized lens, mindfulness's messages can project a colonized viewpoint on the bodies of Black and Brown students to support the pathologizing of student behaviors, ways of knowing, and being that do not fit into the dominant white script (Polinska, 2018). Many researchers take issue with the use of silence in mindfulness combined which has been identified as a tool of white supremacy (Polinska, 2018).

Schwimmer and McDonough (2018) assert that the use of mindfulness in classrooms perpetuates deficit messages that students are the problem when schools fail, which impede educational policies that would help students. The authors argue that it is hard to analyze the different mindfulness programs disseminated to teachers in school due to the commercialized origins of the programming used in K-12 schools that have different types of techniques used and their origins (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). Although the authors found that there are lots of benefits to mindfulness integration in schools, the varying ways in the approach for mindfulness make it hard to determine how mindfulness may be used to enhance students' democratic participation and self-efficacy in academic settings (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018). Schwimmer and McDonough (2018), argue that Eurocentric and white dominant cultural norms have a negative influence on mindfulness interventions in education if educators aren't actively attempting to answer: "whose cultural influence are educators placing on students from this framework?" and "what messages does this type of framework send?" Therefore, it is essential to critically examine the education values at the intersection between mindfulness

curriculum and urban education through an examination of how the process of standardizing the personal mindfulness of a Black and Brown student can harm the democratic values schools say teachers uphold (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018).

The struggle to provide a mindfulness curriculum that reflects the lived realities of Black and Brown students is the same struggle in education for educators to implement teaching practices that reflect the cultures and lived experiences of Black and Brown students is echoed in mindfulness or contemplative practice (Berlia, 2015; Mah y Busch 2014, Hyland, 2009, Kabat-Zinn, 1990, Kabat-Zinn, 2005, Kabat-Zinn, 2005, Polinska, 2018, Kuyken et al., 2013, Forbes 2019). The promise to reduce mental health problems while improving emotional self-discipline, concentration, attention, and happiness by focusing on self-improvement, the integration of mindfulness in education reflects moves in public education to develop the whole student, instead of seeing student academic achievement as separate from student well-being. This mindfulness approach has harmful effects on Black and Brown students because it gives power to the Eurocentric and hegemonic structures through its internalized messages (Berlia, 2015; Mah y Busch 2014, Hyland, 2009, Kabat-Zinn, 1990, Kabat-Zinn, 2005, Kabat-Zinn, 2005, Polinska, 2018, Kuyken et al., 2013, Forbes 2019). Instead, mindfulness can be expressed as a disposition that a person has, but it can also be used as a state of stress management for a situation that the person hasn't fully assessed. Racial socialized messages can be used to help offset the negative effects of racial content or stressors. Racial socialization fosters a connection to the common heritage that alleviates the negative effect of perceived racism directed towards the individual.

Moreover, much mindfulness research interrogates the cultural mismatch in the narratives from teachers who often assume that students need to learn "appropriate" social-emotional

responses to trauma, stress, and learning despite no baseline data for current measurements for students (Black & Fernando 2014; Forbes, 2019). However, when Black and Brown students experience a curriculum that allows students to contemplate while addressing their oppressive conditions, students can empower themselves, develop more resilience, and heal. Another study found that teachers who embrace a mindfulness pedagogy that reflects the needs of the collective consciousness by advocating for changes in their classroom and systems changes also have more success with students (Forbes, 2019). Forbes argues that mindfulness practice requires teachers to integrate students' lived experiences and academic content in a framework that allows students to unlearn the systems of oppression and transform those conditions (Forbes, 2019). Without allowing for students to address mindfulness curriculum reflects a pattern of the failure of educational institutions to reform the issues of stress and well-being in schools (Forbes, 2019). Instead, Eurocentrism is present in Mcmindfulness emphasizes that stress is a universal thing, often devoid of the historical, cultural, or social contexts that create those conditions (Forbes, 2019). Thus, this form of mindfulness indirectly emphasizes reinforcement and benefits the oppressive social structure through its internalized messages which can prove harmful for all groups of students.

Summary

This literature review finds that mindfulness has increasingly been a practice used in American classrooms, including ELA classrooms, as a strategy for removing student learning barriers is a well-intended strategy for the classroom teacher to use as its intent is to teach students self-regulation, and stress reduction so that psychological and emotional barriers to learning can be removed, and classroom behaviors are improved. However, there is evidence in this literature review that mindfulness, while well intended and having some success, is not a

panacea or a replacement for teacher's classroom management problems. Rather, literature counters that, mindfulness being used in traditional American educational systems of schooling may not be effective, nor culturally responsive (Berlina, 2016; Semple et al., 2017). Traditional systems of schooling still hold deficit views of education, which blame students for academic and behavioral underperformance, rather than the system (Berlina, 2016; Valencia, 2010). Therefore, the use of mindfulness by Eurocentric teachers in white dominant normed schooling practices are vulnerable to using mindfulness as a "fix" for Black and Brown student behaviors. Additionally, there is concern that mindfulness practice in classrooms may have reached too far in thinking it is an effective strategy for use as a social-emotional intervention (Semple et al., 2017). This is evidenced in this literature by the research that highlights the lack of effective evaluation of mindfulness practices being used in schools (Semple et al., 2017).

With Black and Brown children in urban classrooms being the recipients of mindfulness practices, with little academic literature to support its effectiveness, it is imperative more research be conducted to bring clarity to both the benefits and potential harm this practice may inflict on Black and Brown children. As culturally responsive educators, we are called to use pedagogies of practices, like radical healing, in which teachers are to acknowledge that Black and Brown student's emotional state in the classroom, is a result of both the social setting within and outside the school, not within the student (Ginwright, 2010). Radical healing requires the teacher to have their own reflective practice where they center the social conditions of Black and Brown students with the intention to change the social conditions, not the student. In the absence of culturally responsive teaching based on radical healing practices, mindfulness becomes another tool to pathologize the student behaviors of Black and Brown students in American schools (Ginwright, 2010).

This literature review has highlighted the need for more research that is focused on authentic culturally responsive mindfulness practices to ensure Black and Brown students are not further harmed or marginalized in the classroom. To ensure that Black and Brown students are cared for in this research study, a research methodology will be used for this study that focuses on disrupting the Eurocentric teacher practices and white normed cultures. This methodology has the intention of fixing the Eurocentric teaching and systems that are barriers to radical healing for Black and Brown students.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the study beginning with an overview of the problem. Then the methodology section outlines the use of intuitive inquiry process, through the five cycles of data analysis that guides the exploration of how secondary ELA teachers' perceive the use of mindfulness curriculum with Black and Brown students. Subsequently, the chapter covers the study's design, including participant selection, participant demographics, and interview techniques utilized. Then the chapter describes the data collection, management, analysis methods including the theoretical framework for this study. Then the research provides an overview of the reliability, validity, and limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter covers a summary of the theoretical perspective. The chapter concludes with researcher presentation of discussion of the researcher's reflectivity to include the researchers role positionality in the study.

Overview of the Problem

Mindfulness practices gained traction in urban K-12 schools across the United States through their potential to improve student well-being and academic achievement (Berlia, 2015; Forbes, 2019; Rempel, 2012; Sarlo, 2020). However, critiques of mindfulness argue that mindfulness in education lacks the use of a culturally-based framework that would empower Black and Brown students (Berlia, 2015).

Researchers have also highlighted that there are critical issues in English education tied to how white educators perceive their interactions with Black and Brown students (NCTE, 2022; Berchini, 2019). Studies illustrate that English educators perpetuate white supremacist structures and ideology through the omission of and by falling to address race, diversity, and oppression (Berchini, 2019). The NCTE Black Caucus and other scholars argue that there needs to be a

transformation of English curriculum and pedagogy to address white supremacy, white cultural frames, and literacy practices urging for pedagogies that embrace Blackness (Baker-Bell et al., 2017). The focus of this study highlights the use of mindfulness by secondary ELA teachers to examine how mindfulness is used in the classroom and what frameworks can be used to serve the needs of Black and Brown students.

The Phenomenological Analysis Hermeneutics

Phenomenological research is a branch of qualitative research that is interested in the unique perspectives of individuals' experiences with a phenomenon that explores what participants have in common (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This phenomenological study is aligned with hermeneutics to focus on what all participants have in common, which is important to the analysis of how perceptions are influenced by preconceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Agery, 2014). This approach was appropriate for this study because the goal of hermeneutics research is to deeply understand the lived experiences of participants, in this case ELA teachers experiences using mindfulness in the classroom with Black and Brown students. A key tenet of a hermeneutic approach to qualitative research, aims to describe that experiences shape our understanding of the theories and as a result that the world is not the way that it appears study is (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This tenet of hermeneutics assisted in the analysis of the data by challenging the assumption that mindfulness in the classroom would have a positive impact (Forbes, 2019). This approach lent itself to looking at the data through a contextual lens and an examination of the practical use of mindfulness by the teachers for Black and Brown students.

Intuitive Inquiry

In selecting a qualitative approach for this study, it was important for the researcher to select a research method that paid close attention to honoring the participants' voice, and the

social context which, that is reflective of mindfulness practice. Intuitive inquiry, a branch of phenomenological research rooted in philosophical hermeneutics research was chosen for its integration of intuition with intellectual data analysis (Anderson, 2011). Intuitive inquiry, developed by Rosemarie Anderson (1998, 2000, 2004, 2011, 2018), joins intuition and intellectual analysis of data in a hermeneutic process of interpretation to bridge the gap between science and intuition which allows the researcher to document their own experiences as inspiration for the topic (Anderson, 2004). Intuitive inquiry allows for intuitive researchers to express their joy, honor their lived experiences as the inspiration for a topic. This method not only invites the transformation of the topic but also transformation of the researcher's own life (Anderson, 2011). The use of the intuitive processes and their connection to education research processes are not normally addressed in educational research, but it has a long history within indigenous and spiritual traditions (Anderson, 2004). The following is a description of the cycles of analysis in hermeneutical intuitive inquiry.

Cycle One: Clarifying the Research Topic

The researcher's journey towards selecting the topic of study began during a school visit, where the researcher was introduced to several teachers who wanted to showcase the use of mindfulness in their classroom. Intrigued by witnessing a classroom full of Black and Brown students completing a mindfulness practice mid-day in their classroom, the researcher was drawn to explore this topic further. In contrast to traditional research, where the researcher chooses a scholarly interest and specialization topic, in intuitive inquiry, the researcher picks a topic by selecting a text or an image that attracts the researcher's intuition or attention (Anderson, 2011). This topic may relate to their area of interest in an unconscious way or very generally relate to the subject area (Anderson, 2011).

Following the initial school visit, the researcher embarked on engaging with the topic for at least thirty minutes a day by interacting with texts related to the research topic. During this process, the researcher took notes of their thoughts, ideas, conversations, impressions, visions, and intuitions occurring during the sessions immediately after sessions (Anderson, 2004). Through repeating this process of reflection, and contemplation, insights into the topic began to evolve into a focused research topic into one that is: 1) compelling, 2) manageable, 3) clear, 4) focused, 5) concrete, 6) researchable, 7) promising (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Anderson, 2004). As a result in cycle one, the researcher uncovered that mindfulness practices and meditation have a long history as it relates to ELA curriculum. This discovery led the researcher to examine the topic further given the researcher's extensive background in ELA and explore the topic of mindfulness in ELA. The researchers exploration of the topic is presented in Chapter Two in the literature review.

Cycle Two: Developing the Preliminary Lenses

In Chapter Two, literature review of this study, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to the topic. In this cycle, the researcher chose to explore the topic from Cycle One through the use of a traditional literature review. In Cycle Two the personal values, and assumptions about the research topic are identified (Anderson, 2011). This process is achieved by creating "preliminary lenses" (Anderson, 2004) or main ideas from the literature that serve as the initial themes or concepts for the research topic.

The creation of the preliminary lenses are an important step that helped support not only the literature review but also continuous cycling process in the subsequent cycles, specifically Cycles Three, Four, and Five. (Anderson, 2011). This cycling process allowed the researcher to synthesize or identify a small number of texts that are significant to the researcher and to narrow

the topic. The lenses are written in the literature review, and the researcher "re-engages" with the initial list to synthesize the number of ideas to make the research topic clearer through the analytical process (Anderson, 2011). Further explanation of this process and how the lenses were applied and revisited in this study are detailed in Chapter Four.

Cycle Three

In this phase, the researcher identified the appropriate data sources for the research, the appropriate method, collects the data, and wrote summaries of the participant data. The descriptive summaries allowed the researcher to organize the data prior to the interpretation of the data, which happened in Cycle Four. The report allowed the readers to read the data without the researcher's subjectivity (Anderson, 2011).

Data Collection. The researcher used Anderson's (2006) data collection method, "Modes of Intuition," to approach the data. There are six modes of intuition that are used to capture the insights efficiently: unconscious process, psychic or parapsychological experiences, sensory modes of intuition, empathetic identification through our wounds, and blends of intuitive modes. The first mode reflects the dreams, archetypes, myths, and creative insights approach (Anderson, 2007). This refers to the state of consciousness used to communicate with the spiritual to analyze the data and this approach acknowledges the reality of traditionally marginalized forms of knowledge creation (Anderson, 2011).

The second mode of intuition is psychic or parapsychological experiences- defined as experiences that take place outside of time, across distance, clairvoyance, and precognitive experiential thought processes (Anderson, 2007). These experiences are defined as synchronicities in Western culture- data that feels like a miracle or a coincidence. The experiences derived from these experiences come from the interpersonal connection that the

researcher has with the material or others and intrapersonal experiences that the researcher finds through using the intuitive methodology.

Anderson (2007) defined the third mode of intuition as a sensory mode of intuition- including the five senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. In this mode of inquiry, indigenous knowledge about how the body informs our intuition to bring conscious awareness back to the present moment is accepted as a form of knowledge. This mode of intuition also connects to the use of body scans in mindfulness workshops used with participants.

The fourth mode, empathetic identification, describes our ability to connect to other people's consciousness or understand the "world" of the object we are studying (Anderson, 2007). The mode requires identifying the researcher's empathy with the object of study and is built into the analysis. The fifth mode of intuition, through our wounds, is an acknowledgment of the researcher's intuition or reflectivity that may lead the researcher to a place of trauma (Anderson, 2007). Anderson (2007) points out that healers in indigenous communities developed the skills to heal out of place trauma. Researchers, too, can bring up unhealed trauma or experience that has the potential for transformational healing for the researcher (Anderson, 2007). Exploring this work inevitably led back to the researchers childhood as a Black woman which was acknowledge in the researcher's positionality statement at the end of this chapter.

The last mode, blends of intuitive modes, acknowledges that intuitive experiences do not always work in the linear sense (Anderson, 2007). Anderson encourages the use of video, sound recording, art, movement, and journaling as the best ways to collect intuitive data (Anderson, 2007). The main data for this study are the video recordings from the Zoom interviews recording method will be videos of the interviews, and DJing as the modality of art or creative expression. The data from the Zoom interviews were transcribed from a professional transcription service

and initially read twice to ensure reliability before they were uploaded into the Dedoose software. The researcher also edited the interviews transcripts for sense-making adding necessary punctuation throughout to help the readability of the text while also keeping as much of the participants words as possible.

Participant Selection and Rationale. Seven secondary classroom teachers that use mindfulness in their classrooms across the United States. The recruitment strategy combined the use of an IRB approved flyer for online promotion and phone calls to school districts as a way to gather a diverse array of perspectives on how mindfulness is used in ELA classrooms with Black and Brown students as shown in Appendix C. The use of the online flyer allowed for a wide dissemination of the study's purpose, and it provided the participant requirements. The personal phone calls to school districts targeted school districts that had a school-wide or district wide mindfulness initiative to ensure the selection of ELA teachers who actively teach mindfulness in their classrooms.

The rationale for the selection of secondary ELA teachers is grounded in the nature of the ELA curriculum, which is home to literary texts, nonfiction, and others already required for educators to discuss current topics like race, racism, and politics. The factors for teacher selection are:

- Secondary English Teachers: Teachers who are engaged with students at an important developmental stage where mindfulness interventions can have a significant impact (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015)
- Use mindfulness in their classroom curriculum: Teachers who at the time of the study used mindfulness practices in their ELA classes, who have firsthand experiences and insights into the use of mindfulness with Black and Brown students.

- Service to Black and Brown Students: A focus on teachers who work with primarily Black and Brown students to explore the specific impact of mindfulness practices in supporting Black and Brown students.
- Urban school context: Selecting students who work in environments with a diverse student population and a range of socio-economic and cultural dynamics. This setting illuminates how mindfulness can be tailored to the diverse needs of Black and Brown students (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Individual Interviews. Individual interviews took place from August 2023 to December 2024 and were used to understand the teachers' experience with integrating mindfulness into their ELA classroom with Black and Brown students. All participants engaged in individual, semi-structured interviews for 60 minutes. A standardized protocol was used for the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2014). The standardization process provides standard ways of probing for information, the kind of feedback given to the participants, and asking questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2014). The standardized protocol helped enhance the reliability of the interviews to ensure that each interview was conducted under similar conditions. The added layer of the semi-structured interviews allowed for the researcher to explore different themes of interest and also allowed the participant to bring up other topics or expand on areas they perceived as important to their teaching experiences. The researcher used the IRB-approved open-ended questions that served as an outline for the types of questions asked to the participants in Appendix D.

Data Analysis and Creation of Initial Lenses. After the collection data, the researcher completed a data analysis process to ensure the reliability and the accuracy of the transcripts. The transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose, a transcription software for qualitative analysis, to assist with the cyclical process of data analysis (Anderson, 2011). The beginning

The Dedoose software helped facilitate the data analysis process by enabling the visualization of the data by providing code frequency tables that revealed unique patterns across the data as seen in Figure 1. Utilizing the ‘Descriptor Fields x Codes Grid Chart’ from the Dedoose the researcher checked the frequency of codes to determine the importance of each identified theme. The grid system in this chart provided the researcher with an understanding of the perspectives each participant had in relation to one another. The final themes and sub-themes are presented in Chapter Four.

Cycle Four: Re-examining Final Lenses

In Cycle Four, the researcher revisited the themes using the initial lenses from Chapter Two, which were informed by the literature review (Anderson, 2011). This process included synthesizing the data from Cycle Three with the Cycle Two initial lenses to enhance the researchers understanding of how mindfulness is integrated in secondary ELA classrooms with Black and Brown students (Anderson, 2011). During this cyclical process the researcher moved beyond re-affirming initial insights or intuitions but was also challenged to examine new understandings of the topic based on the new data (Anderson, 2011). Last, the researcher applied personal pronouns in this section of the cycles of intuitive inquiry to intentionally illuminate the researcher’s role and DJ meditation process in the analysis to reflect the principles of intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 2011). A presentation of the researchers experiences and the final lenses appear in Chapter Four.

Cycle Five: Final Analysis

In Cycle Five, the researcher re-examined the literature based upon the findings from Cycle Four. The researcher also evaluates the efficacy of the hermeneutic circle of understanding through identifying issues, questions, concerns with the research topic, and issues with the

process itself. In this cycle, the researcher also reflected on their transformation, as well as what is valuable in the study for the transformation of and within the world through the discoveries found in the research (Anderson, 2011). This cyclical approach reflects mindfulness, emphasizing that emotions are merely thoughts that we acknowledge and return to the present moment. This approach, however, is transparent to include the overlapping analysis instead of omitting it from the scope of the reader (Anderson, 20011). The experiences of the researcher impact the activities within each cycle. The final analysis appears in Chapter Five.

Theoretical Perspective

As indicated in Chapters I and II, the purpose of this study is to examine English teachers' practice of mindfulness in their classrooms with Black and Brown students. Specific attention in this study was given to the need to focus on culturally responsive approaches for teachers who use a healing-centered approach in their classrooms. The study was shaped and supported by these constructs that form a guiding theoretical perspective. Together with culturally responsive, critical race theory pedagogies, healing-centered pedagogy, and mindfulness, a framework for culturally responsive mindfulness pedagogy informed methodological considerations concerning research design, data collection, and data analysis. In mindfulness research, topics of the social and political context are typically approached through mindfulness pedagogy, cultural-based frameworks, teacher pedagogy, and radical healing theory. These approaches are used to center the conversations around the purpose of mindfulness in educational settings, to examine the pedagogical strategies that K-12 educators use of culturally responsive practices, and to explore how teachers integrate mindfulness into their curriculum in urban educational settings.

The following four sections delve into a comprehensive understanding of each of the theoretical perspectives employed in this study. The first section will begins with mindfulness as

a pedagogical approach through an examination of its impact on educational contexts. Then the section transitions to culturally-based frameworks to address the diverse needs of Black and Brown students in educational environments. Next, an examination of Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) provides information on the pervasive impact of white supremacy in education. Lastly, this section shifts to radical healing and race-centered frameworks to highlight the need to put back the transformative potential of addressing systemic inequalities to enhance well-being of Black and Brown people.

Mindfulness practice as a pedagogical approach

In mindfulness research, mindfulness pedagogy, also commonly known as contemplative pedagogy, is a pedagogical approach as applied science to measure qualitative and qualitative approaches. In the classroom, mindfulness pedagogy is an approach to teaching that uses person-first activities like meditation, mindfulness, journaling, community circles, and others to allow for the teachers, in this case, to examine themselves. By reducing the psychological factors that can impede learning, mindfulness practices can promote lifestyle changes and increase learning in the classroom (Flatt & Dabney 2019). Mindfulness pedagogies focus on teaching works by incorporating first-person lived experiences and approaches to learning. Students are engaged in a curriculum that encourages them to be more aware of their internal state and learn their own values, meaning-making, and relationships with communities, peers, and the world around them (Purser, 2019; Forbes, 2019). Mindfulness pedagogy does not just apply to students. It also incorporates ways of teaching and learning that provide students with a way to integrate new ways of knowing (Hyland, 2009). Teachers who use this pedagogical stance move beyond the scientific to incorporate more body, mind, and spirit to provide Black and Brown students with

the space to incorporate who students are in connection with how students are changed by what teachers teach (Hyland, 2009).

Culturally-Based Frameworks

First this study is grounded in the principles of the construct of understanding the culture as a prerequisite to the study of the educators' perceptions of mindfulness pedagogy in the classroom (Berlia, 2016). According to Paris and Alim (2017), understanding how culture is theorized in teaching and learning is very important to understanding since "culturally relevant and equity-oriented pedagogies are often misunderstood and taken up in ways that diverge from their original intent" (Paris & Alim 2017, p. 252). As a result, researcher grounds this study in culturally responsive, culturally sustaining perspectives, spiritually responsive pedagogies (Gay, 2000; Gay, 2002; Paris 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017; Lingley, 2016). Additionally, this study is grounded in research says that asserts that curriculum that uses culturally-based teaching pedagogy leads better instruction and better student outcomes.

Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS)

Next, this study is grounded in Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) a field that education that emphasizes the prevalence of white supremacy narratives as a manifestation of whiteness's omission of the racial realities of Black and Brown people (Haney-Lopez, 2006). A CWS studies theorist Thandeka (2000), argues that white children are racialized to adopt color-blind ideology, despite bearing witness to race as a child they are socialized by white adults to ignore race which then manifests itself as a norm. The silence surrounding white racialization produces a false narrative that Black and Brown people shouldn't talk about white people in any discourse (Thandeka, 2000). Instead of accepting accountability, white people emotionally deflect their shame through emotional expressions of guilt, anger, defensiveness, and denial (Thandeka,

2000). This evaluation is important because white teachers are commonly the leaders in the classroom for racialized discussions of social-emotional learning and interactions with Black and Brown students (Thandeka, 2000).

Towards a Race-Centered Framework and Radical Healing

Next this study is grounded in frameworks that have an emphasis on radical healing, a concept that is essential to addressing the instructional and relational harms in communities (Ginwright, 2016). Ginwright (2010) argues that healing justice involves the transformation of institutions and relationships that cause harm through a community emphasis of collectively healing and building hope. This means that the schools' jobs are to address the trauma in the schools while also creating a community that promotes well-being (Ginwright, 2016). Radical healing describes a process that builds individual capacity and people's capacity in the communities to face everyday injuries and the injuries Black and Brown people sustained because of racial oppression (Ginwright, 2010). There are different levels of radical healing practices. First, radical healing does not focus on social-emotional learning; instead, it focuses on the social and political conditions as an overall factor for a student's well-being (Ginwright, 2016). The second tenant is that radical healing is a part of the collective. This means that it focuses on people developing a sense of belonging (Ginwright, 2016). Third, social-emotional practices focus on contemplation on social conditions by building awareness, consciousness, and "actions," the conditions that impede Black and Brown students' social/emotional conditions (Ginwright, 2016). Ginwright (2016) argues that without an analysis of these issues, students begin to internalize the toxic behaviors and create self-blame for not fixing the conditions. Additionally, Ginwright (2016) asserts that without this framework educators' default to pathologizing student behaviors versus changing those conditions. The last tenant of radical

healing is the emphasis on the collective nature of well-being, which views health as a result of political priorities, and decisions made by institutions (Ginwright, 2016).

Reliability and Validity

In qualitative research, reliability and validity are important to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the research. In this study, the reliability in the intuitive inquiry methodology was facilitated through the cyclical process across the five cycles of data analysis. Each cycle of intuitive inquiry builds on the prior cycle to ensure that the methodology was applied with validity (Anderson, 2004). Next, the validity of this study was created by ensuring that the findings of this study reflect the participants' experiences and realities of implementing mindfulness in secondary ELA classrooms with Black and Brown students by showing the transcripts of the interviews to confirm accuracy. To ensure validity, the researcher compared and verified data across multiple sources including the interviews and the literature in Cycle Four. This approach added a depth of understanding of the topic, and the participants' perspectives.

The researcher in this study also engaged in self-reflection during the study to examine personal biases, and assumptions in the study included in this chapter to reinforce the credibility of the analysis. In addition, hermeneutic dialogue, a method of interpretation that emphasizes understanding through internal dialogue and conversation with the data. During Cycle Four, the researcher provided insight into their internal dialogue and intuitive process in the analysis cycle. The researcher took care and attention to ensure that the interpretations or analysis of the data was connected to the theoretical framework that guides this study.

Limitations

Anderson (2004) identified nine limitations or challenges from using intuitive inquiry as a

methodology. First, intuitive inquiry requires rigorous subjectivity using the left brain and right brain skills (Anderson, 2004). This process required the researcher to include their intuitive understanding of the topic through the meditative process and then find ways to document those experiences (Anderson, 2011). Although this study has paid attention to credibility and trustworthiness, there are some limitations within this study. The main limitation of this study is the research methods, given the limitations of only restricting the study to analyzing discourse of seven participants. It is impossible to know the relationship between the English teachers' discourse and action.

The second challenge is the rigorous documentation to tell the truth about the data collected (Anderson, 2004) including mistakes, procedures/plans that didn't work, my bewilderment or questions, the process of my intuitive insights, and the problems of the topic. The third challenge is to avoid circularity (Anderson, 2006), requiring the researcher to emphasize the importance of looking for data that contradicts my views and values even if this will make me uncomfortable. Anderson contends that research that uses intuition may create a confirmation bias through affirming the researchers' beliefs (Anderson, 2006). To avoid circularity, I will need an ongoing commitment to looking at my research topic in various ways.

Anderson (2006) calls the fourth and fifth challenges “auspicious bewilderment” and “maintaining a postmodern and culturally inclusive perspective” when analyzing the data. The fourth challenge requires the research to engage with the contradictory data to move the researcher deeper into the research topic (Anderson, 2006). The fifth challenge requires the researcher to understand that reality is constructed from our own experiences of being human in our localized context (Anderson, 2006). This requires a level of human subjectivity that pushes against the traditional objective findings as the main source of knowledge in data analysis

(2006). This requires the researcher to maintain a subjective stance despite the traditional need to have objective findings in the data (Anderson, 2006)

The sixth and seventh challenge “writing in your own voice” and “favoring the particular and the personal” look at the way that the findings must be written (Anderson, 2006 p.329). The sixth challenge requires that the research convey the feelings and experiences that brought the researcher to the topic of research with the findings (Anderson, 2006). Additionally, this challenge also requires the understanding that the writing must include the mind, body, and spirit of the inquiry which impacts the validity of the study (Anderson, 2006). The seventh challenge requires that the findings include the researchers' unique interpretations, experiences, and interpretations over the common patterns that might be observed externally (Anderson, 2006).

The last two challenges “imagining the possible” and “risking personal change and transformation” seek to imagine the possibilities for how the inquiry impacts the world as well as the researcher. Intuitive inquiry seeks to look at different ways of being and knowing in the world (Anderson, 2006 p.330). This type of qualitative inquiry seeks to explore the complexities of the human phenomena which requires attention to the culture(s) at large in the intuitive researcher's topic (Anderson, 2006). Moreover, the results of the study require that the researcher provide new solutions for the world through an emphasis on hope building in a world that is changing every day (Anderson, 2006). Last, the intuitive inquiry can also impact the researcher in that they should expect change in their ways of knowing and being post doing the research study (Anderson, 2006).

Researcher Positionality

The way that I approached this research is impacted by my insider and/or outsider position within the population-teacher educators: my age, race, and educational attainment. My

study design addressed these possible assumptions using multiple methods, including extensive interaction between the participants and myself. The interaction between the participants and myself helped build a rapport while obtaining critical information for the study. My work was also influenced by my lived experiences as a Black woman and the way that I view the world around me. I come from a deeply spiritual background, wherein activism and community work are a part of how I learned to challenge racism, sexism, capitalism, and imperialism in our society. My spiritual practice has impacted my life by helping me empower myself, as well as helping me reflect on my own teaching practice.

I grew up in a Christian household, but my mother always explored different forms of spirituality and reflection. When I was little my mother taught me about the power of journaling and writing down goals to get ahead in life. These practices were not named "mindfulness," but as an adult, I name these moments as part of the foundation of my current practice. Our home was also full of different African, as well as other indigenous texts about connecting to our inner voice through authors like Iyanla Vanzant, Louise Hay, and Don Miguel Ruiz that I was encouraged to read by both of my parents. As I grew older, I fell away from these foundational practices, but when I started my first teaching job in 2013, I realized how important it was to reflect, set goals, as well as contemplate the social conditions that created some of the inequalities that I saw in my classroom. I began to keep a journal of my teaching experience, write notes, set goals for my classroom, and I started to see positive changes in my teaching practice. After implementing my own practice, I looked to find ways to also empower my students to critically reflect, set goals, but I did not know that this practice was called something. Eventually, through connecting with other educators online, talking with my mother, as well as doing my own research, I began to name all these practices as "mindfulness." Since then, I

started to explore different techniques that I can use in my personal life to help me deal with the everyday stressors of teaching. My mindfulness practice first started with meditation, but I quickly realized that being silent wasn't really my preferred method. Yes, I felt calmer, but I wondered if something was missing. Through sustaining my own daily practice, I now embrace movement techniques, music-making, and chanting into my daily practice.

Last, my study is dominated by the presence of white teachers who represent the population of teachers working in the public education system in the USA. It is important that I interrogate my positionality because of the race of the interviewer effect. Since I am questioning the use of mindfulness practices in a predominately white space, as a Black woman, my findings may not accurately reflect the true interactions that the teachers have with the music due to the race-of-interviewer effect.

Chapter IV: Cycle Three and Cycle Four

This study was designed to investigate the uses of mindfulness or critical mindfulness curriculum and pedagogies by ELA teachers in secondary classrooms and their perceived impact on Black and Brown students. This chapter delves into the data collected to address the main research questions:

What framework does a secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teacher use to deliver mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy to their Black and Brown students in urban secondary schools?

Sub-questions:

1. What is the secondary ELA teacher's understanding of critical and social mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy?
2. How do English Language Arts teachers in secondary schools' settings describe the mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy used in their classrooms?
3. How do English Language Arts teachers understand the impact of their mindfulness pedagogy and curriculum on Black and Brown students?

Adhering to intuitive inquiry methodology (Anderson, 2011), it was also the intent to create new understandings of using critical mindfulness in the ELA classroom with respect to the culturally responsive needs of Black and Brown students. The initial research lenses were developed through the literature review and were used in the interpretation the data and develop an understanding of the research topic. The experiences of the participants presented in the following chapter are a central principal of the intuitive inquiry research methodology (Anderson, 2011). This was done by being transparent through using direct quotes from the teachers as much as possible.

This chapter begins with a narrative description of each secondary ELA teacher participant which includes information about the setting in which they teach and other personal descriptive traits, such as gender, race, years of experience and each participant's initial experiences with mindfulness. Additionally, narratives may have personal backgrounds, education, and career journeys if disclosed. The second part of this chapter is the presentation of themes and subthemes that were common across the seven participants. Using the program Dedoose, these themes were identified through an analysis that began with electronic coding using common words, patterns, or phrases found across the seven narratives. An overview of these themes can be found in the provided Table 1 after the participant summaries. The initial lenses are divided into separate sections and are not organized in a linear progression for any importance. In sum, the initial lenses are intended to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of these secondary ELA teachers' use of mindfulness and in doing so answer the research questions (Anderson, 2005). The last part of this chapter describes Cycle Four of the intuitive inquiry cycles, which is characterized by the refinement of themes to create lenses. This cycle also includes a critical examination of the researcher's own perspectives, biases, and meditative process to ensure the analysis is grounded in the principles of intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 2011).

Overview of Participants

Table 1.

Overview of Participants

Participant ID	Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	School Location	% of Black and Brown Students	Years Taught
P1	Emma	White	F	Urban-Suburban	50%	20+
P2	Spinner	White	M	Urban	100%	10+
P3	Manny	White	F	Suburban	40%	20+
P4	Ellie	White	F	Suburban	40%	15+
P5	Claire	Indigenous Latinx	F	Urban	100%	20+
P6	Fiona	Black	F	Suburban	50%	20+
P7	Holly	White	f	Urban	Over 90%	30+

The study has seven secondary ELA teachers who all work with Black and Brown students in urban or suburban communities (see Table 1). Among the seven participants, two chose to submit copies of their curriculum after completing the interview. Each of the participants were assigned a pseudonym for teacher names and locations by the researcher to ensure confidentiality of participants is protected. The pseudonyms were assigned randomly and do not reflect participant real names. The racial makeup of the participants is five participants identify as white/Caucasian, one Black and one as Indigenous Latinx. Six of the participants identified as female and one participant identified as male. Collectively, these teachers have almost 150 years of teaching experience in education within secondary ELA classrooms, with grades ranging from 6th grade to 12th grade. All the participants have college degrees in education and are licensed in the area of secondary ELA that aching in the states in which they teach. Additionally, all the participants identified as teaching in an urban or suburban school

setting that serves a population of students with a critical mass of Black and Brown student representation.

Individual Descriptions of Participants

Emma. Emma is a white female secondary ELA teacher currently teaching high school students in a city that borders a large metropolitan area that she described as an “urban-suburban” city because it has characteristics of both urban and suburban environments. Urban areas are defined through their demographics, and complex social structures which are often accompanied by socio-economic challenges (Millner, 2012). She teaches 10th grade students across advanced track and regular track ELA classes. Her class demographics this year are fifty percent white and fifty percent Black and Brown. She emphasized that she only uses her version of mindfulness techniques and curriculum with her Black and Brown students in 10th grade. She expressed did not see a need to use mindfulness in her Advanced Placement (AP) courses that are full of mostly white students: “But it also is worth noting that my upper class, upperclassmen, our AP classes, mostly filled with white students, and I didn't feel the need to do this mindfulness curriculum with them” (Emma). This observation and its implications will be further explored in the discussion chapter.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, Emma stated that she observed a difference in her teaching practice, including mindfulness with her students. She began to use mindfulness as a way of coping with the ongoing stressors in her personal life in a post-COVID-19 world. These stressors also prompted her to attend a teacher mindfulness group offered by her district. She states,

“Yeah, I would say, during the pandemic, it became more of something that I was using, especially with frustration with student behavior, like when they're really getting riled up

and just having that, ‘okay, I just need to take a step back’. And that all started during the pandemic because we had these wellness groups that the teachers were in, where we would meet like, I think, it was a couple of times a week actually” (Emma).

After joining the teacher mindfulness group, she shared that a group of the teachers, as well as administrators, took it upon themselves to advocate for a mental health specialist at the school to help with the implementation of mindfulness in her classrooms.

The school district that Emma works for chooses to utilize techniques like mindful minutes and the “Dot B” curriculum, which is supported by the mental health specialist and other teachers in her school. The technique Mindful Minutes, used to ground or get students ready at the beginning of every class through a guided meditation, body scan or silent meditation. The second curriculum that was the focus of the majority of Emma’s interview was the use of the “Dot B” curriculum from the United Kingdom. Emma was one of two participants who shared her curriculum with me. An analysis of the curriculum revealed it was created to be used as a pre-K to Kindergarten curriculum. In her description of the curriculum, Emma did not mention if specific adaptations were made to use the curriculum with Black and Brown secondary students. However, Emma describes her understanding of this curriculum’s selection based on her aim of getting Black and Brown students’ better access to mental health resources. She described mindfulness instruction as:

“And if this is a really quick way to get that emotional regulation, and some of those executive functioning skills going, when there seemed to be such a deficit, I don't see any harm in it. And we kind of disagreed with them. But other than that, I really didn't have anything negative yet come from it. (Emma).”

It was not apparent in the interview dialogue that Emma adapted this curriculum for use with her sophomores, nor that she adapted it for her unintended purpose of connecting Black and Brown students to mental health supports. Emma stated she intends to make more efforts focused on empowering students and addressing power dynamics in the future. An analysis of this curriculum will appear in the later part of this chapter, in Cycle 3 in the presentation of the themes and in the discussion in Chapter 5.

Spinner. Spinner is an ELA teacher currently teaching high school classes in a large urban school setting. The school in which he teaches has a majority population of Black and Brown students. He also described his schools as being made up of “mostly Muslim students” (Spinner). He began to use mindfulness to help reduce his personal stress with activities like “yoga and journaling” (Spinner). Since beginning his personal mindfulness practice, he reports having seen improvement in his teaching practice, although he did not make a specific mention of how he has seen improvements.

Spinner began to use mindfulness in his ELA classrooms for “conflict resolution” (Spinner) and “to enhance the classroom environment” (Spinner). Spinner also describes how he incorporates mindfulness practices into his classroom through a “culturally sustaining pedagogy” (Spinner), which is one of the school's main goals. He says,

“So, like for academic mindfulness, we're talking like, I have my students write reflections on how they feel and think a unit went. And we talked about it. It started to help them see that their opinions mattered, and a lot of them started to behave better in class. So, I just started doing it more and more and more. I started tying in some of the culturally sustaining pedagogy, and students seemed engaged and excited to learn about their city (Spinner).

Spinner further expressed that this approach to his mindfulness practices in his class was mostly driven by a need to align his curriculum to the school's goals. This approach involves student-driven discussions, and reflection that promote student engagement in their learning experience.

Spinner further describes his school's mindfulness program as being inclusive of the Islamic faith. The curriculum includes "Islam and character development" with "student-led discussions" that are a form of mindfulness that reflects the students' religious backgrounds. This program is called 16 step he said, "we actually have a whole 16 Step, like practice at our school" (Spinner). This program is held twice a week for thirty minutes, and focuses on life skills, and character development all through an Islamic lens. Here is a breakdown of the 16 steps that he described the curriculum covers:

1. Following Directions
2. Asking for Help
3. Asking Permission
4. Accepting No for an Answer
5. Disagreeing with Others
6. Accepting Criticism
7. Staying Calm
8. Being Honest
9. Respectful Introductions and Greetings
10. Having Conversations
11. Listening to Others
12. Getting Along with Others
13. Apologizing

14. Giving Compliments

15. Accepting Compliments

16. Showing Sensitivity to Others

Although some of these steps directly connect to mindfulness practices, Spinner's program focused on self-reflection and navigating real world scenarios that complement the mindfulness practices. This combination of mindfulness will be explored in Cycle four.

Spinner stated that mindfulness practice has many benefits for students' personal and academic growth by promoting "empathy, collaboration, and emotional intelligence."

He noted that there are some challenges in managing what are perceived as trauma-related issues. For example, he discusses creating a space for students to discuss their experiences. He adds that he attempts to make the activities fun and engaging for the students, which he highlighted as a way of maintaining student attention. Additionally, Spinner expressed his failed attempts at the beginning of teaching mindfulness to students. Spinner has not had any mindfulness training; however, he states that deeper understanding and training are necessary for mindfulness teaching.

Manny. Manny is a secondary ELA high school teacher who teaches three sections of ninth grade and one section of an elective digital literacy class for seniors, who are the focus of her mindfulness instruction. Manny teaches at a suburban school outside of a large metropolitan area. She expressed that the school has become “increasingly diverse over the last years with an increase of Black and Brown students who attend the school” (Manny). The current demographics of the senior elective class are 60% white and 40% Black and Brown students.

Manny shared that she created the digital literacy senior elective course in response to the perceived need for discussions with high school students about digital literacy. Throughout the class, she uses mindfulness to increase students' focus and attention. She states:

“I designed that aspect of the course in direct relationship to the need and my own teaching experience for students to have time to do nothing. And to let whatever emotions or sensations they were having bubble up and sit with those. And that's how I came to it” (Manny).

The course aims to help students develop critical thinking skills, practice mindful awareness, and make intentional choices about their technology use. Additionally, she uses the mindfulness course to “address the mental health crisis starting with devices (Manny).” A large part of the course has students reflect on their mental health throughout the class in connection to their cell phone usage. Students in her class are prompted to collect phone data to start their class, and then she tracks their phone usage throughout the class as they learn a skill that removes the need for the cell phone. She described this process:

“And when they started the class, we took their phone data, and it was like we're almost eight hours a day. And simultaneously, mental health was a huge problem and increasing problems with real significant physical symptoms. The student has engaged early in this

process. Within the first few weeks of the class, through the set and the challenges I was providing to the defects we did, their screen time was reduced by 50%. And they were forming that they saw a direct correlation to their mental health being improved. They talked about how this is extremely hard.”

Manny has been trained by Mindful Schools, and she has a yoga certificate. In her local community, she serves on several committees, including the school’s equity and inclusion committee, plus she serves as a mentor to new teachers. Further discussion of her curriculum is in Cycle 4 of this chapter.

Ellie. Ellie is a secondary middle school ELA teacher who teaches in a suburb outside a large metropolitan area. The student population that she teaches is majority white, but she says there are about 40% Black and Brown students. Ellie aims to equip students with techniques for managing stress and difficult emotions in their daily lives. Ellie describes her classroom mindfulness practices as daily lessons that involve breathing and other exercises and discussions on emotional regulation, brain science, and anxiety. One distinctive strategy that she used that was different from other participants is to cultivate students' emotional regulation by providing practical examples of techniques that she calls, “I am calm” breaths and “body scans.”

Additionally, Ellie describes a classroom environment where students engage in reflective and open communication and vulnerability through the sharing of her personal anecdotes, and experiences with her students to illustrate the benefits of mindfulness. She recognizes that mindfulness is not just about student practice but also about creating an environment where students feel comfortable listening to their inner voice or minds. Like Manny, Ellie is also trained in Mindful Schools.

Claire. Claire is a secondary ELA teacher who teaches in a large urban city at a school within a school setting. Her school serves over 90% of Black and Brown students. She self-identifies as an indigenous Latinx female. Claire explained that the school district that she works for started a new initiative where she must grade students' mindfulness, which requires educators to find ways to implement mindfulness in their classrooms. She describes her school setting as “super chaotic, is very unstructured, there’s no discipline” (Claire). Throughout the interview, she spoke about the “overstimulation,” disciplinary issues, and lack of administrative support in her school. Although Claire had initial uncertainty about how to implement mindfulness practices and concerns about how to handle students’ emotional disclosure, she emphasized the importance of discussing explicitly with students how these mindfulness practices will help them in their academic and personal lives.

Claire explained that the school-wide initiative of grading social-emotional learning as a learning component led to her implementation of mindfulness. She said that the principal in her building made it a grading category, with reading, writing, and discussion. Claire said, “so we have social emotional, we have reading, writing and discussion. I wasn't necessarily happy about that because I felt like that's not something that you should be attaching a grade to, but you know, he's in charge [in reference to the principal] (Claire).” She expressed her issues with grading this category since she believed that it should be practiced intrinsically, but despite her trepidations she still grades the social-emotional learning of her students. Initially, she just focused on journaling, reflection, and check-ins but then when the pandemic started this prompted a shift in her approach, as she thought “why not?”

In addition to the school-wide mandate, Claire acknowledged that her cultural and personal sensitivities as a first-generation student whose parents were immigrants led her to

implement mindfulness practices with her Black and Brown students. Claire reflected on her role as a “cycle breaker” in the context of supporting her student’s emotional well-being and academic success. She emphasized that she commits to addressing students' needs, especially the needs of Black and Brown students, where “emotional validation” may have been lacking. One of the mindfulness practices that Claire uses to promote mindfulness is literary discussions, where her students can have an open dialogue about their feelings in connection to the novel they are reading. Furthermore, she underscored the importance of supporting Black and Brown students' accomplishments, especially for those in AP classes; these students “ask for it [mindfulness practices].” Additionally, she acknowledged that those same students are the “cycle breakers” themselves; Claire believes that “generational trauma” can be overcome with the use of mindfulness practices in the classroom. Claire had no formal mindfulness training but expressed she wanted formal training.

Fiona. Fiona is an African American secondary ELA teacher who teaches both at the university level and in a large suburban high school outside a large metropolitan area with a population of 50% Black and Brown students. She described learning about the benefits of mindfulness when she began her mindfulness several years ago. During this time, she taught in a different state and at a school that had a mindfulness initiative. This initiative was not incorporated into the classroom; instead, it was used as an intervention period. She received little to limited training in mindfulness.

Fiona wanted her students to have the “tools or resources” (Fiona) to navigate the stressors of academic life. In addition, Fiona implemented mindfulness techniques in a dual-credit ELA course where juniors can receive college credit. She expressed that she sees mindfulness as a “tool or resource” for students to learn how to cope with stress:

I think a benefit is to give them a tool because most of the students that I teach are college-bound students. And I think that this gives them a tool or resource to use when they are very stressed. Like I've had two students be hospitalized at the university because I also work at the "University of Deer," and they have to be hospitalized this semester (Fiona).

Her classes focus on moments that may be conducive to relaxation and concentration. She describes guiding her students through mindfulness exercises that aim at reducing the student's stress and enhancing their focus during work periods. During the classroom period, she allows students to find comfortable sitting positions to engage in breathing exercises. She encourages students to "let their mind relax" (Fiona). She described her classroom mindfulness reading time, "It's very soothing, it creates this environment where they can sit down and learn and read the article of the day like today's article was by Virsh on Ashanti young, and they were just able to have that quiet time to read the article. And then tomorrow we'll talk about it" (Fiona). She also describes a serene atmosphere in her classroom when she utilizes calming background noises, such as "brown noise" and "dimming the lights" (Fiona). In addition to her regularly scheduled teaching blocks, she offers a mindfulness session open to all students during the school's enrichment period.

Holly. Holly is a recently retired white ELA teacher; she taught mindfulness in the classroom for over sixteen years. Before retirement, Holly taught in a large urban high school with a student population of over ninety percent Black and Brown students. She reports that throughout her teaching career, she embraced mindfulness to help with student challenges such as ADHD. Holly talks about how she began mindfulness in her classroom based on her past personal use of mindfulness practice.

“And then we also lost another student just because she had a car accident. And so, there were like four students in a year and a half that we lost tragically. And I remembered that I had had a meditation practice, many, many years ago that I had started when I first had some health issues, and it had really helped me” (Holly).

She generally describes her mindfulness practice in the classroom as “I will try to speak calmer, for lack of a better word, more lovingly.” An example she shared was that she began each class with a few minutes of “mindful breathing” or a brief “visualization” experience to set a calm tone for the day. Like Manny and Ellie, she has training in Mindful Schools. She also participates in mindfulness retreats and her own Zen meditation group.

Overview of Common themes and Sub-Themes

The themes of this study provide an overview of the ELA teachers’ perceptions of using mindfulness in the ELA classroom with Black and Brown students. To dig deeper the researcher used the Dedoose analysis tool, ‘Descriptor Fields x Codes Grid Chart’, to check frequency, dominance, and uniqueness of codes under the themes. Due to the large size of this chart, the researcher decided not to include it in the body of the paper, but it will appear as an appendix at the end of the study. This tool created a grid with each participant name for the rows and the codes including child-codes for the columns if a teacher’s interview included one of the codes a

number appeared to represent the frequency. This process allowed the researcher to progressively develop a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the interviews. At the bottom of each column the Dedoose software provides a number totaling the frequency of that code. Finally, the code chart also shows the unique codes that only appear from one participant. By analyzing the “Descriptor Fields x Codes Grid Chart” the researcher began to understand the relationship between the themes and created sub-themes to deepen my understanding of the topic. These themes in Table 2, are presented in order of frequency from the full coding process and the following sections present the results of the analysis of the seven interviews.

Table 2.

Common Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme	Related Sub-Themes
<i>Teachers’ Perceptions of Black and Brown Student Engagement</i>	<i>* Teachers’ Pre-Mindfulness Perceptions of Black and Brown Students Behavior* Teachers’ Perceptions of Black and Brown Student Engagement During Mindfulness Instruction * Teacher Perspectives on Student Feedback Post Mindfulness Instruction</i>
<i>Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms</i>	<i>* Mindfulness as a "toolbox" in ELA* "Mindfulness is a pathway" *Student Stress</i>
<i>Different Types of Mindfulness Curriculum</i>	<i>* Literacy Instruction *Quietude * "There's an app for that"* Lesson Plans</i>
<i>Cultural Considerations of Mindfulness Instruction</i>	<i>* “Crystals” * No Adaptation</i>
<i>Navigating Trauma-Related Challenges</i>	<i>* "Turn off the Lights" * Teachers Perception of Home life and Generational Trauma</i>
<i>Teacher Personal Mindfulness Practice and Support</i>	<i>* “So, I do it”* School-wide Support* Parent Support</i>

Theme One: Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Engagement with Pre, During and Post Mindfulness Instruction

This theme emerged during the analysis of the interview interviews. The interviews illustrate the nuanced perceptions the teachers held of the Black and Brown students' engagement pre-, during, and post-mindfulness instruction in their respective ELA classrooms. The following excerpts from the interview further illustrate the consensus of the participants' perceptions.

ELA Teachers' Pre- Mindfulness Perceptions of Black and Brown Student

Behavior. Before implementing mindfulness, the ELA teachers in this study expressed a variety of concerns about Black and Brown students' behavior in the classroom. All the teachers expressed sentiments that mindfulness instruction in their ELA classroom would lead to an improvement in student behavior. This section examines four of the seven teachers' perspectives about the behavior of Black and Brown students. This sub-sub theme sheds light on the teacher's motivation for integrating mindfulness in their ELA classrooms.

First, Spinner discussed his rationale for incorporating mindfulness into his teaching approach as a way of teaching Black and Brown students the proper behaviors in the classroom environment. Specifically, he said that students in his class learn "They [referring to Black and Brown students] can learn why it's important to behave," through the use of mindfulness instruction. During the interview when Spinner was asked why he wanted to use mindfulness with Black and Brown students Spinner centered the importance of students learning the correct behavior. He said:

A lot of kids usually can make that connection about why they should be behaving a certain way or acting in a certain way. And when they become grownups and adults,

eventually, we get into situations where we want to be goofy, but we can't, right? And it really helps them set that up there (Spinner).

It is important to note here that Spinner's perspective on mindfulness instruction may be influenced by his use of the 16-step mindfulness program that incorporates Islamic teachings. This program may aim to cultivate particular behaviors expected in that religious context although curriculum was provided for analysis in this study.

Additionally, before implementing mindfulness, all the teachers described the challenges that they perceived Black and Brown students faced. As an example, throughout our interview Emma used the term 'executive functioning' but did not give specifics about what that means to her. She disclosed that she believed that Black and Brown students' behavior was different from what she had experienced when teaching her majority white AP courses or with students prior to the COVID-19 pandemic due to this lack of these "executive functioning skills." She described her Black and Brown students generally as being "lower than grade level" and she attributed this underachievement to behaviors that she perceived were not conducive to the learning environment. When asked about why she started to use mindfulness in the classroom she said:

I mean, definitely, time. Like you just feel like there's so much curriculum, you have to get through with the content. You teach like English, especially because a lot of my students in both my advanced and English time classes, they were just lower than grade level, a lot of them were lower than grade level for reading, and you just feel like you have a lot of catch-up work to do. So, it would take a minute or sometimes 10 minutes for us to do those initial [mindfulness] lessons. It feels like you're wasting time. But in the end, their behaviors and how long it took me sometimes to corral them back to attention. There was an improvement after doing these mindfulness techniques. So, it's kind of like

a prime investment; you just pay for it. And there are other ways that you don't take care of it with mindfulness or however you're going to do it (Emma).

Next, Claire, who is also an AP teacher, expressed concerns for Black and Brown students' stress in school, but she attributed this to the pressures that Black and Brown students put on themselves to do well in school. Claire describes how her AP students were before mindfulness instruction using the phrase, an 'overstimulation' to describe the school and classroom environment that students her Black and Brown students face daily. When asked about if there were any challenges to mindfulness instruction in her ELA classes she said:

So, it's just an overstimulation, even in my quiet room, like I can't drown out the hallway. And sometimes there's a fight, or sometimes there's just a kid with the speaker. And it's the language. And so, it's really, I always say that our kids are, like, master's at tuning out the noise. Because we give them AP exams, they take these really high-stakes things while nonsense is going on. And they do really well. It's unfortunate because I think they could do better if the environment were more structured. But that's, I think, the biggest challenge of anything that we do in that place is that when you just let them do whatever they want 95% of the time, you know, you do what you can in your 40 minutes with your structures and with what you do, and then you send them off, and you don't know if they're going to make it to the next class. Or if they're going to end up in a fight or caught up in some nonsense. That's the hardest thing. (Claire).

Here Claire suggests that students struggle with the demands of school and the school environment or structures. Additionally, she suggests that some of the Black and Brown AP students she teaches are 'masters at tuning out the noise' to point out that some of the students have learned how to deal or tune out the distractions without mindfulness instruction. The use of

the word “master” also signifies that Claire, unlike the other participants of this study, viewed some of her Black and Brown students as having the capacity to focus without instruction. Her goal is to ensure all students learn to focus through becoming masters of tuning out the noise through the instruction of mindfulness.

In summary, this theme illustrates the common reasons why these ELA teachers felt compelled seek an alternative approach like mindfulness to improve student behavior, executive functioning skills, or focus. Teachers in this study focused on behavior control which is evident in comments like “why they should be acting a certain way.” Teachers in the study attributed behavioral deficits primarily to Black and Brown students. Emma believed that her Black and Brown students struggled with ‘executive functioning’ skills that led to lower achievement, versus her white AP students that she did not deem mindfulness necessity. In contrast, Claire observed her Black and Brown students as having the capacity to tune out external factors, but she wanted to use mindfulness to enhance their capacity to focus. The perceptions of these teachers raise concern about the potential racial biases that lead teachers to choose mindfulness as an instructional tool in their classroom. Moreover, for teachers who only implemented mindfulness with Black and Brown students this suggests that they view behavior issues as associated with Black and Brown students. In addition to discussing teachers’ pre-mindfulness instruction perceptions of student behavior, the interview data shifts to an examination of their observations and experiences during mindfulness sessions.

ELA Teachers' Perceptions of Black and Brown Student Engagement During

Mindfulness Instruction. This sub-theme explores teacher perceptions of how Black and Brown students engaged with mindfulness in their ELA classrooms, based on the interviews. All seven of the teachers expressed how their students behaved during the mindfulness instruction. Participants' interviews again noted a range of student behaviors of Black and Brown students during the mindfulness sessions, including initial reservations and enthusiastic support.

Among the seven interviews, teachers expressed how their students behaved during the mindfulness instruction. Participants' interviews again noted a spectrum of student behaviors of Black and Brown students during the mindfulness sessions. Among these insights, four teachers candidly shared an initial awkwardness among their Black and Brown students when beginning to practice mindfulness in their classrooms. Emma said flatly, “I think they think it's really awkward at first (Emma),” when describing the response of Black and Brown students when first initiating mindfulness work in her sophomore ELA classroom. On the contrary, Emma shared that a second group of Black and Brown students expressed very differently during mindfulness sessions. She states:

And my fourth hour, they loved it. They just were very open to it. A few kids were kind of, like, when we did, close your eyes, and with the mindful minute at the beginning, they were kind of like looking around and a little unsure of it. But they came around really quickly (Emma).

Emma's interview shows contrasting experiences with two different groups of 10th grade Black and Brown students during mindfulness instruction. One of the classes felt awkward during the mindfulness instruction, but it is unclear why the students felt that way. She perceived the other class as having an enthusiastic experience, and Emma does not talk about this experience further

in the interview or elaborate as to why she thought this group felt better about the use of the mindfulness practices in the ELA instruction.

Three of the teacher participants noted instances of students joking around, underscoring their perceptions of the atmosphere that permeated during these sessions in the classroom with the Black and Brown students. Claire describes her Black and Brown students during mindfulness instructions as “giggling” or “distracted.” She noted:

“But I'd rather you try really just to focus, than, you know, make eye contact with somebody across the table, and then you're just like giggling or whatever. And then most of them do, they'll put their head down, they're distracted, but I got a handful of them. They're just like, stand up, and I'm gonna do this, and it's really difficult for them to stop for just three minutes straight” (Claire).

This quote by Claire illustrates some of the challenges that teachers faced with students struggling to focus due to giggling or creating distractions that potentially disrupt other students or the classroom.

Similarly, Emma expressed how the Black and Brown students teased and joked with her when they began first introducing mindfulness into the classroom. She details her perception of the Black and Brown students mimicking her voice in a negative way. When asked about challenges using mindfulness Emma said, “In fact, they would sometimes kind of like, mimic my voice like they're, you know, imitating me or whatever. But, you know, they do that just to save face until it becomes a natural part of what they're doing” (Emma). It is unclear whether the students were being playful or disrespectful. It is important to note that Emma did not see this behavior as disrespectful but instead she normalizes this type of behavior as a character trait of

students using the phrase “they do that just to save face.” Her comment implies that she believes the Black and Brown students have these types of behaviors to make themselves look better.

Other teachers like Holly, discussed her perceptions of Black and Brown students' inability to sit still during classroom mindfulness instruction. Holly noted:

So, I'm very much aware, and I tune into the energy of the students sitting with me with my guidance. And if I see a young child getting restless, I will just make a blanket statement. If you're feeling restless, try to just bring your focus back to the breath (Holly). She observed that there was some difficulty for some of her Black and Brown students in maintaining stillness during the mindfulness sessions in her classroom. However, it is important to acknowledge that Holly's perspective represents one opinion among many types of mindfulness instruction, which varies in the emphasis on stillness. Her approach to get restless students back on track involved students tuning into their energy levels to focus on their breath when they are feeling restless.

Conversely, Claire also mentioned that she perceives some of her Black and Brown students as having heightened excitement at “not having to do anything in class” during mindfulness instruction as a break from the Black and Brown students' busy day. When asked about how students respond to mindfulness instruction, Claire provided her perception on how Black and Brown students feel:

But I think some of them think it's like, oh, it's like five minutes of me not having to do anything in class. And they like that. But at the same time, they don't realize that, like, if they're really just following along and taking a breath, and doing all the things that the guided meditation is doing, like they do feel a little more calmer (Claire).

According to Claire, many of the students see mindfulness as a brief break from the academic pressures of school, and they appreciate the time to do nothing. She also adds that she thinks that the students have no awareness that the mindfulness meditation is making them calmer. Moreover, it is important to note that Claire, did not have any student feedback to back up her claims that students felt that way about the mindfulness instruction.

Further nuances in Claire's interview revealed that was the only teacher who explicitly discussed her perception of Black and Brown students' level of receptivity to mindfulness instruction in the ELA classroom. She observed that Black and Brown girls, especially those who she viewed as higher performing or in AP classes as having a higher receptivity to mindfulness instruction than their counterparts. She described:

I see it more, or I hear it more from the high performing students. So, and maybe because they are used to being more vocal in a classroom that they're more willing to share. But I do find that the girls who share that they are overwhelmed or that they have really bad anxiety, are willing to say, 'I really enjoy this [mindfulness instruction], this feels better. After I'm done. I like I like doing it'. Right. And then those kids tend to be more well behaved anyways, right. So not seeing a difference in terms of discipline or more that tension in the hallways and stuff. So, I don't know how or if it [mindfulness] impacts those kids, but the kids who are just kind of the higher achieving, they put a lot of stress on themselves (Claire).

Additionally, she noted that these Black and Brown girls are more "well behaved," in comparison to their male counterparts. Claire also asserts that students with more anxiety found mindfulness sessions to be helpful, which indicates her perception of a positive outcome for these students. It is also important to note that Claire admits to a lack of knowledge regarding the

impact of mindfulness instruction for students who have more anxiety despite her comments.

Further discussion of these points is explored in Cycle Four and in the discussion in chapter five.

Lastly, Manny was the only person to discuss how she navigated the challenge of student behavior during mindfulness instruction with Black and Brown students related to cell phone usage. She described that students in her digital literacy course were initially frustrated with her cell phone policy during mindfulness practices. Over time, the students became used to not having their phones when cell phone use was replaced with a mindfulness hobby with the requirement that it must be something that they can do with their hands. She explains how she began the conversation about replacing the cell phone by calling it a “replacement” she said, “so not just like rejecting or deny your cell phone thing. But a lot of that is going to be something you do in replacement of that thing, which is rolling or being on your device” (Manny). Manny also, expressed that she allowed for students to choose what they will do during their mindfulness sessions which resulted in students choosing to do what the students now call “handiwork.” She explained:

And so, they all chose something to do with their hands. They call it handiwork. So once a few students start learning how to twirl pins, they do a couple of students knitting, and using the mindfulness coloring books. So, I've got a lot of people coloring. Yeah, like, once every five classes, we just do handiwork. I play music, and the students just do their individual one, and one student learns how to juggle. He taught himself how to juggle recently, and now he just likes to juggle constantly instead of being on his phone. So yeah, I don't know if that's counted as mindfulness. But for me, I think it does because it's teenagers finding something mindful that centers them, if that makes sense (Manny).

Manny described that her Black and Brown students were initially frustrated with the prospect of being without their phones. Part of Manny's instructional approach to mindfulness requires the students in her class to participate in alternative activities that she says are a version of mindfulness such as knitting or coloring. This approach is individualized, and further discussion of her curriculum will be explored in the discussion chapter.

The insights from seven of the teachers also highlight teachers' diverse perceptions of Black and Brown students' engagement during mindfulness instruction and practices. Teachers highlighted the initial awkwardness, playful behavior, teasing, and challenges in maintaining stillness while engaging with mindfulness. Additionally, some of the teachers expressed that some students enjoyed the stillness. Teachers also shared observations regarding their perception of heightened receptivity of Black and Brown girls during mindfulness instruction.

Continuing from the examination of teachers' perceptions of students during the mindfulness sessions, the interviews also illustrate teachers' perceptions of Black and Brown students in the classroom after mindfulness instruction and practices. This sub-theme explores how teachers perceive the impact of mindfulness on Black and Brown students within their ELA classes including feedback from students including instances of resistance.

Teacher Perceptions on Black and Brown Student Feedback Post Mindfulness Instruction

The ELA teachers in this study shared varied perceptions of Black and Brown students' feedback after mindfulness instructions. A couple of the teachers noted positive feedback where the Black and Brown students expressed that they enjoyed mindfulness instruction and techniques in the ELA class. Other teachers experienced challenges like skepticism or resistance.

When asked about the type of feedback she has received from the Black and Brown students Ellie provided an anecdotal story about one of a Black boy who shared how he used the

mindfulness technique from his ELA class. Ellie described how in the first couple of classes the students in her sixth-grade class learned about “I am calm breaths” a meditative breathing practice that students can use to deal with emotional disturbances. She said that one day the Black boy came to class and give her feedback about how he is using the “I am calm breaths” in situations that occur at home. She narrates the Black Boy saying, “Oh, I tried the ‘I am calm breaths. And my, I was really mad at my brother. And it worked, you know.” Ellie saw this as a successful moment because the student was able to know when to use the “I am calm breaths’ at home. It is unclear if the situation between the two brothers were resolved from the use of this mindfulness technique. Ellie also noted that using mindfulness practices in her ELA classroom were what she calls “self-advertising” because the Black and Brown students in her class share what she perceives as positive experiences with one another and about how she uses the practices at home. Three other teachers expressed similar successes with using mindfulness in the classroom with their students’ using words like “loved it,” “wanting it” and “I can do this.”

On the other hand, three of the teachers expressed ‘pushback’ or negative feedback from the students, including skepticism, stereotyping, and resistance regarding the use of mindfulness in the ELA classes. One Black and Brown girl in Emma’s class went as far as to call mindfulness a “white lady thing to do” when asked why she didn’t want to participate in that day’s mindfulness activity. When asked about feedback from students Emma recounted that moment:

And because a couple of them were saying this is a real white lady thing to do. I was just like, tell me more about why you say that. And they were just kind of describing that archetype of, like, the hipster white woman; this is like a new age. Like, I have an oil for that kind of thing. Those kids were a little bit skeptical of it at first. And I think my go-to response was just to laugh at it. Well, yeah, I mean, what do you expect? I am a white

lady. Let's give it a shot. Like, what could it hurt? You know, maybe they're on to something (Emma).

In her recount of the feedback from the student Emma, noticed some skepticism from the Black girl in her class. Emma responded to the student with humor, and still encouraged the student to try. Further discussion of this experience will be explored in the discussion.

Next, Holly stated that she was met with resistance from two Black and Brown girls in her class that she perceived came from ongoing and past traumas she thought the students experienced. When asked about student feedback she stated, “There were two girls in my class who absolutely did not want to do mindfulness in class” (Holly). After a reflection on the students’ home lives, she began to connect the student’s resistance to mindfulness to the students’ lived experiences. She elaborates:

I did know one of them well, but I actually knew both of the girls. I did know that one girl had lost her father, her father had passed away to cancer the prior year. And then the other girl was being raised by her grandmother and her mother was in and out of legal institutions due to drug use. And I didn't realize it at the time that what was happening is that the mindfulness was triggering their trauma. So, that started something that was very uncomfortable. I mean, they went to the administration, and they said, they didn't want to do this, they wanted to transfer out of my class. And deep down, I knew that this was really going to be helpful for them, if they would be willing to try. But they were not. And I didn't know yet how to front load my classes with the trauma informed practices. But what it did, what the positive thing that it [regarding the resistance from the Black and Brown girls] did was, it gave me the idea to go get some instruction in trauma informed mindfulness (Holly).

Holly recognized that the mindfulness practice may have triggered the students' traumatic experiences. This experience led Holly to explore mindfulness teacher training to learn more about trauma informed practices.

This section of the interview data provides a diverse range of perceptions from the ELA teachers interviewed regarding Black and Brown students pre, during, and post the implementation of mindfulness instruction and practices. This range of teacher perception includes both perspectives of a positive student response and a response of skepticism and resistance. The next theme presents another finding related to teacher perception as it relates to the teacher mindset when choosing and implementing mindfulness instruction and practices.

Theme Two: Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA

The theme of mindfulness as holistic support presents teachers' perceptions regarding the purpose of mindfulness integration in their ELA classrooms. The interviews included teachers' emphasis on giving Black and Brown students more access to mental health resources or coping skills through the instruction in their classrooms.

Mindfulness as a “Toolbox” for Social-Emotional Learning in ELA. All the participants used the term “tool” or “toolbox” when speaking about their purpose or reasoning for introducing mindfulness in their ELA classroom. These teachers seem to conceptualize mindfulness as a “toolbox” or an essential tool within their teaching pedagogy to provide students with practical skills for navigating social-emotional challenges and enhancing academic performance in the classroom.

Firstly, Ellie views mindfulness as a tool to increase students' focus before performance assessments. She said, “And here, we'll often do it in sixth grade, before an assessment, or, you know, if we're being like really silly playing a game or something, and we need to focus. So, we

use it as a tool to increase focus” (Ellie). Ellie’s words express her awareness of the interconnection between students’ academic success and social emotional learning (SEL), through the integration of mindfulness as a tool to help students focus during what could be perceived as stressful tasks, such as assessments.

Both Claire and Fiona expressed the goal of using mindfulness as an essential tool to empower Black and Brown students in the classroom and beyond. Claire expressed that she encourages her students to view themselves as a "change agent," throughout their learning as they equip themselves with the mindfulness tools, they learn that will help them shape their own lives. She voiced, “So I always try to kind of just walk them through that, okay, you know, if this is how it was done with you, they did the best they can, but like you are now that cycle breaker, right” (Claire). Claire also reflected on the significance of equipping students with tools for personal growth or self-improvement. To achieve this, she draws parallels between her own therapy journey, student’s journeys, and academic success. She narrated what she tells the Black and Brown students in her classes:

Like, this is why we have these tools [referring to mindfulness]. We are going to therapy. or doing all the things that we're doing now, so that when we become parents, we don't become our parents; we're better than what they are. And I feel like it's not what I should be doing. Like it's not, that's not on an AP exam, but it just ends up being the conversations that we have a lot of times (Claire).

Here Claire, uses the word “we” in her speech to the students illustrates a collective identity or solidarity that she feels between her experience as a Black and Brown person. She also admits that her inclusion of these types of talking points are not a part of the curriculum but that she feels compelled to discuss topics like this with her Black and Brown students.

Next, Fiona adapted the mindfulness practices in her classroom as a way to increase student empowerment. Students in her classes have more choice in the mindfulness practices they select and the tools they might use.

Some people work better, but the focal point, like you just choose some objects in the room. And you just, you just look at that, as opposed to closing your eyes. So, I talked about those kinds of things. And you only have to do what you feel comfortable doing. Because this is all about you. And giving you tools to help navigate life is what I tell them. (Fiona)

Through allowing her students to select their own comfort level, Fiona helps students learn a valuable tool for not just her classroom but for life. Fiona encourages students to adapt mindfulness for their own personal needs by allowing them to use different techniques that resonate with each person.

After examining teachers' perspectives of mindfulness as a "toolbox" or "tool" that students can learn to use in academic settings, their current lives and beyond, the next section shifts the focus to the comments teachers made about mindfulness as a "pathway" for the creation of a desired classroom culture.

"Mindfulness is a Pathway" for Culture in ELA. "Mindfulness is a Pathway" theme comes from Emma who highlighted the idea that schools can use mindfulness as a pathway for creating the desired culture within the educational environment. Emma said:

So, I would also say we have the support of the administration, which is trying to build a culture of. I don't know if there's actually, but I take that back. I don't know if they're trying to create a culture of mindfulness so much. They're just recognizing that mindfulness is a pathway to the culture they're trying to create (Emma).

This theme encompasses how the teachers might use mindfulness practices to create a holistic school learning atmosphere driven by mindfulness practices. Several participants mentioned making physical changes to their classroom environment to ensure that their classroom reflected a commitment to students' holistic wellness. Some of these physical changes included the use of yoga mats, dim lighting, and affirmations on the wall to inspire the students. Emma and Ellie are two of the ELA teachers that described how they were able to create a culture of mindfulness in their classrooms or a mindfulness pathway.

Firstly, Emma used “mindful minutes,” a short mindfulness practice with her Black and Brown students at the beginning of the class to create sense of calm to impact student behavior and set a standard of the classroom behaviors she wants to see. She describes how the use of that mindfulness practice impacted student behavior to create a calm environment:

I think those mindful minutes just created a sense of calm at the beginning of class, for two classes that were anything but calm at the beginning. Like I had kids coming into and pull up on the doorframe after gym class, and just this like heightened [in reference to her feelings] your day is so hectic as a teacher. So having that moment to just calm ease into the classroom and set this standard of like, this is how we come into this space. That was a massive impact on my demeanor in the class, how I speak to them [students] when they're not easily corralled. And then yeah, the vocabulary having that shared vocabulary that we can use to talk about these things, to maintain it (Emma).

Additionally, she shared how she uses mindfulness vocabulary from the *Dot B* curriculum when speaking to her Black and Brown students to remind them of the expected classroom norms and behaviors. As an example, she described how she used the vocabulary during writing conferences in her class:

Mostly the conversations that I have with students like when we're doing writing conferences, if I can tell that, you know, they've got 15 tabs open their cell phones sitting there, and they're like, baited, they're waiting for a message or something, I'll say, I need you to clear the distractions, 'drop your pin' [a phrase from the Dot B curriculum], do you need a minute, I can come back if you just need a minute to get yourself present (Emma).

Through the incorporation of the vocabulary from the Dot B curriculum Emma extends the mindfulness instruction of the class through the use of common language. The phrase "drop your pin" that she says to students during the work period serves as a reminder of the desired behaviors of the calm environment Emma wants to uphold.

Additionally, Ellie shared that she thinks that mindfulness helps build the type of classroom environment where students can become aware of their traumas. She explains:

Yes, I think yes. Um, but again, I think that goes to building your classroom environment. I don't think that's specific to mindfulness. I think that that's specific to your relationships with your students. And if, if at any time during mindfulness trauma would come up for a student. I am confident that they [Black and Brown students] would know that they can leave. They can stop, they can stay, they can come back. I'm confident that they [Black and Brown students] would know that they had options and would be okay. Because I just think kids need to feel emotionally safe no matter what. And that would just be that's just another experience in which I would hope that they would feel safe (Ellie).

Both of these participants see mindfulness practices, which includes changes in the physical setting of the classroom, as a way of building a culture of calm, and emotional safety.

In addition to the concept of mindfulness as a “pathway” for the creation of the desired classroom culture, as highlighted by Emma, the researcher now examines the strategies teachers used to create mindful environments that aim to reduce stress.

Mindfulness and Student Stress in ELA. Teachers’ perceptions of student stress were another prominent sub-theme. In the analysis of teachers’ perceptions of student stress, words emerged as indicators of the challenges teachers perceive that Black and Brown students experience in their academic and social environments. Words such as “overwhelm,” “pressure,” “anxiety,” and “stress” were frequently used to express teachers’ perceptions of the pressures that Black and Brown students experience. Additionally, teachers used words like “support,” “well-being,” “resilience,” and “coping mechanism” to illustrate the importance of fostering an environment conducive to students' learning. Lastly, teachers used phrases like “social interaction,” “inclusive environments,” and “peer support networks” were used frequently to highlight how positive social relationships mitigate stress by providing a sense of belonging to students. These words and phrases provide insights into the teacher’s perceptions of student stress that Black and Brown students face.

Many of the teachers expressed their perceptions that student stress was a result of the assignments, assessments, extracurricular activities, and peer pressures that their Black and Brown students faced. Notably, Claire shared that she uses mindfulness as a tool for her high-performing students to have a way to deal with anxiety since therapy worked for her. She notes: “And so I thought it would be beneficial to show the tools of that. But I also saw how helpful it was for me because I have, you know, a lot of anxiety and so and especially during that time, so that's kind of why I've incorporated it, like on a weekly basis in my class” (Claire). Claire

thought that the mindfulness practices used in her classroom routine would help her Black and Brown students gain a coping mechanism for managing stress and anxiety.

Equally important, many of the teachers' reflections emphasize the importance of teaching Black and Brown students' tools that will help them deal with specific stressors tied to social media and the digital age. Manny illustrates how she accounts for social media stressors in her classroom curriculum: "And how are we [teachers] going to help kids develop the tools and the skills that they need to survive? Which is what I see myself as doing in the digital literacy class. Like, they don't know how to survive right now. Like, they're like, desperate for like, alternative ways of functioning [in relation to mindfulness]" (Manny). In her interview, Manny spoke about her perception of social media being a major factor in helping Black and Brown students learn to survive. She believes that mindfulness can become the "alternative way of functioning" instead of students using social media.

In addition to perceptions about mindfulness as a solution to student stress, one teacher also spoke about mindfulness as a solution to mental health issues that Black and Brown students may face.

Teachers' Perceptions of Black and Brown Student Mental Health. Mental health was one of the lesser sub-themes, as only one teacher reflected on the importance of mental health. Emma expressed that one of her goals in integrating mindfulness into her classroom was to increase Black and Brown students' access to mental health. In her interview, she described her perception of mental health disparities in mental health services in the United States for Black and Brown students. She expressed, "Um, now I am, I think, more than anything else, I felt that I was helping students of color more than my white students, just because I feel like, in general, white students have better access to mental health resources" (Emma).

Teacher participants in the study perceived mindfulness as influencing the integration of holistic wellness in their classroom and beyond. Teaching students to use mindfulness “tools,” to respond to mindfulness vocabulary, creating physical spaces with mindfulness cues, and teaching students’ mindfulness as a response to stress were all mentioned as ways mindfulness practices can be used beyond the classroom. While mindfulness was introduced as a “tool” to combat classroom stress, such as calming a student before an assessment, it was not emphasized as much as a “tool” for addressing mental health.

Following the exploration of the teachers’ perceptions of mindfulness as holistic support for ELA classrooms, the researcher delves into how these ideologies impact their mindfulness framework in chapter five. The researcher now examines the teacher types of curricula.

Theme Three: Different Types of Mindfulness Curriculum

This theme illustrated the different types of mindfulness curricula, or lack thereof, that the ELA teachers integrate as a modality for facilitating and/or teaching mindfulness. This theme reveals the varied approaches these teachers used when teaching mindfulness. It was also of concern that many of these participants were not provided with a mindfulness curriculum by their school or districts, nor were the choices of mindfulness curriculum suitable for meeting students' needs. Mindfulness apps were more likely to be used by teacher participants to facilitate their teaching than were a comprehensive curriculum. The interviews revealed that teachers primarily focused on literary integration, quietude, and utilizing online meditation apps as the modality for delivering mindfulness curricula. The theme shows the varied approaches that teachers use that teachers use to integrate mindfulness into their ELA classrooms.

Literacy. The most popular form of mindfulness curriculum for Black and Brown students was through the instruction of literacy skills in the teachers' respective classrooms. The most prevalent of this type of instruction was journaling and writing for reflection in connection to another course curriculum. Manny said that this focus has even been integrated into the school rubrics. She describes the importance of the connection between literacy and mindfulness:

“Awareness, metacognition, thinking about how they're interacting with their mouths, and how they're thinking about their world? We just had a reflection and almost all of them shared at some point in our discussion about how they are more aware. In general, it is body sensation and emotion. Feelings, as you know, they just have so much more; they have exponentially increased their self-awareness and metacognition. (Manny).

Manny discussed how she gave students a reflection assignment and the students self-reported having more awareness of body sensations, and emotions after being in her class.

The second most prevalent version of mindfulness in literacy was discussions, many of which were connected to the literature that students read. Teachers expressed that they encouraged students to consider their personal connection to the text including emotional, or mindful connections. This encouragement includes students' reflection on personal struggles, which teachers note were an important part of the classroom instruction. For example, Spinner shared that he held discussions around texts like *House on Mango Street*, where students are prompted to consider different perspectives than their own. He describes the directions and activities that he tells the students:

I always try to say, if a character is doing something really stupid, or like not really considering what's going on, 'Oh, isn't this character doing something that's not such a smart idea. Like if we were there, we would do X, Y, and Z'. So those mindfulness

lessons are just being woven into the lesson. And allow the students to be like, ‘Oh, what do you think this character should have done?’ Instead of ‘I think this character should have done this.’ And it helps them kind of understand conflict resolution, in ways that they've never really considered before. And it just sort of like develops through the conversations we have (Spinner).

Spinner uses the mindfulness with a novel by having the students examining the behaviors and also exploring the characters emotions in the texts. He also prompts his Black and Brown students to explore different perspectives in the book.

Claire, the only participant who had a school-mandated mindfulness program, spoke about the use of mindfulness to connect to the ‘heavier’ texts that the AP students read in the class. She describes,

But yeah, in conversations, I can make those connections to why we need to be able to slow down or just reconnect with ourselves in our bodies. Because we are just constantly overstimulated, the world is never quiet. So, we have to find that time for ourselves. So, I think in those conversations, sometimes when we're just breaking down a text or just going over what I'm asking them to do, it ends up popping up here, and they're in my AP class. I think I do a lot of heavier texts when we talk a lot about like, generational trauma, and how that is passed on to us. So, I think those things also come up in those conversations (Claire).

Claire highlighted her perception that people slowing down and reconnecting with ourselves is important due to the overstimulation of the world which is a common trope in the books that she reads with her Black and Brown students.

Last, teachers used literature to connect the characters’ lives to students’ mindfulness

practice through discussion. Six of the participants mentioned the use of literature for the type of curriculum they use. Ellie approached this by creating a safe and supportive environment so that her Black and Brown students felt comfortable sharing their experiences and insights related to the study of literature. She describes:

My Black and Brown students are sometimes like, yeah, and some of them will feel comfortable stepping up and sharing because their parents have shared history and stories with them. And so that's usually a time where, because of the environment we've built, and because of the safety, that they will speak up sometimes, or they speak up during the Renaissance lesson and gives them confidence that because I'm going to, you're my expert, like, when we read *Ghost Boys*, I'm gonna want you to share with us, you know, the things that we know, but not in the way of speaking for all Black people, like not in that way (Ellie).

Through the validation of students' voices and experiences, Ellie, like many others in the study, hoped to empower students by seeing how mindfulness practices can help students feel more comfortable speaking in the classroom. In addition to incorporating mindfulness into literacy in ELA teachers also used quietude.

Quietude. All teachers utilized various practices to create a sense of quiet, foster tranquility, calm, or silence through the mindfulness instruction with Black and Brown students. These practices included quiet sitting, observing silence during exercises, and maintaining a calm atmosphere. A central part of this type of curriculum was the emphasis of creating atmospheres conducive to reflection and stress reduction. The teachers in the study often used words like “respectful,” “mindful,” “quiet,” and “engaged” to describe the types of behaviors they observed from their Black and Brown students. As an example, Spinner said that the practice of mindfulness made his Black and Brown students have more respect during a group outing. He describes an outing to a beach:

I remember walking down to the beach one time because, my last year there [in reference to the beach field trip], I was like, ‘Yeah, let's go walk down to the beach and have some fun’. We went to a grocery store just on the way, and around 20 of us were there. And they were all really, really respectful. They're really mindful of the kind of good place they're going into and how they might get judged being a group of 30 kids. And we're, they're being really nice, being respectful (Spinner).

He emphasized the students' quiet and respectful behavior in public spaces that he accounts as an indicator of success for his mindfulness teaching.

Furthermore, Ellie begins her classes with a silent sitting, or meditation to establish a reflective atmosphere, providing students with a space for introspection, although this can inadvertently prioritize certain communication norms. Ellie introduces "I am calm breaths" as a tool for students to regulate stress, encouraging mindfulness beyond the classroom. This empowers students by promoting self-regulation and agency. She also spoke about how she

addresses common challenges, such as social pressure, through encouraging individual quiet practice:

But you have to be quiet. Like, I really don't care if you do it or not. Then I talk about how good it is for them. And I talked about how I do it. And I talk about how it's very different from the mindfulness they've learned about before (Ellie).

Additionally, Claire and Fiona create quiet spaces for their students, recognizing the overstimulation in educational environments. Claire highlights the challenge of maintaining focus amid distractions, while Fiona uses "brown noise" to create a calming atmosphere conducive to learning.

In addition to mindfulness practices that emphasized quiet, teachers also discussed the use of meditation applications or apps on their phones in the classroom.

“There’s an app for that.” In addition to quiet and silence, all the teachers mentioned that they leveraged online meditation tools to enhance their classroom mindfulness instruction. The most popular app used by the ELA teachers was Headspace, which supplemented their classroom instruction.

Additionally, the teachers went beyond the use of the apps in the classroom; they also encouraged their students to use the app at home, acknowledging the importance of extending mindfulness practices beyond the classroom. For example, Claire says,

I brought my phone into the classroom. And I would start class and class with a mindfulness practice from the app *Calm*. And I got a free subscription to it because I was using it in my classroom, which was kind of cool, too. And I noticed that the students really, for the most part, they didn't really enjoy the transition from what they were doing

before our class, then at the end of class to what they were going to do next, which in my case was often the end of the day (Claire).

Claire used a free subscription to the mindfulness app *Calm* in her classroom with her Black and Brown students. She noticed that the students often struggled with the transition from the mindfulness practices in her class to their homelives since her class was often held at the end of the day. As a solution to the problem, Claire suggested that her students also download the app on their phones for use at home.

Table 3 represents the different types of mindfulness apps used by these teacher participants.

Table 3.

Mindfulness apps used by these teacher participants

App	Description	Frequency Mentioned by Participants
10% Happier	Provided guided meditations and talks focused on improving work and personal life.	1
Calm	Sleep and guided meditation app. Includes music, and sleep stories.	2
Insight Timer	Provides guided meditations and unguided meditations.	1
Plum Village	App made by Thich Nhat Hanh, includes mindfulness meditations for daily life.	1
Headspace	Guided meditations and mindfulness. Includes different levels beginner and experienced	5
YouTube	Video platform that has a selection of meditation content including guided meditations, meditation music and more.	2

As noted in Table 3, five of the seven participants mentioned the Headspace app as one they used as their classroom mindfulness curriculum. Other notable apps mentioned include 10% Happier, Calm, Insight Timer, Plum Village, and YouTube. These apps offer different features

designed to help individuals support their mindfulness practices. For example, Plum Village, inspired by the teachings of Thich Nhất Hạnh, has guided meditations, Dharma talks, and mindfulness exercises grounded in Buddhist tradition. On the other hand, Headspace has guided meditations, mindfulness exercises, and sleep sounds designed to cultivate mindfulness and improve sleep. The Headspace app has a personalized approach, including various personalized features such as mood tracking, yoga sessions, and guided meditations. It is important to note that while these apps offer resources for mindfulness practices, they are not specifically tailored for Black and Brown populations, and none of the participants who used apps mentioned making adaptations based on the ages of the participants since the age of these apps are mostly adults.

Lesson Plans. Emma and Ellie used lesson plans for their mindfulness curriculum. Emma partnered with her school's mental health professional to select a mindfulness curriculum to use in her ELA classes. The mental health specialist suggested that Emma use the "Dot D" curriculum from the United Kingdom developed by MiSP. Emma said that the purpose of the curriculum was to develop student self-awareness, emotional regulation, and positive, engaging activities and discussions. Dots curriculum offers flexible sessions tailored to children 3-6 years old that could be delivered in ten to twenty-minute increments, specifically for preschool or school settings.

Three of the participants in the study received training from Mindful Schools: Manny, Ellie, and Holly. All three of them expressed that dealing with students' complex reactions to the mindfulness curriculum, including but not limited to adverse reactions to turning off the lights during meditation and perceptions of student trauma, led them to seek out professional development for their mindfulness instruction. Mindful Schools is an organization that promotes mindfulness in education and offers training programs designed to equip teachers with tools and

techniques to integrate mindfulness in their classrooms. The curriculum emphasizes the cultivation of mindfulness skills such as attention, emotional regulation, and compassion.

In addition to her Mindful Schools curriculum, Manny created an elective ELA class that infuses mindfulness with digital literacy in a class she calls “digital literacy.” Throughout her interview, Manny emphasized that she wanted to create a class that would provide students with the tools and strategies to navigate the digital world in a mindful or balanced way. The class explores topics such as algorithms, screen time management, and social media use. As a culminating project for this class, students are required to put their phones away and instead take up a new hobby or skill that the students call “handiwork.”

The use of a comprehensive mindfulness curriculum and/or related mindfulness lesson plans was a rare find in the practices of these teacher participants. Rather, mindfulness apps were much more prevalent, with the Headspace app being used by 5 of the 7 participants to facilitate mindfulness in their classrooms. Literary methods and discussions were also used to facilitate mindfulness in the classroom, along with the practice of silence or quiet. The lack of formal teacher training in mindfulness brings more interest to the lack of curriculum, which leaves most curriculum and instruction in this area to each teacher’s personal development.

In summary, various sections of mindfulness curricula used by secondary ELA teachers was explored and highlights a range of approaches from literacy techniques to the use of mindfulness apps. The next section will examine the cultural consideration of mindfulness instruction and curriculum.

Theme Four: Cultural Considerations of Mindfulness Instruction and Curriculum

This theme refers to how teachers navigated integrating mindfulness into their secondary ELA classrooms. An analysis of the teachers’ perceptions regarding this theme encompasses

teachers' experiences, strategies, and challenges concerning integrating mindfulness practices within the context of their ELA classrooms. The first theme, "crystals," captures teachers' awareness of Black and Brown students' spirituality and the use of culturally responsive approaches to mindfulness instruction. The subsequent theme talks about how teachers did not make any culturally responsive adaptations.

Crystals. The sub-theme "Crystals" comes from a quote from Claire, and it represents how three of the seven participants explicitly acknowledge the spiritual practices of Black and Brown students. Three of the participants acknowledged their Black and Brown students' personal spiritual practices as a part of mindfulness practice, while one of those three participants expressed a level of caution with this type of implementation. This teacher participant delivered a mindfulness curriculum devoid of spiritual elements because she believed it might alienate students whose cultural backgrounds are intertwined with spiritual traditions. One of the participants dismissed the Black and Brown students' spiritual culture.

Claire embraced the students' spiritual background by affirming their spiritual background and interests, thereby demonstrating culturally responsive spirituality. When asked whether she experienced any pushback from the implementation of mindfulness in the classroom, she said:

And some of them are already kind of in that realm, like, they like crystals and chakras and talking about all of these things. So, some of them are already in, in that vein, they just don't, maybe haven't seen like, adding this really quick thing at the beginning or the end of your day can be something that just complements some of the stuff that you're interested already. And right like that spirituality stuff, I feel like it's all connected to this kind of practice (Claire).

Claire's commentary shows an awareness that mediation may not be a new concept for the Black and Brown students that she teaches. By acknowledging that some of her students already understood concepts like crystals, chakras, and spirituality, she demonstrates an awareness of the connections that her students may have between culture and spirituality.

Similarly, Spinner also embraced his students' religious background as a cultural element that he tied to mindfulness teaching in his ELA classroom. Spinner describes a sixteen-step practice that aligns with Islamic teachings, the religious practice that is the most prevalent in his community. He explained that the school's 16-Step program meets twice a week for thirty minutes to discuss character development within the context of the Islamic religion. Spinner's approach incorporates the students' religious background by infusing the curriculum with Islamic tenets in a manner that resonates with the cultural backgrounds of his students. He further explains that the mindfulness curriculum aligns with the Islamic core beliefs.

In contrast, Holly emphasized that the community she taught in was predominantly Catholic. As a result, she avoided the spiritual or Buddhist vocabulary commonly used for mindfulness; instead, she opted for what she called a "nondenominational" use of language when instructing. Holly said:

We're predominantly Catholic, as far as a traditional religion goes. And I grew up Catholic. So, I'm pretty aware of not using words like the Holy Spirit and things like that and vocabulary like that. I will try to use the word social-emotional learning because the teachers are aware of that. The students have been that word, that acronym, or that SEL has come up a lot. So that's a nondenominational type of wording. I don't do yoga with them. Some people might think that that's also a spiritual practice. I do mindful

movement, but I don't call it yoga, even if some of the movements may be sort of yoga-ish (Holly).

In the excerpt, Holly describes her deliberate avoidance of religious terminology but instead opts for neutral language such as “Social Emotional Learning” (SEL) to accommodate the predominantly Catholic background of their community. Holly continues, “And I don't even use the word spirit tool at all, or sacred or any of that, I just tell them, things like this will be beneficial for your relaxation in school and your stress” (Holly).

Echoing this same behavior of omission, Emma avoids acknowledging her student's spiritual practice when asked about using mindfulness in the classroom. Emma perceives that Black and Brown's students associate mindfulness with white behavior. In the narration, Emma claims that the student expressed, “I have an oil,” illustrating a potential spiritual or cultural practice that the student uses instead of mindfulness to do the same thing; Emma made no mention of whether she asked further questions to the student about their spiritual culture or identity in relation to the oil. Further discussion of this theme will appear in chapter five.

While some of the teachers chose to make cultural adaptations for their Black and Brown students by adapting the curriculum to reflect students' needs, the interview data also showed that teachers made adaptations in their curriculum for student choice.

No Adaptation. In the study, the ELA teachers were asked if they made any culturally responsive adaptations to the mindfulness curriculum that they used with Black and Brown students. Five of the seven teachers said they did not make any culturally responsive adaptations to their curriculum, as evident in the interviews. Ellie expressed a lack of intentional connection between the Black and Brown students and the curriculum that she uses in the classroom. For instance, Ellie explained, “Um, I don't think that I made much adaptation in terms of

differentiating the curriculum for the students of color versus the white students” (Ellie). She elaborated in the interview that she did not feel that her 10th-grade class needed culturally responsive adaptations for her class. However, she noted those students had some challenges with executive functioning and emotional regulation. Additionally, Ellie acknowledged that she accounted for the significant number of Black and Brown students in her class but did not attempt to make any adaptations. Furthermore, Ellie also acknowledged her oversight in integrating cultural or personal sensitivities; she responded:

No, you're making me feel really bad about it. No, I really don't. I haven't. I haven't looked at any research, and I don't even have knowledge of how it would affect kids differently related to race or ethnicity. I haven't ever looked at that. I'm going to now, though (Ellie).

The teachers' comments show a lack of culturally responsive adaptations for the mindfulness instruction and practices used. Chapter five will include a deeper discussion into this sub-theme.

In summary, the participants in this study clearly had various ways of adapting mindfulness in a culturally responsive way for their Black and Brown students, from the acknowledgment of religion or spirituality to no adaptation or change. Further discussions on this theme are provided in the following chapter. After exploring participants' use of culturally responsive pedagogy, the researcher examines teachers' perceptions of Black and Brown students' trauma with the mindfulness curriculum.

Theme Five: Navigating Trauma-Related Challenges

This theme illustrates how teachers navigate trauma-related challenges that mindfulness practices may cause. In addition, this theme reflects how teacher participants report Black and Brown students' responses to mindfulness practices in ways that could be perceived as harmful

or traumatizing to Black and Brown students. For example, teacher participants discussed how Black and Brown's students had expressed issues of mindfulness practice, such as mind lighting and closing eyes as triggering.

Turn off the Lights. The sub-theme “turn off the lights” describes the trauma informed considerations about lighting that the teachers made to accommodate student needs. A couple of the teachers spoke about how lighting or instructing students to close their eyes can be triggering to some of their Black and Brown students. Fiona used “Christmas lights” to accommodate students who may find a lack of lighting triggering. A couple of other teachers mentioned giving students choices in closing their eyes because it might be a potential trigger for students. Emma describes her first experience when a student had issues with the direction of closing their eyes during the mindfulness meditation:

But one of the things that we quickly learned in Southern Poverty Law training that we can't completely shut the lights off. And I think it's the same sort of thing where you're planning things. For example, when you're well intended, and you go to, like, put your hand on a child's back to comfort them, and you don't realize that they're triggered by touch and things like that. And I think that was one of the things in southern our we, we hadn't considered, that trauma response, or just, you know, having that in our mind while you're planning. And so, I can say that we did it after the mental health specialist had left. Mandy, my co-teacher, turned all the lights off. And I think we also had the shades closed that day; for some reason, maybe I had shown a movie earlier. And it was pretty much pitch dark in my classroom, other than for just the smartboard, which was playing the mindful minute video. And one of my students stood up and requested that we put the lights on, like, pretty aggressively (Emma).

Emma's interview shed light on the importance of giving students choices in closing their eyes. Her training from Southern Poverty Law showed her the importance of teachers' adaptability to the needs of some Black and Brown students who may be triggered from the meditation's directions.

Trained teachers by Mindful Schools echoed the importance of allowing for students to have autonomy during mindfulness practices since it can be triggering to some students to close their eyes. As an example, Holly decided to allow her students to choose whether or not they wanted to close their eyes after receiving mindfulness training from Mindful Schools. Holly states:

“Yeah, so specific. The most important one I have incorporated is that I don't require it. I encouraged and invited students to close their eyes but didn't require it. I make it clear that it's better for them if they don't look at each other. If they look, you know that they gaze at a neutral spot in front of them. But I don't require the closing of eyes; I might, at some, every so often, say try it this time; try for just one minute or two minutes. And if it's uncomfortable, that's fine” (Holly).

In her classroom, Holly gave students in her ELA classes the autonomy to close their eyes during the meditation practices. She also, emphasized that she makes it clear to the students of the different choices they have during the meditation practices to ensure students understand which options they have while meditating.

This section examined the teachers' perspectives about how teachers navigate trauma-related challenges with Black and Brown students in the classroom. Specifically, this section examined teacher perceptions and consideration for lighting and student autonomy when closing

eyes. Teachers in the study also discuss home-related challenges that Black and Brown students face that may impact the student's mindfulness including generational trauma.

Teacher Perceptions of Home-Related Challenges. In this section the research examines a couple of teachers perspectives on how home-related challenges impact mindfulness instruction with Black and Brown students. In Holly's interview she attributed traumatic home-related challenges that a couple of her Black and Brown girls faced as their reason for disengagement or pushback to mindfulness instruction in her class. She described that both girls went to the administration to discuss their disdain for mindfulness; "There's usually in the classroom, some students that I can tell have some rough background, maybe rough family background" (Holly). She said that because of having these students, she not only sought out teacher training but also changed the way that she spoke to the class.

Like Holly, Claire also spoke about the impact that Black and Brown students' home lives can have on students' mindfulness instruction. She argued that Black and Brown student have generational traumas or psychological wounds that are passed down from generation to generation. She believes that the prevalence of generational trauma necessitates the use of mindfulness instruction or practices in her ELA classrooms students can "slow down" and "reconnect with their bodies." Claire emphasized the creation of a space that gives Black and Brown students the ability to reconnect with themselves, especially in face of the overstimulated world that is devoid of quite. Moreover, she believes that the creation of this space for Black and Brown students in their ELA classes should also include the discussion of topics such as "generational trauma."

The participants in the study had different ways of perceiving the impact of student trauma that resulted in student discomfort with lighting and closing their eyes, traumatic home

lives, and generational trauma. Further discussions on this theme are provided in the following chapter.

Following the exploration of teachers' perceptions of trauma, the interview data sheds light on participants' perceptions of personal mindfulness practice and different types of support.

Theme Six: Teachers Personal Mindfulness Practice and Support

This theme delves into teachers' perceptions of their own mindfulness practice and its influence on their decision to use mindfulness in their ELA classroom. This theme also explores the levels of support the teachers receive from their professional communities in terms of embracing and integrating mindfulness into their ELA classrooms. This theme sheds light on the teachers' interactions in an educational environment.

Yes, I do it. Six of the seven ELA teachers in the study reported that they maintain their own mindfulness or meditation practice. The title of this theme comes from Fiona, who described her nightly mindfulness, "Yes, I do it. And I don't do exactly what I do with them. But every night, I practice mindfulness pretty faithfully, almost every night, unless I fall asleep. But I practice it faithfully before I go to sleep" (Fiona). Fiona expressed that she has a nightly mindfulness practice that she used faithfully. Additionally, among the other six participants, there were many modalities of mindfulness practices that teachers used in addition to general self-care. The teachers used words like 'more present' and 'settling down' to describe some of the feeling's teachers felt after maintaining mindfulness practice. The teachers emphasized that the mindfulness practices benefited them personally and also helped equip them with tools to support Black and Brown students.

Furthermore, some teachers described their use of mindfulness for personal emotional regulation. Claire and Holly shared that they had 'anxiety' which is why they have a daily

mindfulness practice. Holly shared her poignant experience; she began using mindfulness after she experienced a sequence of tragic events at her school. She says,

And I remembered that I had had a meditation practice many, many years ago that I had started when I first had some health issues, and it had really helped me. And I was at a loss of what to do because I was devastated. And I would come to work and cry a lot. I just had a hard time getting through the day. So, I decided to beef up my meditation practice at that point to help me with my mental health. And then I had this realization that if it helped, if it's helped, helping me, which it was, and it was, I was using an app on my phone at the time, I thought, if it's helping me, then maybe it will help my students, they knew these students that had passed away. They knew them personally.

Holly turned her mindfulness practice into a coping mechanism for the personal struggles she faced after realizing mindfulness's potential to reduce stress and enhance mental health.

Moreover, three participants disclosed their engagement in therapy as a form of self-care, which led to their mindfulness journey. Spinner said that the 'chaotic' nature of teaching led him to seek mental health resources and practice mindfulness. He describes:

Like teaching is so stressful. Having the ability to just focus on myself and practice mindfulness when it's in a less stressful situation has really helped me. For example, when I'm in a super chaotic classroom, I think in my first few year's meditation really helped. But, like, even when I'm stressed, like a lot of kids being stupid today, I would just like breathe in, breathe out, focus on what I can call out, the kids who need to be called out and don't try to like to make it seem like it's a big conflict, just sort of keep the class going. And it was really helpful in that way (Spinner).

Spinner describes teaching as stressful, but that finding the time to practice mindfulness has helped him focus. He thinks that mindfulness practices helped him in the first years of his teaching; meditation really helped him breathe and focus on including calling out the Black and Brown students' behavior without creating conflict in the class.

Other participants also shared this same sentiment that teaching was used as a way of dealing with the daily pressures of teaching, leading them to seek professional challenges and enhance their overall resilience. Fiona shared:

Yeah, I've never done the day of mindfulness because I don't really know how I would extend that by itself. Also, I've done it in therapy. So, to me, we do, maybe we do it at the end, or we do it at the beginning and talk about how I cope. And then, like, I know that teachers are nowadays where everything is right; we're parents, we're therapists, and we're all of these things. But I'm a little trepidatious with, with doing that a lot with them because stuff comes out right and like, I don't necessarily know how to handle all of it, because that's not my training, like I'm reading, writing and all of that stuff, not necessarily know how to kind of hold all of that properly (Fiona).

At first, Fiona was hesitant about using mindfulness practices in her classroom because she had concerns about her capacity to handle emotional disclosures from the students. She argued that she doesn't know how to address the things her students will say since she has no formal training and that is outside of the scope of her job as an ELA teacher.

Lastly, Manny and Holly mentioned they were a part of a Zen Sangha, as a type of support. Zen Sangha's are a group of people who gather frequently to participate in discussions related to Zen philosophy. These meetings typically include long moments of silence, guided meditation, chanting, and lectures or discussions on Buddhist teachings. Holly mentioned in her

interview that when she taught, she made it a point to attend mindfulness retreats or regularly attend her Zen Sangha to cultivate resilience while teaching.

In tandem with teachers' personal mindfulness practices, the data showed that teachers had different opinions about the role of school-wide support.

School-wide support.

Five of the teachers felt supported by their administration or school district. For example, throughout Emma's interview, she emphasized the collaborative efforts between teachers and administration in implementing mindfulness practices. She states, "I wound up finding a resource, and we actually got a grant. And so, we have a mental health specialist (Emma)." In addition to the school mental health specialist, she also spoke about a teacher mindfulness support group that she attributes to building her confidence in the use of mindfulness in the classroom. She described how another teacher helped,

But it was, honestly, [colleague name]. She is our AP Psychology teacher; her way of explaining it [referring to mindfulness] and one of the meetings we had just made more sense to me. She made this comment about how, at the very least, it can't hurt to try it because it's not like it's expensive or anything like that (Emma).

Emma states that another teacher in the building explained how mindfulness may help her in the classroom. The other teacher emphasized the low cost of mindfulness practices, since most programs are free, in addition to the perception that mindfulness would not "hurt" students are viable reasons for using it in the classroom.

Ellie echoed Emma's sentiment that the administration and other teachers were a large part of the school-wide support that she experienced. When asked if she has support to do mindfulness in the schools, she said,

My school really doesn't tell me what I have to do. I have a lot of freedom within my classroom, and I see them 90 minutes every other day. Within those 90 minutes, I can do whatever I want to do as long as I'm teaching them the curriculum. The nice thing for me in English is that I also teach leadership. So, we talk about leadership and a growth mindset—leadership, growth mindset, and mindfulness (Ellie).

She also suggests that other teachers' use of mindfulness greatly influenced her use of mindfulness in her school. Ellie says, “So they come to me from fifth grade, having had that sort of experience with mindfulness, but then some of them had me in first grade” (Ellie). She suggests that other teachers in her building use mindfulness in their classroom as well, so her Black and Brown students are used to the mindfulness practices.

In contrast, Claire, who worked in a school district with a mandate to teach mindfulness, still felt that she wasn't supported by the administration or other teachers in the school.

None. It's just me doing what I think might work. And that's kind of reflective of what the Department of Education does. They say, here's what we're focusing on, and then there are no resources. And then, two years after that, they want to focus on something else and just abandon it. So, it was not surprising. I do know that other schools have wellness centers. I don't really know what they can do there, but I know that they want teachers to be kind of like these key points of meditation and wellness.

Claire highlighted her perception of a lack of resources, and consistency from the Department of Education in her state regarding the mindfulness mandate. Additionally, she mentioned that other schools have “wellness centers” in her district but her school does not which suggests an inequality in the distribution of resources for mindfulness instruction and practices.

Fiona also shared similar sentiments to Claire about the lack of administrative support for a school-wide approach to mindfulness instruction:

We don't have enough time in my class to implement it. But that would be easier if it were our priority throughout the school. So that is like I said: we devoted a day, not a whole day, but part of a day, to it in my last district, and it was like a school-wide initiative. And it seemed important and serious. And so, the students took it that way. But I think if I tried to fit that in now, there just isn't room because we're trying to keep up with the other teacher who also teaches this class.

In her previous school, Fiona perceived benefits of the school-wide mindfulness initiative. According to her, the initiative led to an importance and seriousness on behalf of the students and staff. However, she noted that her current school has some challenges including time constraints and other priorities that hinder a school-wide approach.

Like the school-wide support, teachers also expressed the external support systems that impacted their mindfulness instruction, including parental support.

Parental Support. Another type of support that all teachers mentioned was parental support's role in their mindfulness instruction, with mixed perceptions of Black and Brown student parents' support for mindfulness being in their school. Spinner expressed frustration with his perception of the parent's lack of response when he attempted to engage them with information about his use of mindfulness in the classroom. He said, "What I would call parents are like, Hey, your kids, actually not they wouldn't get a response. So, I was like, You know what, I'll just start teaching it in my classroom" (Spinner). Although he did not garner support from his Black and Brown students' parents, he still decided to do mindfulness activities in his classroom. Later in his interview, he stated that he had success collaborating with one student's

parents about the child's disruptive behavior in class. He suggested to the parents the integration of mindfulness techniques at home, noting, “We talked about different mindfulness techniques that he could be doing at home at the same time. And the mom was really supportive of that” (Spinner).

Other educators, like Manny, discussed connecting with first-generation American Black and Brown students to combat academic pressures their parents put on them children to be perfect or achieve. She describes,

“But academic pressure can feel different for students who are first generation. I encounter that in every single one of my classrooms. So, a conversation with a student whose first generation, especially when I'm thinking of my digital literacy, is often directly linked to how my parents pressure me to do perfectly at school and how it gets internalized. And so, I think a lot about those kids when I'm designing a more experimental class like this because some of their personal questions are often like, how do I demonstrate to my parents that I'm doing a class work? And I'm like, well, this is primarily a formative class. And so, it's going to look way more process-oriented, very hard pill to swallow, not the kids that are against it, but they bring to me your parents' concerns consistently” (Manny).

Manny also noted that what she describes as the “formative design” that she uses makes it hard to create “on-ramps” for parents to understand why process learning is an important part of the digital literacy class.

Last, Fiona said that since her class is a college-credit high school class, she doesn't need to communicate with the families since she wants to set the tone for college life. She explained:

I try not to talk to families when I don't have to for a variety of reasons, but mostly, I teach college, this college class. And so, I'm trying to, and I even tell the parents from the very beginning, I email them all, and say, 'My preference is that the communication comes from the student because it's a college class. When you go to college, you don't communicate with your students' professors, like the professors will only communicate with the students.' So, I'm trying to set that tone. But of course, I am at a high school. So, it's something that they need to reach me they can (Fiona).

Fiona explained that she preferred limited communication with the parents or families to help Black and Brown students learn how to communicate in their future academic endeavors. She explained her perception that parents of students do not communicate with professors, so she wants to teach students this skill.

In conclusion, this section provided a description of the participants, outlined the Cycle Three of the data analysis cycle and presented the initial themes or findings from Cycle Three. Six key themes, including teachers' perceptions Black and Brown students' pre-mindfulness instruction, and the variations in the types of mindfulness curriculum used with Black and Brown students. Additionally, this chapter examined teacher's perceptions of cultural considerations for mindfulness instruction and trauma related challenges. The next section will provide context for the creation of the final lenses of this study.

Cycle Four: Creation of Final Lenses

In the following sections of chapter three, the use of the personal pronouns was intentionally done by the researcher to follow the principles of intuitive inquiry and offers insight on the researcher's chosen meditative or intuitive process (Anderson, 2011). The meditative approach or intuitive process of using music or DJing will be explored later in Chapter Five and

elements of this process will appear in the following section. Through using personal pronouns, the researcher illustrates transparency by giving the readers an understanding of the researcher's role and perspective (Anderson, 2005). According to Rosemarie Anderson, transparency is important for readers to examine the researcher's biases, and influence on the outcomes of the study (Anderson, 2011). Additionally, the use of personal pronouns prompts reflexivity through the researcher's engagement in self-awareness and examination of the researcher's positionality, assumptions, and biases throughout the study (Anderson, 2011). Last, the inclusion of personal pronouns allows for the researcher to address their biases which adds to a more nuanced understanding of the data (Anderson, 2011). The rest of this section will explain my Cycle Four process and reveal the final lenses I will use for my analysis in Chapter Five.

Analysis Steps

As informed by the hermeneutic circle of understanding, I meticulously identified issues, questions, concerns, and limitations associated with the analytical process as it relates to my research topic and research questions. (Anderson, 2005) in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. Through the intuitive inquiry process, this introspective examination extended to my transformation and the broader implications for the world (Anderson, 2011) of secondary ELA pedagogy. It's important to emphasize that the research was inherently cyclical and encompassed my own experiences within each cycle of the analysis. The cyclical nature allowed me to continuously build upon my understanding and incorporate new insights gained from each phase of the subsequent cycles. Using this iterative and self-reflective approach, I strived to ensure rigor and validity while fostering a deeper connection to the material's implications.

In the intuitive inquiry methodology, the preliminary lenses or topics explored in Chapter Two are the foundation of the analysis of my initial lenses from Cycle Three (Anderson, 2011).

These initial lenses are shaped by the literature review, which represent my initial assumptions and biases (Anderson, 2011). To begin this process, I reread my literature review, and research questions. I identified the preliminary lenses from Chapter Two and created descriptions represented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Preliminary lenses

Preliminary Lenses	Description
White Supremacy and Anti-Blackness in Education	Explores how educational systems uphold white supremacy, and antiblackness at the expense of Black and Brown students.
Schools as Racialized Spaces	Analyzes the power dynamics that shape school environments and how these ideologies perpetuate white dominance.
Naming the Harm to Black and Brown Students	Names the specific ways that the educational practices can be detrimental to Black and Brown students.
Consequences of Harm	Explores how the negative outcomes experienced by Black and Brown students due to racialized educational students impact students.
Whiteness in English Education	Critiques the dominance of white cultural norms and white supremacy within ELA.
English Educator Culturally-Based Pedagogy	Discusses and advocates for the use of cultural-based teaching by ELA teachers.
Healing Centered Pedagogy	Examines the educational approaches that center healing and prioritize student wellness to address historical and ongoing racial traumas.
Mindfulness as Pedagogy	Investigates the use of mindfulness as pedagogy in K-12 educational settings.
Interrogating Mindfulness's Success in Education	Explores critiques from prior research about the effectiveness of mindfulness in educational settings with K-12 settings and particularly for Black and Brown students.
Teachers' Professional Development and Mindfulness Curriculum	Considers how mindfulness teacher training and curriculum design influence implementation of mindfulness.
Stress Regulation	Focuses on mindfulness as a tool for managing student stress in educational environments.
Mindfulness, Dominant Racial Frames and Racism	Examines prior research on the potential of mindfulness to reinforce or challenge racial power structures in education.

Once I created Table 4, I sorted my initial themes from Cycle Four by synthesizing the initial lenses through the preliminary lenses from Chapter Two. In this phase, I sat down with some instrumental house music in the background as I sorted the themes from Chapter Four which resulted in the creation of the Table 5. I invite the readers of this dissertation to listen to the music from my “diss” playlist by accessing the following link:

<https://soundcloud.com/anomalysoul/sets/diss> (Anomaly Soul, 2023) as you read the rest of this section.

Table 5. Cycle four initial themes

Preliminary Lenses	Cycle Four Initial Themes	Description
White Supremacy and Anti-Blackness in Education	Teachers Perceptions of Black and Brown Student Engagement Pre, During, and Post Mindfulness Instruction	Examines how teachers perceive the engagement of Black and Brown students in their ELA classrooms.
Schools as Racialized Spaces	Cultural Considerations of Mindfulness Instruction	Explores how students' culture might influence student responses to mindfulness and mindfulness pedagogy.
Naming the Harm to Black and Brown Students	Different Types of Mindfulness Curriculum	Analyzes the various mindfulness practices employed by the teachers and the potential impact on Black and Brown students.
Consequences of Harm	All	This category can be an outcome of all identified themes.
Whiteness in English Education	All	This category may be an outcome of all identified themes.
English Educator Culturally-Based Pedagogy	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms, Cultural Considerations of Mindfulness Instruction	Illustrates how mindfulness practices and instruction with culturally responsive approaches for holistic support.
Healing Centered Pedagogy	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms	Examines how mindfulness practices and instruction lead to healing-centered approaches that address racial traumas that Black and Brown students may experience.
Mindfulness as Pedagogy	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA	Illustrates how mindfulness is used as a tool in the ELA classroom and examines the effectiveness. Includes student learning and engagement discourse.
Interrogating Mindfulness's Success in Education	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms	Explores the overall effectiveness of mindfulness practices in ELA. This may be combined with the aforementioned category. Examines if the goals of mindfulness instruction are achieved or not.
Teachers' Professional Development and Mindfulness Curriculum	Different Types of Mindfulness Curriculum	Investigates the link between teacher professional development and the mindfulness curriculum used by the ELA teachers in this study.
Stress Regulation	Navigating Trauma-Related Challenges, Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms	Examines how mindfulness practices are used to reduce student stress.
Mindfulness, Dominant Racial Frames and Racism	All	This category may be an outcome of all identified themes.

Next, I sorted my initial themes from Cycle 4 with my theoretical framework from Chapter Three to help guide my analysis of key concepts and perceptions relevant to my research questions and sub questions. The theoretical framework from Chapter Three, encompassed Mindfulness as a Pedagogical approach, Culturally-Based Frameworks, Teacher Pedagogy and Critical Whiteness studies (CWS) and Towards a Race-Centered Framework and Radical healing in Table 6.

Table 6. Preliminary lenses, initial themes, and theoretical framework

Preliminary Lenses	Initial Themes	Theoretical Framework
White Supremacy and Anti-Blackness in Education	Teachers Perceptions of Black and Brown Student Engagement Pre, During, and Post Mindfulness Instruction	Culturally Based Frameworks, Mindfulness as Pedagogy
Schools as Racialized Spaces	Cultural Considerations of Mindfulness Instruction	Mindfulness as Pedagogy
Naming the Harm to Black and Brown Students	Different Types of Mindfulness Curriculum	Mindfulness as Pedagogy
Consequences of Harm	All	All
Whiteness in English Education	All	All
English Educator Culturally-Based Pedagogy	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms, Cultural Considerations of Mindfulness Instruction	Culturally Based Frameworks
Healing Centered Pedagogy	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms	Towards a Race-Centered Framework and Radical Healing
Mindfulness as Pedagogy	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA	Towards a Race-Centered Framework and Radical Healing
Interrogating Mindfulness's Success in Education	Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms	Towards a Race-Centered Framework and Radical Healing
Teachers' Professional Development and Mindfulness Curriculum	Different Types of Mindfulness Curriculum	Mindfulness as Pedagogy
Stress Regulation	Navigating Trauma-Related Challenges, Mindfulness as Holistic Support in ELA Classrooms	Towards a Race-Centered Framework and Radical Healing

Mindfulness, Dominant Racial Frames and Racism	All	All
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Turning on music once more, I sat down to further sift through the existing themes in Cycle Five of the intuitive inquiry process. The house music song “Deep Inside” began to play as I meditated on how to synthesize my results further. The singer repeats the lyrics, “All we need is love,” and I meditate on my data, continuing to synthesize further. I took a couple of days' break from my analysis cycle, then sat down again, playing “Deep Inside” as the first song of my work session. As I sorted this time, I reviewed the memos I created in Dedoose while I did my second round of coding the interviews. One of the memos reads “white supremacy,” where I noted in a couple of interviews the white supremacist ideologies that surfaced. I was struck by the pervasiveness of white supremacist ideology that surfaced in the seven participants' discussions about mindfulness in their ELA classrooms. What struck me most was the openness with which these ELA teachers revealed their deficit attitudes to me when they spoke about the Black and Brown students in their classroom. As I sat across from the participants on Zoom, many of whom were white, I found myself grappling with the weight of their words, and as a result, it became increasingly difficult to maintain a neutral composure or facade. Despite these feelings, I recognized the importance of remaining composed to facilitate an open dialogue for my study. As a result, I named my first lens “(In)Visibility of White Supremacy and Mindfulness Instruction in Secondary ELA Classrooms” to highlight the significance of this experience with participants.

The house remix song “I’m searching” by Vertigini plays in the background as I sift through the rest of my data. I reexamined my research questions as another upbeat instrumental played in the background while I got into a comfortable seated position to center my thoughts and open myself to new insights. I began tapping my fingers to the beat while contemplating the

nuances of Table 5. During this meditative state, the name of the last lens emerged, “Cultivating Consciousness: The Gap In Culturally Relevant Mindfulness in ELA,” to represent a mix between acknowledging critical mindful approaches made by a couple of the participants and the deficiencies in integrating critical perspectives into mindfulness practices as seen in Table 7.

Table 7.

Research questions and final lenses

Research Questions	Final Lenses
1. What is the secondary ELA teacher’s understanding of critical mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy?	2. Cultivating Consciousness: The Gap In Culturally Based Mindfulness in ELA
2. How do ELA teachers describe the mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy used in their classrooms?	2. Cultivating Consciousness: The Gap In Culturally Based Mindfulness in ELA
3. How do ELA teachers understand the impact of their mindfulness pedagogy and curriculum on Black and Brown Students?	1. (In)visibility of White Supremacy in Mindfulness Instruction in ELA

Summary

In summary, Cycle Three culminated with the development of initial themes for this study. These theme were synthesized through the preliminary lenses from Cycle Two and the methodology from Chapter Three. Two final lenses were identified as a result of the Cycle Four- (In)Visibility of White Supremacy and Mindfulness Instruction in Secondary ELA Classrooms and Cultivating Consciousness: The Gap in Culturally Based Mindfulness ELA. These lenses will be used to reframe a analyze the interview data in Chapter Five to address the research questions. Chapter Five will include a discussion of lenses, implications, limitations, and dilemmas, as well as personal changes experienced by the researcher as a result of this study.

Chapter V: Cycle Five- Discussion

This chapter begins with an overview of the study provides context for the analysis that follows. Then the researcher explores how the two lenses identified emerged from the data and the implications. Through this analysis the researcher explores how each lens completes the hermeneutical circle through the research process. The research followed the intuitive inquiry circle as outlined by Rosemarie Anderson (2011). The intuitive inquiry started with a limited understanding in Cycle One and expanded depth in Cycle Two with the prior research. In Cycle Three data was collected that informed the themes in and refinement in Cycle Four to create two lenses used to discuss the data. In this final cycle, Cycle Five the researcher provides an interpretation of the data through the lenses. These interpretations lead to the final implications of the study, complete the hermeneutic circle, and guide the implications from the study (Anderson, 2011).

Additionally, the chapter will include a discussion of the unsolved questions and suggestions for future research which will complete the hermeneutic circle. Following the completion of the circle, the researcher will present candid thoughts on the limitations of the study. This includes researcher insights gained from the research mistakes made, failed procedures, and ineffective plans (Anderson, 2011). Through acknowledging these mistakes, the researcher demonstrates transparency and offers valuable insights for future researchers. The chapter ends with the style of intuitive inquiry employed by the research to clarify the approach I took and its impact on the intuitive inquiry process and how I was changed (Anderson, 2011).

Overview of the Study

In urban and suburban K-12 schools across the United States, there is a growing trend of the use of mindfulness practices to address various classroom challenges and enhance student

well-being (Berlia, 2015; Forbes, 2019). While there are programs that offer strategies for educators, critics argue mindfulness programs often overlook complex issues such as white supremacy, racism, and oppression (Forbes, 2019) thereby ignoring how these biases are embedded and perpetuated into mindfulness pedagogy (Forbes, 2019). Critics have coined the term “McMindfulness” (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2021) to describe the systemic failures and shortsightedness of modern-day mindfulness pedagogy. Further, the critics warn that current mindfulness approaches in educational settings may inadvertently perpetuate Eurocentric and white supremacist ideologies that undermine the perceived empowerment of Black and Brown students (Berlia, 2015; Forbes, 2019). Additionally, there is a lack of research that focuses on K-12 urban school, or Black and Brown students.

Discussion of Lenses

The lenses from the collected data are presented to examine the framework that secondary ELA teachers use to deliver mindfulness curricula to secondary Black and Brown student populations. First, a discussion is provided on the pervasiveness of white supremacy in mindfulness instruction based on previous research from Cycle Two entitled- (In)Visibility of White Supremacy and Mindfulness in ELA Secondary Classrooms. Then, a discussion is presented on the gap in mindfulness instruction in ELA classrooms compared to previous research on ELA pedagogy, mindfulness pedagogy, and culturally based frameworks- entitled Cultivating Consciousness: The Gap in Culturally Relevant Mindfulness in ELA. Lastly, this section includes a discussion on how the two lenses close the hermeneutic circle.

Lens One (In)visibility of White Supremacy and Mindfulness Instruction in ELA Classrooms

This lens examines how white supremacy can be embedded in the mindfulness instruction in secondary ELA classrooms for Black and Brown students. The data from the

curriculum review and the individual interviews of the seven secondary ELA teachers in the study show the pervasiveness of a prominent lens across all participants: the assertion that Black and Brown students need mindfulness to address behavioral and academic issues. The interviews aligned with previous research (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011; Davis & Ernst, 2019; Blaisdell, 2020). In the study, ELA teachers demonstrated cultural racism by perpetuating their belief that the Black and Brown students needed mindfulness as a solution to address the teacher's perception of behavioral issues and lack of academic achievement. This reinforcement resulted in the perpetuation of stereotypes and maintenance of the power dynamics that uphold white norms and values. Many participants ignored the broader systemic factors that contribute to student behaviors and perceived mindfulness instruction as a solution.

Many of the teachers used wording like “executive functioning,” “overstimulated,” and “emotional regulation” to describe the behaviors they witnessed from their Black and Brown students despite a lack of baseline data, or empirical evidence to support their assessments (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Instead, teachers relied on pseudoscientific terms to explain the behaviors that they saw further stereotyping Black and Brown students relying on personal anecdotes. For example, Emma explicitly said that she only uses mindfulness with her Black and Brown students instead of her white students implying that their white counterparts had superior behavior. This, in turn, reinforced the systemic cultural racism that still exists in the ELA classroom and educational system through upholding white norms and values (Blaisdell, 2020). The reliance on deficit language for the selection of mindfulness as an intervention for only Black and Brown students also impacts the power dynamics the teacher reinforces the educational hierarchy that favors white students (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Bonilla-Silva, 2011; Davis & Ernst, 2019; Blaisdell, 2020) .

Furthermore, prior research discusses the detrimental impact of colorblind ideologies on Black and Brown students (Ladson-Billings, 2000). In the study, all participants shared elements of colorblind ideology in their explanations of mindfulness as a universal approach to fixing students' emotional and behavioral issues. The interview interviews show that the colorblind messages were met with pushback from some Black and Brown students who took issue with mindfulness being used in their ELA classroom due to cultural incongruity. Student resistance was often met with white fragility, defensive responsive and discomfort by several of the participants in the study (DiAngelo, 2011). For example, Emma reflected on a Black girl's skepticism by calling it a “white lady thing to do” when she introduced mindfulness practice. In addition, the Black and Brown girl said, “I have an oil for that,” illustrating a potential spiritual or cultural practice that the student uses instead of mindfulness. Emma’s lack of curiosity to examine the student’s perception reflects defensiveness associated with white fragility as she laughed off the student's response by explaining that students often joked due to their age (DiAngelo, 2011).

White fragility also appeared as several teachers took a defensive stance in conversation with the researcher when they asked the participants if they used culturally responsive pedagogy or made cultural adaptations to the mindfulness curriculum for their Black and Brown students (DiAngelo, 2011). Notably, one participant Ellie, expressed that the researcher made them “feel bad” for asking these types of questions in the interview. Another participant, Spinner, positioned himself as the “dumb white guy” in front of his Black and Brown students when asked about this use of culturally responsive pedagogy within his mindfulness curriculum, which could be an indicator of his own lack of racial identity development. Specifically, Spinner said that he tells his Black and Brown students he is a “dumb white guy” in discussions where

students are talking about race or racism in a book as a way to get the students to share their lived experiences. Through using the word “dumb” Spinner attempts to deflect from the potential criticism and removes himself from discussions of race and racism in the classroom. Through positioning himself as less intelligent or “dumb,” Spinner attempts to illustrate to his students his perceived innocence in relation to the socio-political dynamics that Black and Brown students may face (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). This rhetorical move Spinner uses reflects white fragility because when he felt discomfort, he felt the need to deflect from the issues of race or racism. Despite his attempts to make himself appear unaware he perpetuates inequality by inhibiting constructive dialogue about race in the classroom (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Prior research also discusses the white supremacist ideologies and practices that are used to maintain the status quo through the silencing and marginalization of Black and Brown students (Valencia, 2010; Leonardo, 2004). All of the seven participants had narratives of silence and quiet that emerged, which echoed the historical erasure of marginalized voices and experiences of Black and Brown students in educational settings (Love, 2016). The teacher interviews and curriculum review reveal a focus on silence as a large part of mindfulness cultivation. Participants highlighted the absence of maintaining silence in the classroom to build through the use of practices such as quiet meditations. The teachers required students to observe silence during mindfulness exercises, and the teacher using a calm voice prioritizing a monocultural approach to classroom discipline that does not account for differences in communication styles (Paris & Alim, 2017). For example, Spinner’s approach to using mindfulness in his teaching illustrate how power dynamics operate in the classroom. He acknowledges that he structures his lessons to include mindfulness in the middle of the class.

Spinner described a time when he tried to do a different activity with the students but later decided to pivot from that activity because he perceived students as being too loud. He says:

I told them they can do whatever they need to as long as you're not being loud. That's my one thing: generally, kids have fine behaviors. They just, if you're too loud, it's too much for me. So that's what they did. And then, like, Okay, guys, it's time to get back. We just had a really intense situation; let's try to go back to mindful breathing. And then they do, and it works pretty well. I think just making sure things are engaged and they're excited about (Spinner).

In his lessons Spinner structures, his mindfulness lessons sporadically in the middle of classes to regain control or power in the classroom. Spinner prioritizing maintaining control over student behavior underscores the inherent power dynamics in the classroom, where the teacher's authority is held at the expense of the student's autonomy and agency. Moreover, his attitude reflects a pattern of dominance and subordination by the teacher, which is a characteristic of white supremacist systems, where people in positions of power assert their authority by the suppression of dissenting voices or behaviors (Baker-Bell et al., 2017; Crenshaw, 1995).

In examining the interviews from the study, silence emerged as a prominent approach that teachers used for mindfulness instruction and practices with Black and Brown students. The use of silent mindfulness is significant when considering there is a large spectrum of mindfulness practices that do not require silence, including but not limited to dance, music creation, dialogue and more (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Khoury et al., 2015). As an example, Manny, stated that one of the main experiences in her digital literacy class is the use of silence. At the beginning of every class, she sets the tone of the class through the use of silence. She states, "And so one of the core experiences in the classes, the first 10 minutes of every single class, we spend in complete

silence setting.” The use of silence in her classroom reflects a pedagogical approach; quiet or silence is seen as an important element in the foundation for cultivating mindfulness (Hyland, 2009). However, when looked at through the lens of white supremacy, the silence reflects the dominant cultural norms that often selectively marginalize students through the emphasis on verbal communication or by centering certain voices over others (Paris & Alim, 2017; Leonardo, 2004). What's more, the centering of silence further marginalizes Black and Brown students through the omission of the plethora of mindfulness techniques that do not require students to be silent (Gay, 2002; Warren & Wray-Lake, 2017).

Moreover, a significant aspect of the silencing phenomenon is that the pushback the teachers received against the use of mindfulness practices predominantly voiced by Black and Brown girls in their classrooms (Crenshaw, 1994). All seven participants centered their stories around female students, suggesting a gendered lens through which mindfulness instruction is perceived and applied. Claire was the only participant to express that she felt that “girls are more receptive” when it came to instructing mindfulness instruction. In comparison, only four participants shared stories about boys in their interviews. Holly described two Black and Brown girls in particular as “particularly vocal about their skepticism about mindfulness.” The same girls took their complaints to the administration. Here, too, the students were met with white fragility, as Holly takes a defensive rhetorical stance in her interview to describe the students home lives as factors for why they spoke out against mindfulness instruction instead of centering the teacher's instructional approach or complicity in the harm (DiAngelo, 2018). These findings demonstrate a lack of personal accountability and an inclination to blame the negative experiences of Black and Brown students like several other ELA teachers in the study (Leonard, 2004).

Other research (Forbes, 2019; Purser 2019), addresses the harmful consequences that the pervasive racism in school systems and its impact on Black and Brown students. This occurs through its emphasis on individual wellness that promotes Eurocentric and white supremacist ideologies (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2019). This study reveals teachers overlooked their complicity in creating the dysregulated symptoms that they perceived the Black and Brown students had in their ELA class. For example, throughout the interviews, teachers gave Black and Brown students deficit labels instead of acknowledging their role or power dynamics. This labeling of Black and Brown students perpetuates stereotypes that illuminate the issues in the educational system. Moreover, the teachers' interviews highlighted an absence of self-reflection on their instructional practices, pedagogy, or other strategies used to mitigate the concerns they had for students. None of the teachers, despite described student disruptions, or resistance, explained how their instructional approaches or classroom management may have contributed to the issues in their classroom. Instead, teachers' perceptions reflect a pattern of labeling student behaviors as inherent or attributed to external factors. Compounding these issues are mindfulness apps, in addition to mindfulness meditations also act as a tool that further perpetuates racial biases and inequalities in educational settings. Prior research says that the messages in mindfulness meditations are harmful to children due to the emphasis on individual behavior that is devoid of an examination of the socio-political context or an acknowledgement of the student's age in connection to their ability to change their circumstances, showing a disregard for the developmental needs and experiences of young learners (Forbes 2019; Purser 2019). Additionally, apps like the ones used by the participants in the study have the potential to perpetuate stereotypes and overlook the role the community plays in the creation of solutions for

complex issues since they are not specifically designed to meet the needs of Black and Brown students, further marginalizing the students.

In summary, the teachers in this study illustrate and highlight how mindfulness pedagogy perpetuates and reinforces white supremacist ideology. This lens illustrates that teachers utilized cultural racism, white fragility, and colorblind ideology to justify their belief that Black and Brown's students required mindfulness as a solution to teachers' perceptions of behavioral issues and academic shortcomings (DiAngelo, 2018; Bonilla-Silva, 2011). The lens further implies that teachers perpetuated stereotypes and upheld the white normative script and values (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Leonardo, 2004). Many of the teachers relied on pseudo-scientific terminology, deficit language to describe student behaviors and personal evidence to support their use of mindfulness instead of empirical evidence (Paris & Alim, 2017; Valencia, 2010). These practices reinforced systemic cultural racism in their ELA classrooms (Sleeter, 2017; Love, 2019). Additionally, interviews also highlighted the dominance-subordination dynamic in classrooms through silence being prioritized as a means of maintaining control, often at the detriment of student voice or autonomy (Crenshaw, 1994). Notably, the majority of the pushback against mindfulness instruction came from Black and Brown girls, indicating a gendered lens through which mindfulness is perceived (Crenshaw, 1994). Lastly, the use of mindfulness apps added to the perpetuation of racial biases since these tools were not tailored to the needs of Black and Brown students through a disregard for the sociopolitical contexts and the developmental needs of young learners (Forbes 2019; Purser 2019). Overall, this lens showed the insidious influence of white supremacy in mindfulness instruction, underscoring a need for systemic changes, teacher bias training and culturally responsive pedagogies in ELA classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017).

The next section examines the lens from this study on how ELA teachers' mindfulness instruction demonstrated an awareness or lack of the integration of culturally responsive practices in their chosen mindfulness curriculum.

Lens Two Cultivating Consciousness: The Gap in Culturally Based Mindfulness Education

The lens examines the ELA teachers' awareness and lack of awareness of the importance of incorporating culturally responsive practices into the mindfulness curricula they chose to use with their Black and Brown students. This lens examines teachers' responses when asked whether or not they used culturally responsive pedagogy in the creation of their mindfulness curriculum or chosen curriculum. The next sections present a detailed discussion of the lens on the gap in culturally based mindfulness in education. First, this gap is defined, and then the researcher examines how teachers adapted their curriculum or omitted culturally responsive practices from their curriculum and the existing research reviewed for this study.

Literacy and Culturally Responsive Mindfulness. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) advocates for culturally responsive teaching pedagogies and practices that honor the cultural assets students bring to the classroom (NCTE, 2022). It is important to note that the participants of this study did not explicitly label the mindfulness practices they integrated into their ELA courses as culturally responsive approaches to teaching mindfulness. When asked directly about culturally responsive adaptations for their Black and Brown students, the majority of the participants claimed not to make any modifications, while Spinner claimed to make modifications tied to the Islamic religion. This discrepancy shows the need for educators to acknowledge and recognize the culturally responsive elements embedded in the mindfulness practices they integrate into their secondary ELA classrooms. Despite participant perceptions,

the researcher has decided to include secondary ELA mindfulness techniques that the teachers mentioned in the interviews that are culturally responsive approaches.

Literacy skills such as reading, writing, speaking or discussion played a pivotal role in the culturally responsive, mindful approaches used by teachers in the study. In particular, several of the teachers acknowledged having students engage with texts that feature characters from identical or similar backgrounds as the Black and Brown students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2000). Claire noted the significance of incorporating diverse mindfulness texts and perspectives into the curriculum. She said, “Introducing literature and writing that reflects the cultural diversity of our students allows them to see themselves represented and validates their experiences.” Spinner also discussed how integrating mindfulness into his reading curriculum through the use of diverse texts helped students connect with the material on a personal and emotional level. He reflects, “We’re reading *House on Mango Street* right now... [students] can relate to their real lives.” While the characters in this novel do not directly reflect the Black and Brown students in his class, the approach Spinner used illustrates the importance of incorporating students’ cultures in the classroom (Paris & Alim, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2009). This approach aligns with research from NCTE that called for embracing Blackness instead of rejection of Black and Brown identities (Baker et al., 2017).

Prior research in ELA also advocates for providing students with authentic writing experiences that allow for Black and Brown students to express themselves in culturally relevant ways that are meaningful (NCTE, 2022; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2017). In the study, several teachers extended the text reading to their mindful writing or journaling. Spinner highlighted the role of mindfulness as a tool of writing instruction to allow the students to engage in self-expression and reflection. He said, “I encourage students to engage in free writing

exercises where they can express their thoughts and feelings without judgment. This allows them to process their emotions and gain clarity before engaging in more structured writing tasks." In this context, Spinner, like many other teachers, acknowledges that writing is a mindfulness tool that allows students to cultivate self-awareness and emotional regulation that align with mindful pedagogy principles (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Forbes, 2019).

Participants also emphasized creating a supportive, non-judgmental learning environment for their writing activities. Approaches like these align with prior research, and a culturally responsive educational environment empowers students' intellectual, social, emotional, and political identities as shown in prior research (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Gay, 2000; Paris & Alim, 2017). Participants highlighted the various approaches to incorporating mindfulness into the writing prompts and activities. For example, Ellie described, "I use mindfulness prompts such as 'mindful moments' or 'gratitude journaling' to prompt students to reflect on their experiences and emotions before writing. This helps them cultivate a sense of presence and awareness in the moment." By integrating mindfulness in the writing prompts, the teachers helped students develop mindfulness skills while being culturally responsive to Black and Brown students' emotional needs (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Forbes, 2019). Furthermore, this approach also allows teachers to validate students' identities (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Gay, 2002).

Manny also reflected on writing as a mindfulness tool in secondary ELA classes, "I provide students with opportunities for peer feedback and reflection, emphasizing the importance of constructive criticism and empathy in the writing process." This approach not only fostered a sense of community but also aligned with prior research on effective writing pedagogy (NCTE, 2022; Paris, 2012). Additionally, her emphasis on constructive criticism and empathy in the writing process reflects a commitment to humanizing student relationships, aligning with prior

research on culturally responsive pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Through this teaching strategy, Manny actively worked to disrupt the deficit approaches to writing instruction and promote asset-based strategies that further aid the culturally responsive environment (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The individual interviews show that most participants did not call their instructional practices for mindfulness culturally responsive or make culturally responsive adaptations to their curriculum to reflect their Black and Brown students. The next section provides insight into the role that teacher mindfulness professional development played in teachers' implementation of culturally responsive practices and mindfulness curricula.

Teacher Professional Development and Curriculum. The research results show mixed results on the impact of teacher training on their integration of culturally responsive practices in mindfulness. Prior teacher training and mindfulness research emphasized the importance of mindfulness training for teachers (Belia, 2019; Meiklejohn et al., 2012). The interviews revealed a spectrum of approaches shaped by varying levels of professional development. Ellie, Manny, and Holly all underwent formal training through Mindful Schools that enhanced their ability to implement mindfulness practices effectively. Ellie, one of the teachers who had formal training, emphasized student choice in her interview, and her mindfulness training shaped that. Although she did not explicitly call these practices culturally responsive, student choice is a fundamental aspect of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Paris & Alim, 2017). The other participants in the study, whom Mindful Schools formally trained, shared similar techniques of allowing for student choice, but these teachers also did not acknowledge these practices as culturally responsive. One of those participants, Manny, even went as far as to state that she has taken culturally responsive teacher professional development, but she doesn't claim that her

course is “hyper intentional” in regard to being culturally responsive (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2000).

In addition to teacher training, the data also overlapped with the teacher's curriculum use in the classroom with varying approaches to curriculum design. The differences in the curriculum used by the ELA teachers illuminate the importance of equitable curriculum development and the need for educators to evaluate the varying curricula used with Black and Brown students (Paris, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Many participants, even those trained, relied on readily available apps or generic mindfulness exercises, reflecting a lack of depth or cultural responsiveness in their instructional materials (Purser, 2019; Forbes, 2019). However, Emma, and Manny stood out for their more comprehensive approach to lesson planning with varying levels of culturally responsive pedagogy. While one teacher utilized a curriculum designed for younger students, the other demonstrated a commitment to cultural responsiveness by creating lesson plans with clear student expectations (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000). This disparity underscores the importance of intentional curriculum development and the need for educators to critically evaluate the resources they utilize in mindfulness instruction.

In addition to the impact of teacher training, data also revealed how teachers in the study were away from the spiritual underpinnings of mindfulness instruction, and some of the participants infused their instruction with a culturally responsive approach.

Culturally Responsive Spirituality. Current research highlights the importance of culturally responsive spirituality to combat spiritual-murdering pedagogies and white supremacy (Love, 2016). Claire and Spinner embraced their students' cultural and personal spiritual practices as a part of the mindfulness practice. Claire acknowledged the Black and Brown students spiritual background by affirming the diverse spiritual backgrounds and interests,

thereby demonstrating culturally responsive spirituality (Dillard et al., 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). When asked whether or not she experienced any pushback from the implementation of mindfulness in the classroom, she described her awareness of her students already being aware of the spiritual “[...] realm, like, chakras, and talking about those kinds of things” (Claire). Claire’s commentary shows an awareness that meditation may not be a new concept for the Black and Brown students she teaches. By acknowledging that some of her students already understood concepts like crystals, chakras, and spirituality, she demonstrates an awareness of her students’ culture and spirituality. Her awareness suggests that mindfulness practice would only complement the students’ existing interests through the integration. By acknowledging her students’ identities, she fosters a culturally responsive learning environment that honors her students’ backgrounds (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Similarly, Spinner also embraced his students’ religious background as a cultural element that he tied to mindfulness teaching in his ELA classroom. Spinner describes a sixteen-step practice that aligns with Islamic teachings, the religious practice that is the most prevalent in his community. Spinner’s approach incorporates the students’ religious background by infusing the curriculum with Islamic tenets in a manner that resonates with the cultural backgrounds of his students (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Paris & Alim, 2017). During these sessions, the Black and Brown are instructed to explore the various concepts of the Islamic religion to connect to their character development. The researcher notes that although this Islamic teachings may appear like cultural responsiveness, it is important to explore how these practices may inadvertently led to a reinforcement of the power dynamics or marginalize students who do not align to cultural or religious norms.

Regarding the inclusion of the spiritual voice and indigenous knowledge, Dillard et al., (2000) both are frequently removed from the educational settings due to existing educational policies and curriculum that prioritize western epistemologies, and methodologies through the omission of diverse expressions. Most of the participants in this study omitted the connection between mindfulness meditation and the cultural norms of Black and Brown people that are central to their resistance to racism and white supremacy (Dillard et al., 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Holly is an example of approaching mindfulness through this omission instead of focusing on mindfulness as a universal practice devoid of cultural or spiritual contexts. In her interview, she describes her deliberate avoidance of religious terminology but instead opts for what they describe as neutral language, such as “social-emotional learning” (SEL), to accommodate the predominantly Catholic background of their community (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000). This reveals a pattern of reluctance to acknowledge diverse spiritual perspectives instead of incorporating the students' Catholic background. This omission reflects a limited understanding of mindfulness and its roots in various cultural and spiritual traditions, especially concerning Black and Brown students (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Forbes, 2019). Echoing this same behavior of omission, Emma avoids acknowledging her students' spiritual practice when confronted about using mindfulness in the classroom. In the interaction between Emma and the Black and Brown student, where the students perceive mindfulness as a white behavior, she decides to ask the students why they believe this is the case. In the narration, Emma claims that the student expressed, “I have an oil,” illustrating a potential spiritual or cultural practice that the student uses instead of mindfulness to do the same thing; Emma made no mention of whether or not she asked further questions to the student about their spiritual culture or identity in relation to the oil.

In summary, this lens examined the awareness and lack of awareness that secondary ELA teachers had regarding integrating culturally responsive practices into their mindfulness curriculum. The section also discussed how teachers adapted or committed to culturally responsive practices. Teachers' interviews from the study highlight that despite not explicitly labeling their practices as culturally responsive teachers, they emphasized literacy approaches that integrate mindfulness like reading, writing and discussion. Moreover, this study explored the impact of teacher mindfulness training on the implementation of culturally responsive mindfulness practices. Additionally, this lens discussed the role of culturally responsive spirituality, wherein some teachers embraced students' spiritual backgrounds while others omitted the connection.

This study's discussion of the lenses highlights secondary ELA teachers' perceptions of mindfulness in their secondary classrooms with Black and Brown students and their culturally responsive approaches. Implications from this study lenses for secondary ELA teachers' use of mindfulness in the classroom and further research are elaborated in the next two sections.

Implications

This study aimed to explore how secondary ELA teachers use mindfulness instruction with their Black and Brown students in urban classrooms. Specifically, this study examined a gap in educational research by examining the intersections of mindfulness, white supremacy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and ELA instruction. Although prior researchers have discussed the importance of culturally-based frameworks to reflect the needs of Black and Brown learners in the context of secondary ELA curriculum, this study examined the use of mindfulness through a culturally responsive lens. Additionally, several researchers have criticized the use of mindfulness in the broader context of education settings (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2019); this study

examined the mindfulness framework that ELA teachers have on their current use of mindfulness in their classes with their Black and Brown student populations. The lenses of this study offer insightful implications for secondary ELA.

A notable gap emerged in the final lenses, specifically regarding the main research question concerning the framework the ELA teachers use to deliver mindfulness curriculum and pedagogy to Black and Brown students in urban secondary schools, which remains largely unaddressed. A significant finding concerning the main research question was the discovery that no teacher employed a comprehensive mindfulness curriculum grounded in research or evidence-based practices. Instead, the ELA teachers of this study used curriculum and instructional approaches that appear to be individual teacher preferences. Furthermore, without substantial curriculum or data, it is hard to determine if the teachers who self-identified using mindfulness practices actually integrated the approaches they mentioned. This is concerning due to the lack of consideration that the teachers took in the nuances, spirituality, and the unique needs of Black and Brown students.

The random adoption of mindfulness practices without a foundational understanding of the cultural relevance or effectiveness can pose risks to Black and Brown students (Berlia, 2015; Mah y Busch 2014; Hyland, 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Polinska, 2018; Kuyken et al., 2013; Forbes 2019). Moreover, the absence of measurements to gauge the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the practice adds to the potential risk. The only evidence of teacher-student feedback in the study the teachers did have was not consistently positive and failed to assess the impact of mindfulness practices on student well-being and academic performance. Prior research in the field of mindfulness education echoes the need for more rigorous mindfulness standards when it comes to the teaching of K -12 students since the

original underpinnings are meant for adults (Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018; Zapolski et al., 2019). It is important for schools to address these concerns that prioritize inclusivity, cultural relevance, and empirical rigor to foster a more equitable learning environment.

The studies' final two lenses indicate a need for secondary ELA teachers to critically examine and assess their mindfulness practices through a culturally responsive lens so that it does not harm Black and Brown students. Secondary ELA teachers who use mindfulness in the classroom must move beyond simply using mindfulness exercises for behavior management. The study showed that teachers need to understand that using culturally insensitive practices can perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce systemic racism through the focus on individualism instead of collective responsibility. For example, six of the seven teachers in the study discussed the need for Black and Brown students to change without a critique of the educational systems or their impact on students' emotions or academics. This underscores prior researchers (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Spear, 2014; Forbes, 2019) suggesting that teachers must interrogate mindfulness curriculum to ensure that these messages do not further harm students. Additionally, this idea also aligns with prior research in English education that calls for white educators to make sense of their interaction with Black and Brown students (Berchini, 2019; Borsheim-Black, 2018; Brosheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Butler, 2017; Haddix, 2015; Johnson, 2018; Pasternak et al., 2017). Examining the curriculum's messages will enable educators to examine how the mindfulness curriculum can silence the erasure of institutional and personal responsibilities.

Teachers must interrogate how the use of mindfulness in classrooms perpetuates the idea that students are the problem when schools fail since that type of ideology can impede the implementation of existing or creation of educational strategies that would help students achieve

(Schwimmer & McDonough, 2018; Ginwright, 2010). The lenses highlight the pervasiveness of white supremacist ideologies embedded and upheld in the selected mindfulness practices by the ELA teachers that can have harmful effects and further marginalize Black and Brown students by reinforcing stereotypes about Black and Brown students. For example, the majority of the teachers in this study relied on the pseudo-scientific belief that students needed to be more mindful in order to have higher levels of academic and emotional achievement, revealing a deficit stereotype about Black and Brown students. This underscores the need for teacher training and professional development that fosters critical reflection. Teachers should engage in professional development that includes questions like those posed by Schwimmer and McDonough (2018), "whose cultural influence are educators placing on students from this framework?" and "What messages does this type of framework send?." Teachers could identify and dismantle the deficit narratives about Black and Brown learners by engaging in this critical reflection.

In addition, the study lenses highlight the transformative potential of mindful literacy approaches in the secondary ELA classroom curriculum. Several of the teachers used diverse texts as a way of validating the lived experience of Black and Brown students as an approach to mindfulness instruction in ELA. The teachers used the texts as a springboard for discussions and writing assignments where Black and Brown students' lived experiences and emotions are validated. This approach aligns with the position statements from NCTE (2020) and NCTE's Black Caucus that urge teachers to re-imagine the ELA curriculum through the use of culturally responsive and antiracist pedagogies to combat the white-dominant curriculum. Through the integration of diverse texts and mindfulness, educators can move beyond only promoting emotional regulation. Instead, teachers can cultivate student awareness of how socio-political

contexts can impact Black and Brown peoples' social-emotional growth. Ginwright (2015) theorized that a sustained practice that encourages an analysis of these types of issues can lead to collective healing, a sense of belonging, and sustainable actions to change the conditions that impede social-emotional growth. It is important to note that given students' positionality within the educational system, teachers should be aware of the potential blind spot of sustainable action and instead should become an advocate for or help dismantle the aforementioned conditions on behalf of the Black and Brown students that they teach.

The study also highlights the potential harm that mindfulness practices can unintentionally perpetuate for Black and Brown students and the importance of disrupting culturally insensitive approaches that fail to consider student skepticism in favor of silencing or further marginalizing students. For example, the centrality of silence in the teacher's mindfulness practice as a way to create a calm environment often emphasized a lack of student voice and emotional control. A critical examination is needed to examine the impact of such practices in the context of a world that Black and Brown students have to navigate that continues to police Black and Brown bodies, words, and emotional expressions. This reflects prior education research. Further, the emphasis on silence as a tool for control overlooks the cultural, spiritual, and linguistic diversity through the reinforcement of white dominant norms. Instead, teachers should move away from mindfulness practices that require silence, opting for practices that allow for student voice or linguistic expression.

The lenses of the study also highlight the need for educators and school administrators to recognize and address the unique challenges Black girls experience in their educational settings. Specifically, the study underscores the importance of centering student skepticism and resistance in mindfulness instruction and teacher pedagogy discussions. This aligns with prior research by

Bettina Love regarding the daily spiritual murder pedagogies (Love, 2013). For example, several of the participants expressed pushback from Black girls in their classroom regarding the use of mindfulness instruction, with two Black girls even reporting their discomfort to administration. Even when the Black girls expressed concerns, they were dismissed or silenced. Instead of dismissing or silencing students' concerns, educators should view student concerns as opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and potential action to address the harm. Through addressing student concerns, teachers can combat educators' spirit-murdering pedagogies and create an inclusive environment where students feel seen, heard, and respected (Dillard et al., 2000; Love, 2013)

Lastly, this study data implicates an oversight in existing mindfulness training programs regarding cultural responsiveness. For example, the teachers who had formal training failed to acknowledge or identify the culturally responsive practices they used in their secondary ELA classrooms. All three of the trained teachers also asserted their integration of mindfulness into their literacy instruction but did not identify those instructional practices as culturally responsive. In comparison, Claire, identified her mindfulness approaches as intentionally culturally responsive was untrained. Prior research in the field of mindfulness teacher education states that mindfulness training needs to center teachers' anti-oppression pedagogy and emphasize frameworks that dismantle oppressive teaching practices (Berlia, 2015). This includes teachers learning to embrace student resistance to mindfulness as informing of teacher pedagogy (Berlia, 2015).

Unsolved Questions and Suggestions for Future Study

This study contributed to the existing research exploring mindfulness in education in the contexts of secondary ELA, as well as culturally responsive pedagogies. However, there are still various unanswered questions and suggestions for future study in this research area.

Firstly, future research could examine the impact of mindfulness training programs on teachers' understanding and implementation of culturally responsive pedagogies. Trained teachers made no connection to culturally responsive teaching, while untrained teachers demonstrated an awareness of which suggests a gap in existing mindfulness training. An investigation could delve into the gap in understanding the role of teacher training and professional development in teaching educators to implement culturally responsive mindfulness practices. Research in this area could also compare different training models with one that includes anti-oppressive or healing-centered approaches as a focal point for teacher training to determine the specific components contributing to or hindering culturally responsive pedagogies from informing mindfulness training initiatives.

Secondly, questions arose about the experiences and perspectives of Black and Brown students regarding the use of mindfulness in their ELA classrooms. Future research could focus on student perceptions of mindfulness practices and examine the potential impact on student's academic performance and well-being. This type of study could provide teachers with valuable insights into creating a more culturally inclusive and supportive learning environment. Additionally, a longitudinal study is needed to examine the effects on students' academic performance, socio-emotional development, and overall wellness. Future studies could look at the effect of mindfulness instruction in secondary ELA by tracking students' progress over time,

as this approach could provide deeper insight into the impact of mindfulness practices on Black and Brown secondary students.

Next, future research is needed to understand the effectiveness of mindful literacy practices by secondary ELA practitioners. The outcomes of this study showed that mindful literacy practices could also include tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy that may be helpful for secondary ELA teacher's integration of more cultural teaching strategies. Future studies could examine the synergies between integrating mindfulness with culturally responsive practices for Black and Brown student populations. Additionally, investigating how students resist or challenge mindfulness instruction could shed light on the classroom's cultural incongruity or power dynamics.

In closing, another interesting finding in this study was that almost all ELA teachers had the support of their school administration to integrate mindfulness into their curriculum. Investigating factors that influenced administrative support for mindfulness instruction may offer guidance for educational leaders. Addressing these future considerations promotes all students' academic success and well-being in secondary ELA classrooms.

In the next section, the researcher examines the limitations and dilemmas that emerged from this study as a pivotal step in Cycle Five of intuitive inquiry based on the newness of the research lenses.

Limitations and Dilemmas

This study on culturally responsive mindfulness instruction in secondary ELA has several limitations and dilemmas. The disclosure of limitations after completing Cycle Five is an important step to intuitive inquiry steps to increase the reliability of study implications (Anderson, 2011). Firstly, the study's small sample size poses a challenge to the study's

application to the broader context of secondary ELA teachers. While this study aimed to understand the approaches of culturally responsive mindfulness pedagogy of secondary ELA urban schools, the final participant pool consisted of a majority of suburban teachers (Milner, 2012). Milner (2012) states that urban schools are high density populations that have notable economic, social, and cultural diversity, often facing systemic inequities, in contrast to suburban schools that have fewer challenges and greater homogeneity. The teachers in this study self-identified as urban teachers due to the demographics of their school, not the physical location, economic, or systemic inequities their students faced, which was an oversight on behalf of the researcher. This limits the generalizability of the final lenses to the experiences of urban teachers. Additionally, relying on the secondary ELA teachers' self-reported data may introduce some biases or also overlook nuances or flaws in their instructional pedagogy. Additionally, the sample size provided limitations for a deep understanding of culturally responsive mindfulness instruction in secondary ELA classrooms. A more diverse sample size could provide a deep understanding of the phenomenon in this study. The diversity of the sample size could include a broader range of participants, from various parts of the United States to capture the nuances of mindfulness instruction in different educational contexts. Moreover, the incorporation of a more diverse ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds may also lead to a broader understanding of perspectives on how mindfulness practices can be effectively implemented in classrooms with Black and Brown students.

Also, using qualitative methods offers some insights, but these insights may not fully encapsulate mindfulness instruction's impact on Black and Brown student outcomes. Moreover, another limitation of this study emphasizes the need for ELA teachers to examine the ethical considerations around the cultural appropriation of mindfulness practices since they are rooted in

cultural traditions. The cultural significance of these practices should be examined to reduce the risk of superficial adaptations that fail to honor mindfulness with integrity.

As a Black woman researcher, my identity and perspective may influence the results of my research. Although my identity can provide some insight into the experiences of Black and Brown students or teachers, there is also a potential for bias. Equally as important, my lived experiences, beliefs, and spiritual and cultural background may also shape how I interpret the data. To alleviate the bias, I used my intuitive inquiry methodology as an opportunity to practice ongoing self-reflection and also searched for feedback during my research process. The final section of Chapter Five ends with a reflection on my personal changes in the process of using the intuitive inquiry methodology, as well as a reflection on the challenges of my approach.

In this study's final section, the researcher now reflects on their personal changes, intuitive approach, and challenges of intuitive inquiry. In the section the researcher will use personal pronouns to reflect intuitive inquiry methodology (Anderson, 2011). The personal pronouns are used to convey the researcher's personal insights while using intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 2011).

Personal Changes and Intuitive Inquiry

In this paper, I used intuitive inquiry, a research methodology that blends intuition with traditional analysis, to analyze how secondary ELA teachers incorporate mindfulness practices with Black and Brown students. I took inspiration from Rosemarie Anderson's work on intuitive inquiry as an unconventional journey for a profound blending of intuition and analysis (Anderson, 2011). When I started this journey, I was interested in tapping into my intuitive process and challenging myself to gain more self-awareness of my intuitive inquiry process about my research process. In selecting an inquiry process, I used the DJing method of intuition

and a metaphorical tool of intuition. Out of curiosity, I started DJing five years ago, and it quickly became a hobby. Over time, DJing evolved into my intuitive method, as I often had epiphanies or ideas for my research or writing in the middle of DJing. The rest of this section will detail how I used my DJing as my intuitive approach through the cycles of intuitive inquiry. Additionally, this section will discuss my changes while using intuitive inquiry.

As I started my research on this topic, I was skeptical about completing all five cycles of intuitive inquiry, which felt similar to my novice years figuring out how to connect my turntable to my laptop or find the right DJ software- tasks that seemed challenging due to the technical demands. Similarly, the intuitive process and many research cycles seemed technically daunting due to the unconventional nature of this research methodology. The initial struggle I faced emerged from the fact that intuitive inquiry (Anderson, 2004) requires that the researcher find a way to document those experiences, and I was perplexed about finding a way to document everything. In short, selecting an intuitive process seemed overwhelming; like curating one of my playlists for my DJing, there were too many potential possibilities and no wrong answers. Begrudgingly, I settled on DJing as my chosen tool for exploration and intuition. To keep track of my meditative process results- I created an uploaded my mixes to Soundcloud and provided in the appendixes Cycle Three through the end of Cycle Five (see Appendix 1).

When I started Cycle three, I created a DJ schedule for my meditative practice to challenge myself to listen to new tracks, placing songs that moved me into playlists, DJing, and listening to other DJs for inspiration. Within my schedule of meditative practice, I also left space to listen to my mixes, learn from my mistakes, and identify growth areas to echo the intuitive process's transformative nature (Anderson, 2004). During this time of my intuitive inquiry, I was very relaxed and notably created a DJ mix, "My Joy" (Anomaly, 2023), after the first couple of

interviews that I felt went well. Much like my research process at the time, the mix kept a steady pace of 120 Beats Per Minute (BPM), which was my preferred speed. However, the journey in creating this DJ mix was challenging as I relistened to the bumps in the tracks, the messy overlaps of words from songs, or missed cues. Although, I made several mistakes I was proud of myself for pushing the boundaries of my sound selection, so I took notes on how to improve for future mixed and moved on to the next steps in my dissertation analysis.

My "joy" was short-lived as I ended Cycle Three and began Cycle Four as I noticed a flaw or limitation in using music as my unconventional method of meditation- focusing while coding. During this time, I was relearning how to use Dedoose, a coding program used for qualitative data. I used Dedoose on a prior job years ago, but I had since forgotten how to use programming to help with my current research coding needs. Relearning Dedoose, coupled with the large amounts of interview data to code, made it increasingly hard to focus or to "imagine the possible" (Anderson, 2006). Until then, I was coding and doing the meditative process separately, but I wanted to integrate my coding practice with my music as seamlessly as possible to see if my intuitive process would increase. To push through this challenge, I reminded myself that I needed to have "auspicious bewilderment," curiosity, or openness with my data (Anderson, 2011). I pushed myself to explore how it might look if I kept my BPM the same but paused to stop when the music didn't flow with the coding process. I used this DJ experience as a metaphor for my coding to get into a good BPM or rhythm of coding, stopping to take breaks if needed so that there is a smooth transition between my cycles. This process resulted in creating the next mix I made called "Name this later mix" (Anomaly, 2023), where I challenged myself to incorporate new music as a metaphor for the process of coding my data, as well as creating smooth transitions between each track.

Through this meditative process, I saw myself grow in terms of overall confidence; I even dabbled in producing a couple of tracks using my turntable as a result of the inspiration that I felt while coding. This personal transformation also helped me push my interpretation and data analysis. DJing provided daily reminders of slowing down as I immersed myself in the data the same way I would immerse myself in the music to uncover hidden truths and insights. This process is how I created the themes of "Crystals" and "There is an App for That" to grapple with my understanding of mindfulness in secondary ELA contexts as a form of remixing or rethinking the data. Surprisingly, I had profound moments of emotion as I coded the data and DJ'd. The deeper I got into Cycle Four and revisited the data, I would find myself moved to tears by the experiences of young Black girls as narrated by their secondary ELA teachers. The stories of resistance reminded me of myself, and this information further transformed me through the awareness of my connection to the research topic. I reflected on my years as a Black student in predominantly white educational institutions. In these institutions, I was the Black girl who frequently resisted teacher pedagogy and practices, often resulting in punitive treatment or punishments by the teachers. I grappled with how much of these perceptions from the majority of white participants were real and how much of it was their own bias seeping out onto the page, which further made me teary-eyed. I pushed through, remembering that intuitive inquiry required me to explore human phenomena and cultures (Anderson, 2006), including the complexities of white supremacy and gender dynamics. As I started Cycle Five, DJing remained at the front of my intuitive exploration by reminding me of the importance of adding sampling to the mix. DJing requires the sample or splicing of tracks to help with smooth transitions similar to how a researcher edits the quotes from an interview or from prior research in their research. The importance of sampling served as a reminder of the importance of extracting and

reconceptualizing prior research from Cycle Two and Cycle Three to create an analysis of the teachers' perspectives in the study. To conclude this process, I created the mix “Clout Monster” (Anomaly, 2024) where I explored different ways of sampling, transitions, and special effects.

In conclusion, the intuitive inquiry methodology used in this study allowed me to deepen my exploration of using ELA teachers' mindfulness with Black and Brown students in secondary classrooms. The iterative cycles of intuitive inquiry reminded me about the importance of slowing down and examining why I wanted to make confident choices with the data. Integrating my personal experience through my intuitive process has been critical in illuminating the complexities of this research topic. Specifically, my use of DJing served as a way to express and explore my meditative process, offering a creative expression that I found helpful in my analysis cycles. This served as a creative outlet by which I could explore my insights through a modality or speed that worked best for me.

Moreover, my intuitive process also helped remind me of the transformative power inherent in each person, including the Black and Brown students in the rooms of the ELA teachers under study. Last, as I reflect on my transformation, this methodological approach deepened my understanding of the dynamics at play in mindfulness instruction in ELA secondary teachers. Additionally, the implications gained from this study will inform my future discussions around culturally responsive pedagogy and equitable educational practices for Black and Brown students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board

uwm.edu/irb
irbinfo@uwm.edu
414-662-3544

Date: April 10, 2023

To: Donna Pasternak

Dept: Education

CC: Alanna Harris - Co-Investigator, Donna Pasternak - Faculty Advisor

IRB #: 23.215

Title: Critical Mindfulness in the Urban English Language Arts Secondary Classroom

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board has granted your protocol Exempt Status under Category 1 as governed by 45 CFR 46.104(d).

This exemption determination is valid for three years and will expire on **April 9, 2026**. Before the expiration date, you will receive an email explaining how to either keep the study open or close it. If the study is completed before the expiration date, you may notify the IRB by sending an email to irbinfo@uwm.edu.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

It is your responsibility to:

- promptly report unanticipated problems to the IRB
- maintain proper documentation of study records
- ensure that all study staff receive appropriate training as outlined in the protocol
- adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the IRB, UWM, and the UW System, and to all applicable state and federal laws

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project.

Appendix B: DJ Mix Links

The DJ mixes included in the appendix of my dissertation are the creative expression of the intuitive inquiry methodology used in the exploration of teachers perspectives of mindfulness in secondary ELA classrooms with Black and Brown students.

Anomaly Soul. (2023). Diss [Audio playlist]. SoundCloud. Retrieved from

<https://soundcloud.com/anomalysoul/sets/diss>

Anomaly Soul. (2023). My joy [Audio file]. SoundCloud. Retrieved from

https://soundcloud.com/anomalysoul/my-joy?si=a17d765b997540338fa3afff61c74aef&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Anomaly Soul. (2023). Name this later mix [Audio file]. SoundCloud. Retrieved from

https://soundcloud.com/anomalysoul/name-this-later-mix-anomaly-soul?si=a87577dc412b45eb969eb5799df39646&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Anomaly Soul. (2024). Clout zombie mix [Audio file]. SoundCloud. Retrieved from

https://soundcloud.com/anomalysoul/clout-zombie-mix?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing&si=5cf9d491a0924fde9bf97d2bc1920c44

Seeking Dissertation Research Participants

Critical Mindfulness in the Urban English Language Arts Secondary Classroom

What is it about?

I am seeking English teachers who teach mindfulness practices to Black and Brown students in the USA for a research study. This study aims to understand how English teachers are incorporating mindfulness practices into their classrooms and how it affects Black and Brown students.

By participating in this study, you will:

Help contribute to a better understanding of the use of mindfulness practices in English classrooms for Black and Brown students

As a participant in this study you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 60-90 min interview via Zoom
- Share any materials you use to teach mindfulness in your English classes (e.g., lesson plans, resources, readings)
- Follow-up interview, if deemed necessary

To participate or for more information, please contact:

Alanna Harris
omalloy@uwm.edu
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
414.336.6636

Subject: Invitation to Participate in a Dissertation Study on Mindfulness in the Urban English Language Arts Secondary Classroom

Hey there,

I heard about the amazing work you are doing over at King regarding the use of mindfulness in your ELA classes. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study entitled "Critical Mindfulness in the Urban English Language Arts Secondary Classroom." My name is Alanna Harris, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into mindfulness curricula that are culturally responsive or healing in urban settings with Black and Brown students in English Language Arts classrooms. with integrating mindfulness into their practice, as well as provide a space for reflection about those experiences. All participants will engage in individual, semi-structured interviews lasting 60 minutes. The interviews will be audio-recorded and will allow me to ask critical questions and probe for clarity. Additionally, I will collect mindfulness curriculum materials.

I am specifically looking for English teachers who teach in urban communities and serve Black and Brown students, and who use mindfulness techniques in their teaching practice. If this describes you, I would be honored if you would participate in this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. I would like to assure you that there are no negative consequences whatever you decide. The risks involved in participating in this study include the possibility of some interview questions being personal or upsetting. However, you can skip any questions you don't want to answer.

I would like to emphasize that participating in this research study will provide a direct potential benefit to you since you will have the opportunity to critically consider your use of mindfulness and contribute to the knowledge base. There is no cost to you for participating in this study, and you will not receive any form of payment or compensation for your participation. All information collected about you during this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. We will present this data and our findings to others at scientific conferences and publish our results in scientific journals. However, only the Principal Investigator and researchers associated with this project will have access to the information about you and the data collected.

If you choose to participate, I will follow up with you to share the findings of the study once it is completed. To do so, I will need to keep your contact information on record, which will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of sharing research results. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research or if you would like to participate, please contact me, Alanna Harris, or Donna L. Pasternak, Ph.D., Professor of English Education, Department of Teaching and Learning, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Contact information:

For questions about the research, problems, or complaints	Alanna Harris Doctoral Candidate Department of Teaching and Learning University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee PO Box 413 Milwaukee, WI 53201 414-336-663 amalloy@uwm.edu	Donna L. Pasternak, Ph.D. Professor of English Education Department of Teaching and Learning University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee PO Box 413 Milwaukee, WI 53201 (414) 229-4721 dlp2@uwm.edu
For questions about your rights as a research participant, problems, or complaints	IRB (Institutional Review Board; provides ethics oversight)	414-662-3544 / irbinfo@uwm.edu

Thank you for considering our invitation to participate in this study,

Alanna Harris M.S

Teaching and Learning- English Education

PhD Candidate, Urban Education

Hello, may I speak with [participant's name]?

My name is Alanna Harris and I'm a researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I'm calling today because I am doing research on Critical Mindfulness in the Urban English Language Arts Secondary Classroom, and I'm looking for English teachers who meet the following inclusion criteria:

- Must be a secondary teacher who teaches English, as this is the group I am studying.
- Teachers who use mindfulness techniques as a pedagogical strategy, as I am specifically interested in exploring the use of mindfulness in the classroom.
- Teachers who serve Black and Brown students, as the current research emphasizes the need for culturally responsive practices and a different approach for teachers of Black and Brown students necessitating the criteria that teachers teach that population of students.
- Must teach in an urban community, since I have an emphasis on Black students, so the hope in selecting this inclusion criteria is to have a better chance at selecting teachers who teach that population.
- Must teach in the USA, as all the research I used for this study focuses on the United States.

If you meet these criteria and are interested in participating, I would like to invite you to take part in a 60-minute individual, semi-structured interview. The interview will be audio-recorded and will allow us to ask critical questions and probe for clarity on teachers' experiences with integrating mindfulness into their practice.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you can change your mind later if you decide not to participate. There are no negative consequences for declining or withdrawing from the study. Your decision to participate or not to participate in this study will not affect any present or future relationships with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

As a researcher, it is important to me that participants are informed about the sharing of research results. Therefore, I will follow up with participants to share the findings of the study once it is completed. To do so, I will need to keep your contact information on record, which will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of sharing research results.

If you have any questions about the study, you can reach out to me at any time via email amalloy@uwm.edu or phone 414-336-6636. If you're interested in participating, we can schedule a time for the interview that works best for you.

Thank you for considering participation in my study.

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Opening Questions:

1. Where do you teach? Can you tell me a little bit about[MS1] the background of the students in your class? (e.g., grade level, is this a majority minority classroom, predominantly white, all white, etc.)
2. Can you tell me how you came to use mindfulness in your classroom?
 - a. *Follow-up about their own mindfulness practices?*
 - b. *Connections they see with personal practice and classroom practices.*
3. What mindfulness practices do you currently use in your classroom] ?
4. What kind of support do you have to lead this work (e.g., online support groups, other teachers practicing it at their school, etc.? Have they ever had formal training or certification in it?)
5. What kind of reaction have you gotten from students when you started this practice?
6. Can you talk about any ways in which you may have adapted mindfulness practices for Black and Brown students in your classroom?
 - a. If yes, can you talk more about the adaptations?
 - b. If not, have you ever considered making adaptations?
7. What do you feel are the benefits to students of this practice?
8. Can you give an example of a student who has benefited from how you integrate mindfulness in the classroom?
9. Can you talk about any negative reactions to the practice by students you have seen in your classroom. Can you share an example of that?

10. Follow-up: Has the issue of trauma ever come up? How did you handle that? OR something like ‘is trauma a consideration when you are designing lesson plans?’
- a. If yes, Can you talk about that strategy more?
 - b. If not, have you ever considered ways you might do this?
11. Are there ways in which you have incorporated cultural relevance in mindfulness activities for Black and Brown students?
12. If I was going to visit your classroom, where would I see mindfulness happening? Do you integrate mindfulness within your content or lesson plans that are relevant to Black and Brown students? Can you talk to me about the syllabus you brought? [Or I see XX on your syllabus – can you talk to me about what that looks like in practice?] Can you walk me through an example of how you incorporate mindfulness into a class assignment.
13. Have you ever involved Black and Brown families in the mindfulness practice of their children? Can you talk about what you did?
14. Are there ways in which you intentionally address any cultural or personal sensitivities related to mindfulness in the classroom for Black and Brown students?
15. Have you seen there is a need to consider that some of your Black and Brown students as well as other students may face trauma or additional challenges when you are designing mindfulness practices?
16. Can you give an example of how you have sought to address any biases in mindfulness practices for Black and Brown students?

Based on that experience, are there things you do to try to minimize potential bias in the future?

17. Can you talk about some of the challenges or barriers you personally have faced, if any, to implementing mindfulness in the classroom? How have you addressed those challenges?
18. Can you describe how you trained and supported other teachers to address cultural humility when implementing mindfulness for Black and Brown students?
19. Can you describe how you encourage Black and Brown students to continue practicing mindfulness outside of the classroom?
20. Can you describe how you manage time and attention during mindfulness activities in the classroom with Black and Brown students?
21. What do you view as the impact of mindfulness practice in your classroom?
 - a. Are there ways in which you have tried to measure this?
 - b. Can you describe how you measure the impact of mindfulness on the academic and socio-emotional well-being of Black and Brown students?
22. Do you gather feedback from Black and Brown students to improve your mindfulness teaching strategies in the classroom?
 - a. If yes, can you describe what that looks like and how you use that information?
 - b. If not, have you considered gathering feedback from your students?

Closing Questions

23. What are your hopes for incorporating mindfulness in the classroom?
24. Do you plan to continue to integrate mindfulness in the classroom in the future?
25. What are your recommendations for others who hope to do this?
26. Do you have any questions for me?