A BLACK FEMINIST NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF THE OUTSIDER-WITHIN
POSITIONALITY OF BLACK WOMEN K-12 ART EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the narratives of Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences navigating the white field of art education, and in particular, the predominance of White, Eurocentric male artist-centered teaching resources. The analysis of their narratives focused on racial and gender concerns associated with being Black and being a woman. Black women offer a different perspective on oppression than White women or Black men. Adopting an outsider-within positionality framework, the analysis revealed Black women K–12 art educators are unprivileged insiders within their schools and outsiders to a social system that privileges White people as the dominant group in the field of art education. This study’s use of Black feminist narrative inquiry provided a platform for Black women to reveal why race and gender in K–12 art education curricula and the field of art education matter. This study included 21 Black women art educators working in elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States. The women’s narratives capture the inequality, inequity, isolation, exclusion, marginalization, and racism they have experienced in the field of art education. The data provides evidence of four emergent themes: curricular beliefs and attitudes, the identification of teaching resources, the underrepresentation of Black women artists, and the incorporation of Black women artists into curricula. The findings from the study suggest a need for the field of art education to diversify K–12 teaching resources, implement more inclusive curriculum development processes, and champion equitable treatment of Black women art educators.
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Chapter 1.

RECOGNIZING BLACK WOMEN IN ART EDUCATION

Black women in the field of art education teach in an arena dominated by Whites (Acuff 2018; Knight, 2007; Kraehe, 2015; Lawton, 2018). Curriculum developers in K–12 art education rely primarily on White, Eurocentric male artists in art education teaching resources, including textbooks for developing curricula (Wilson, 2017). The field of art education rarely considers Black women art educators’ curricula experiences through their social, historical, racial, gendered, and lived experiences (Berry, 2015). In other words, Black women art educators are part of an educational system, and a field, in which their experiences are often missing. They are unprivileged insiders who are relegated primarily to the day-to-day operations in the classroom, and they are outside of the power structure in the field of art education.

In this study, I critically analyze the curricular experiences of Black women K–12 art educators. I examine curriculum development, teaching resources, the underrepresentation of Black women artists, and racial and gender concerns.

Insiders Without Full Rights and Privileges

Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins (2016) asserts that the increasing visibility of Black women in educational institutions should not be mistaken for power, access, or equality. The intersecting oppressions of being Black and being a woman hinder Black women from becoming insiders with full rights and privileges in
educational institutions (Brown, 2012; Collins, 2000; Knight & Deng, 2016). Sociologist Robert Merton (1972) describes an insider doctrine accordingly: “Insiders are the members of specified groups and collectivities or occupants of specified social statuses; Outsiders are the nonmembers” (p. 21). Insiders usually have similar racial, gender, social class, and educational backgrounds. Comprising the privileged dominant group, insiders create a system of power and authority by excluding others who are not of the same race, gender, and/or social class, or who do not hold the same ideology. Their monopolistic access to particular kinds of knowledge and positions, Merton argues, reinforces social and racial assumptions by excluding those who do not have backgrounds similar to or accepted by the insiders; these individuals are the outsiders. Many of the Black women navigating a white educational institution are outsiders to a system that ignores their plight and status based on White male insiderism (Bhambra, 2015; Collins, 1986; McCoy, 2015; Merton, 1972). In other words, insiders have the power to influence who is granted privilege to specific forms of information or entitlements.

Collins reminds us that despite the educational attainment and status of Black women, Black women’s feminist thinking and theories remain outside mainstream academic discourses. According to Merton (1972), “[T]he doctrine of the Insider, the Outsider, no matter how careful and talented, is excluded in principle from gaining access to the social and cultural truth” (p. 15). Art educator Joni Acuff (2018) affirms, “Art education is implicated in such oppression as seen in the underrepresentation of Black women in art education research and in the field at large” (p. 201). Black women art

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1 I capitalize the words “Black” and “White” when referring to groups of people but lowercase “white” when identifying a structure or a system of power (e.g., white field).
educators are part of the field of art education, yet they are excluded from the dominant group. As critical race feminist Adrien Katherine Wing (2000) argues, “Black women are not White women plus color, or Black men plus gender” (p. 7). In this study, I adopt an outsider-within positionality theoretical framework to analyze how Black women art educators in K–12 educational institutions navigate a white field.

**Investigating Black Women K–12 Art Educators**

There is a dearth of scholarship on Black women K–12 art educators that uses an outsider-within positionality framework to explore the educators’ curricular experiences, teaching practices, and racial and gender concerns. Some scholars have examined the influence of White, Eurocentric male artist-themed curricula and the underrepresentation of Black artists (Acuff, Hirak, & Nangah, 2012; Wilson, 2017) and the tokenism of Black artists in art education teaching resources (Kee, 2017). Other scholars have highlighted the limited support for Black teachers in pre-service art education programs (Kraehe, 2015) and the underrepresentation of Black women art educators as role models in the classroom (Lawton, 2018).

The majority of existing scholarly literature focuses on Black women artists found in art history courses (Collins, 2002; Farrington, 2005; Patton, 1998; Robinson, 1996). Art educators Gloria Wilson (2017) and Jessie Whitehead (2008) are two of the few scholars addressing Black artists and the experiences of women educators of color in the K–12 educational system. I find these scholars’ research vital in analyzing Black women art educators’ navigation of a career field in which they are minoritized. By investigating Black women K–12 art educators’ experiences of racial and gender
inequality in curricula and teaching resources, I place the educator’s curricular experiences at the center of analysis and contribute to the existing literature.

**Searching for Black Women Artists in K–12 Teaching Resources**

As a Black woman artist and former high school art educator, I understand that Black women artists are perceived as untalented and are devalued in the art world (Farrington, 2005, 2017; Wilson, 2017). I taught commercial illustration classes at the Essex County Vocational Technical High School in New Jersey. Essex County is the largest county in New Jersey and consists of 22 municipalities. The majority of the students who attend Essex County vocational schools are either Black or Brown. These students primarily reside in the densely populated areas of urban Eastern Essex County, where there are pockets of high poverty and high crime rates. In teaching various art courses, I realized that the artwork in high school art education textbooks and teaching resources focuses principally on White, Eurocentric male artists. There are few references to White women artists and Black male artists, and there are even fewer representations of Black women artists (Farrington, 2005; Grant & Kee, 2013; Kee, 2017; Mont, 2008; Staikidis, 2018; Whitehead, 1999; Wilson, 2017). Learning about White, Eurocentric artists is important; however, curricula led many K-12 students to believe Black people do not create art (Hunter-Doniger, 2018; Wilson, 2017). The Eastern Essex municipalities, where the majority of the students lived, include the cities of Newark, East Orange, Orange, and Irvington in New Jersey. The population of Essex County, New Jersey, is 38.6% Black, 34.9% Hispanic, and 22.7% White, and 88.8% of the population has U.S. citizenship. Essex County has the largest percentage of people living in poverty in the state, with 16.4% of the population living below the poverty line (DataUSA, n.d.).
2017). Many of the students I taught did not know Black women artists existed. I was the first Black woman artist they knew. The underrepresentation of Black women artists in the mainstream art world parallels the artists’ underrepresentation in K–12 art education teaching resources. In studying artwork by Black women artists, students encounter a different story of culture, history, gender, and race than that which is reflected in the majority of art education teaching resources. Due to the limited curricular resources on Black women artists, I conducted research to develop teaching resources to incorporate into my curriculum.

In developing my curriculum, I combed through the catalogs of K–12 art education suppliers Dick Blick, Nasco, Sax, Triaco, and Utrecht. The catalogs are filled with materials, tools, and teaching resources for sale. Textbook publishers Davis and Glencoe, two of the leading art education textbook publishers, rarely include the art and narratives of Black women beyond African utilitarian artwork. In seeking Black women’s artwork, I was stunned by the lack of available teaching resources. For example, I ordered the collected posters of Black artists’ work, and the collection showed only Black male artists. When I ordered posters of women artists, Frida Kahlo was the only woman of color represented. A few Black women artists, including Edmonia Lewis, Elizabeth Catlett, and Faith Ringgold, are visible in K–12 art education textbooks and teaching resources. However, the inclusion of one or two Black women artists barely scratches the surface of Black women’s artwork. Information on Black women’s lives is scarce. bell hooks explains her shock that there are no gender distinctions between the experiences of White and Black women.
and those of Black men and Black women. hooks (1994) describes the outcome of her search for scholarship by Black women:

In search of scholarly material to document the evidence of my lived experience, I was stunned by either the complete lack of any focus on gender difference in black life. . . . Scholars usually talked about black experience when they were really speaking solely about black male experience. Significantly, I found that when “women” were talked about, the experience of white women was universalized to stand for all female experience and that when “black people” were talked about, the experience of black men was the point of reference. (pp. 120–121)

Like hooks I believe that racist and sexist biases shape the (in)visibility of Black women’s experiences. Little or no information is available about these experiences.

This critical gap motivated me to seek resources about Black women artists and their artwork. I gathered together a collection of work by Black women artists by purchasing calendars, posters, greeting cards, and magazines. I visited Black-owned galleries, artist shows, and museums, and I watched YouTube videos. For example, in 2002, I purchased an Annie Lee (1935–2014) calendar to teach about Black women artists who are not typically mentioned in K–12 art education textbooks and teaching resources. Renowned for her illustrations, Annie Lee depicted scenes from the everyday lives of Black women in Black communities. Art scholar Deborah Whaley (2011) describes Annie Lee’s paintings as “images of cultural resonance, new ways of seeing the black subject, and a varied cultural politics of identity” (p. 192). In searching for materials by Black women artists to develop a diverse curriculum, I
gathered teaching resources that went beyond the work of White, Eurocentric male artists. In this study, I examine whether other Black women K–12 art educators have had similar curricular experiences.

**Narratives of Black Women Art Educators**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to investigate the curricular experiences of Black women K–12 art educators and my personal experiences of navigating an educational system dominated by Whites. Thus, this qualitative study focuses on the narratives of 21 Black women, and in particular, the teaching resources they use in their curricula and their concerns about race and gender in the field of art education. Another purpose of the study is to examine to what extent Black women art educators include Black women artists in their curricula and if so, how they access these resources.

I interviewed the participants to discuss the following aspects of their teaching practice: (a) developing curricula, (b) gathering teaching resources, (c) locating Black women artists, and (d) navigating a white field. I sought to give Black women art educators the opportunity to vocalize their experiences and “to create their own sphere of theorized existence, and thus remove themselves from the marginalized position to which the dominant society has relegated them” (Amoah, 2013, p. 85). By listening to the narratives of Black women K–12 art educators, I was able to examine how race and gender influence their curricular choices.

Educator Djanna Hill-Brisbane’s (2005) research exposes the isolating, discriminatory, and controlling experiences faced by many Black women educators.
These experiences stem from a discourse that neither represents their narratives nor acknowledges their contributions to the field of education. Too few art educators and scholars discuss racialized and gendered oppression in art education curricula or the influence of a Eurocentric definition of art (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Kraehe, & Carpenter, 2018). The narratives of the Black women K–12 art educators who participated in this study provide insight into the women’s lived experiences. The findings of this study thus help art supervisors, leaders of pre-service art education programs, and curriculum developers recognize the need to revise current White, Eurocentric male-dominated curricula and to improve the curricular underrepresentation of Black women artists. Furthermore, the study may inspire those who work in the field of art education to discuss the intersection of racial and gender inequality and inequity among Black women art educators.

**Research Question**

The research question that focuses the narrative inquiry is: *What are the curricular experiences of Black women K–12 art educators?* This research question emerged out of my interest in understanding whether in developing their curricula, other Black women K–12 art educators sought teaching resources on Black women artists that they could not find among the teaching resources they had at their immediate disposal. The teaching resources that the educators could access easily promoted the dominant white field of art education.

The focus is on examining the narratives of the 21 Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences, and in particular, the various ways that racialized
and gendered oppression manifests in their teaching practices. This study gave Black women K–12 art educators the opportunity to analyze their consciousness about the incorporation of Black women artists.

**The Significance of Race and Gender in K–12 Art Education**

The study extends prior research of Black women in the field of art education. As both researcher and participant, I needed to move beyond sharing my experiences as a Black woman art educator to explain *Who cares?* and *So what?* for an audience concerned about the artists represented in K–12 art education. Examining both the *Who cares?* and the *So what?* aspects of Black women in the field of art education uncovers the racialized and gendered oppression perpetuated by teaching resources and teaching experiences. The study of Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences and perspectives helps illuminate the effects of relying predominantly on White, Eurocentric male artists in curricula and teaching in an educational system dominated by Whites.

In the following sections, I capture the significance of the study as the study pertains to (a) Black women art educators and (b) K–12 art education curricula. In the first section, I discuss the intersectionality of Black women teaching art and their presence in the field. Recognizing the stories of Black women art educators’ curricular experiences that lie dormant, I argue for the necessity of confronting racialized and gendered oppression. Next, I discuss the importance of exposing Black, Brown, and White K–12 art students to Black women artists. In this section, I describe how some
scholars have questioned the merit of the teachers’ assumptions and the teachers’ decisions to develop diverse curricula that help challenge racial and gender biases.

**Being Black and Being a Woman**

Historically, Black women educators have struggled for equality and equity in sharing their knowledge of Black culture; they have received minimal recognition for their contributions to the field of education (Dixson, 2003). In Black women’s view of the world, their experiences are ignored or distorted in white educational institutions (Collins, 2000; Patterson, Kinloch, Burkhard, Randal, & Howard, 2016). Art educator Wanda B. Knight (2007) emphasizes that Black women live with the duality of being Black and being a woman. They shift between two worlds, a white one and a Black one, in order “to cope with racial and gender discrimination in the United States” (p. 24). Analyzing Black women art educators’ experiences offers a different perspective of oppression than analyzing the experiences of a White woman or even a Black man (Berry, 2014; Knight & Deng, 2016; McCoy, 2015). Black woman art educators speak from a different set of lived experiences than those that typically appear in scholarly texts. In this study, I examine how gender and race intersect in shaping art education curricula from the perspective of Black women art educators.

The underrepresentation of Black women in art education research leads to the silencing of Black women, the questioning of their research as a valid source of data, obstacles to their professional growth, and the dismissal of their narratives in academia (Acuff, 2018). I question the limited scholarship of Black women art educators and help reveal why Black women K–12 art educators’ narratives are important to the field
of art education. Political scientist Nadia Brown (2012) and art educators Rita Irwin and Amelia Kraehe (2018) describe Black women as agents of knowledge for change. Black women draw from their lived experiences to highlight educational inequality and racial injustice.

White women dominate the field of art education, and scholarly literature rarely mentions the perspectives of Black women. Art educator Pamela Harris Lawton (2018) sheds light on how some Black women feel teaching in a white field, stating, “No matter how hard we work, or how far we advance, we are still viewed as the ‘other’ and subject to inequitable treatment” (p. 373). Many of the participants and I experienced feelings similar to those of Lawton: feelings of working harder yet still being viewed as the “other.” These feelings can affect our teaching practice as Black women. Many Black women in academia understand, regardless of their education level, that White male-controlled educational institutions will attempt to block their accomplishments and academic establishments (Baszile, 2006; Clark, 2006). This study answers the Why? question by presenting Black women K–12 art educators’ firsthand narratives; I explain how the stories are neither monolithic nor trivial. Black feminist scholar Suryia Nayak (2015) states:

However, even though it would be logical to assume that Black women are in a good position to articulate, redefine and devise “realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future,” this is not the case because the voices, standpoints, and scholarship of Black women are often ignored and/or sidelined for not being recognized as having any efficacy. (p. 9)
My story and the stories of 21 Black women who teach K–12 art and who are navigating and negotiating predominantly white curricula and teaching resources highlight the racialized and gendered tensions that influence teaching practices and curriculum development. I reveal how many Black women art educators respond to working every day in a field that does not always validate their experiences or represent them as insiders. Recognizing, documenting, and sharing the contextualized individual experiences of Black women who experience systemic patterns of inequity in K–12 art education is essential.

**White Histories and White Experiences**

The field of art education claims to celebrate open-mindedness in creativity and pedagogy even as White scholars, White artists, and White educators dominate the field (Dewhurst, 2019). Knight (2019) argues:

> Historically, African voices have been silenced or excluded in the US curriculum. . . . At the heart of the exclusion and silence of blacks in the curriculum has been the centrality of whiteness, whereby education and the curriculum have focused on white histories and experiences. (p. 3)

The K–12 curriculum excludes or silences Black women artists.

In the K–12 education system, the teaching resources that educators show to students can influence how the students perceive the truth. Researchers Hannah Kim Sions and Amber Coleman (2019) address the impact of Whiteness in curricula:

> In art education, the most visible influence of Whiteness is in the curriculum where White Eurocentric ideas of who an artist can be and what art looks like
prevails; from the beginning of public school art education, most pedagogy of art education within the United States was modeled after European standards. These standards have reinforced White Eurocentric males as the masters of art, with artists of color incorporated sparingly throughout the occasional “multicultural” lesson. (p. 32)

K–12 art education has a history of promoting White, Eurocentric male artists as the canon that is taught in schools and published in teaching resources. According to art education scholar Elliot Eisner (2002), “The curriculum is a mind-altering device. We design educational programs not merely to improve schools, but also to improve the ways in which students think” (p. 13). I agree with Eisner that the content of a curriculum influences what a student learns and how the student views the world. However, there is a disparity in representation in terms of the artists that curriculum developers and teachers show to students. For example, art educator Debra Ambush (1993) examines how the United States educational system is predicated on a Eurocentric cultural system that helps shape many children’s values of race. She argues that Black children receive a one-sided view of art education that affects their artistic development. In a recent study, Wilson (2018) argues that the field of art education needs to question the field’s assumptions and biases about art students. She highlights the need for a solution that increases the visibility and presence of artists other than White, Eurocentric male artists in the teaching resources. Unless teachers consciously conduct research and incorporate into their curricula teaching resources that present Black women artists, students may leave their elementary and secondary
schools with a narrow understanding of art and artists. Students lose the opportunity to learn about different lived experiences if they do not view artwork by diverse artists.

I noticed the Black and Brown students I taught did not see artists who represent them in the K–12 art education teaching resources I used. Even though many of the students were very talented, they could not imagine themselves as artists. I had many meetings with parents to encourage their children to study art after graduating from high school. Some of these parents did not know Black artists existed. Knight (2019) and Wilson (2017) both highlight how textbooks and teaching resources reflect a White artist’s worldview and silence the contributions of Blacks. Students in elementary and secondary art classes do not have the opportunity to see the richness of the legacy of Black artists. One of Wilson’s (2017) students told her, “Ms. Wilson, Black folks don’t make art” (p. 52). Art educator Tracey Hunter-Doniger (2018) relates a similar experience. A second-grade Black student told her, “Wait, what? That is the artist? But he looks like me. I never saw an artist look like that” (p. 17). I agree with Knight and Wilson. As my awareness of the artists featured in my teaching resources increased, so too did the students’ connections with race, gender, and art. I felt the art students in the classes I taught should learn to view Black women as real creative artists the same way as they did the White, Eurocentric male artists in their textbooks. I painted in my classroom, not only to model a technique but also to demonstrate that Black women can create art.

Art educators Alphonso Grant and Jessica Kee Baker (2013) argue that Black artists do not receive equal treatment in art history texts compared to White and European-born male artists. Even though Grant and Baker’s research is on college-
level art education textbooks, similarly unequal treatment appears in K–12 art education textbooks. Art historians Lisa Farrington (2005, 2017), Sharon Patton (1998), Lisa Collins (2002), and Jontyle Robinson (1996), among others, present Black women in their texts; however, their texts target college students. I purchased many books of Black artists and Black women artists while visiting universities, museums, and commercial bookstores. I used the books as additional references to showcase Black women artists who did not appear in K–12 art education teaching resources.

The White, Eurocentric male artists worldview perpetuated in teaching resources not only affects Black and Brown students; it also precludes White students from learning about non-White artists. White students living in white neighborhoods and attending school with White teachers who use K–12 art education teaching resources have limited exposure to Black women artists. Art educator Dipti Desai (2010) remarks that White students’ understanding of race and gender is based on stereotypes and promotes racial inequality. Teaching predominantly White, Eurocentric male artists disregards the stories, experiences, and culture of Black women’s artwork. Exposing White students to Black women artists allows the students to develop a deeper appreciation of Black women artists’ contributions to the art field (Lawton, 2018).

In describing the power that art can have for students, Eisner highlights the meaning of representation in art and the feeling of security that comes with familiar surroundings. Eisner (2002) emphasizes, “If the only tool you have is a yardstick, you look for what you can measure. Put it another way, the tools you work with influence
what you are likely to think about” (pp. 8–9). Teaching resources and textbooks that primarily feature White, Eurocentric male artists influence the artists teachers present to their students. Ultimately, students’ ability to develop a diverse consciousness about various forms of artistic expression is at stake. Art teachers have the power to strike up these conversations about the artwork and artists in their classrooms, thereby shaping their students’ opinions about art.

The question of *Who cares?* remains. All art educators should be concerned about the racial and gender biases in dominant texts and resources. Examining the underrepresentation of Black women artists in K–12 textbooks and teaching resources is needed to critically observe how the field of art education has failed to adequately address the problem that is the promotion of White, Eurocentric male artists. Concentrating on Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences exposes racism and oppression. This study thus has important implications for the broader field of art education. Art educators must discuss representations of race and gender in teaching resources, textbooks, curriculum development, and pre-service programs.

**Definition of terms**

The following operational definitions are used in the study:

- *Black* refers to individuals who have African or mixed-race ancestry and self-identify as being of African descent. Collins (2016) states the term “Black” is based on “a racial identity assigned to people of African descent by the state, a political identity . . . and a self-defined ethnic identity” (p. 136). While terms referring to United States citizens of African descent have changed over the
years, Sigelman, Tuch, and Martin (2005) and Newport (2007) conclude the use of the adjectives “Black” versus “African American” did not make a difference in one’s identity. Therefore, I use the term Black to describe the racial identity of the participants.

- *Eurocentric* refers to the fundamental ideology of Western philosophy. This ideology prioritizes seeing the world from a European point of view, an egotistical approach that legitimates racial superiority (Aydin, 2018). Aydin (2018) claims that “Eurocentric” does not refer only to the geographic region of Europe but is in fact a conceptualization of Western thought and values. “Eurocentric” refers to a system of power built to maintain whiteness conceptualizations influenced by European or white perceptions and conquests that have cultural or historical dominance through racial hegemony (Gaztambide-Fernández, Kraehe, & Carpenter, 2018; O’Rouke, 2018).

**Limitations of the Study: Exclusions and Concerns**

A limitation of the study is that the women interviewed include only current Black women art educators who teach in K–12 institutions in the United States. In capturing the current curricular experiences of Black women art educators whose narratives may impact the future of curriculum development and teaching practice, I purposefully chose to exclude retirees. I also excluded Black women art educators who teach at the collegiate level. My research question emerged from my experiences as a Black woman high school art educator trying to understand the influence of gender in teaching resources; therefore, I did not include Black men. I recognize other non-
Black women-of-color art educators may experience similar phenomena related to locating non-Black women-of-color artists in art education teaching resources. However, I focus explicitly on the duality of being Black and being a woman. Much of the literature on women in art education focuses on gender. Race is often left out as a significant factor in developing curricula; therefore, excluded from the study are White women. My decision to restrict the race, gender, and employment status of the participants provided Black women K–12 art educators the opportunity to voice their views and experiences through an outsider-within positionality framework.

I made reasonable efforts to limit potential issues in conducting the study. In particular, I avoided generalizing from the participants’ stories to the larger population of Black women K–12 art educators. The narratives presented in the study represent individual experiences. While there are similarities in the women’s approaches to curriculum development, teaching resources, and racial and gender concerns, there are also differences. I attempted to interview art educators in different geographical regions throughout the United States, and I sought Black women who were willing to participate in the study. The study does not represent every state or region of the country. Recognizing the underrepresentation of Black art educators within the field of art education (Kraehe, 2015; Lawton, 2018) and the need to protect the participants’ identities, I omitted some aspects of their responses.

I took into consideration my personal biases of working in a non-traditional art education setting at an inner-city vocational-technical high school. I acknowledge that my experiences as a career technical educator (CTE) who taught commercial illustration may differ from those of the other Black women in the study who teach in
more traditional K–12 school settings. For example, concerns about funding and schedules vary depending upon the type of institution. At times, I found putting my race and gender aside challenging. I listened carefully to each participant’s story so as to avoid assuming we had the same concerns and beliefs about curriculum development and Black women artists.

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter 2 presents relevant literature in three areas to provide both a theoretical framework and a description of the ongoing challenges facing many Black women art educators. I believe that these three areas collectively offer essential information on how race and gender influence Black women’s professional practice. First, I provide an overview of Patricia Hill Collins’s (2000) *outsider-within* positionality framework, highlighting the racial and gendered oppression experienced by Black women in white institutions. Second, I examine various kinds of literature seeking the voices of Black women K–12 art educators’ experiences. Third, I look specifically at the curricular preparation Black women in pre-service art education programs in predominantly white institutions receive.

Chapter 3 explains the study’s methodology and research design. First, I describe how narrative inquiry honors the lived experiences of the participants; I also describe narrative inquiry’s benefits for art educators. I elaborate on the importance of Black feminist approaches to narrative inquiry. Second, I describe the participant selection process and my use of snowball sampling via social media. I explain the search for demographic information about Black women K–12 art educators in the
United States. Next, I explain my methods of collecting data and my role as both researcher and participant. Lastly, I describe my methods of analyzing the data. These methods helped me identify emergent themes and subthemes.

Chapter 4 shares the preliminary narratives capturing the racial and gender concerns expressed by Black women K–12 art educators. During the coding process, patterns arose that revealed how race and gender influence the teaching practices of the 21 participants. I share four significant obstacles the majority of the women reported encountering and saw as attempts to hinder their progress as art educators. These specific obstacles are racial barriers in pre-service art education programs, isolation in the field of art education, the silencing or ignoring of their experiences, and explicit racism perpetuated by administrators and colleagues.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from the narratives of the participants, as well as the four themes and subthemes resulting from the analysis. The first theme is curricular beliefs and attitudes. I reveal how Black women feel about the curriculum development process. The second theme is the identification of teaching resources. The theme of identifying teaching resources has two subthemes: textbooks and technology. I explain why Black women K–12 art educators use or do not use textbooks and why technology may be a significant contributor to teaching resources. The third theme is the underrepresentation of Black women artists in K–12 art education teaching resources. Next, I describe the subtheme, tokenism, and the impact of repeatedly using certain Black woman artists in K–12 curricula. As part of the final theme, the incorporation of Black women artists into curricula, I share the women’s comments about selecting artists to share with their students. I also discuss possible
strategies for incorporating Black women art educators and artists into the field of art education.

Chapter 6 concludes this study. I discuss how Black women matter in art education, the relationship between Black feminism and art education, and the impact of an outsider-within positionality framework in the field of art education. Chapter 6 provides an overview of each of the preceding chapters and the results of the data analysis. I describe the implications of the study and five ways the field of art education can utilize the data from the study. Lastly, I offer my concluding thoughts on Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences.
Chapter 2.

**RACE, GENDER, AND POWER: AN UNEQUAL INTERSECTION**

In this chapter, I discuss the literature relevant to my investigation of the curricular experiences of Black women art educators who teach in the K–12 environment. The literature captures Black women art educators’ experiences as scholars, educators, and students, with a particular emphasis on racism and injustice. The discussion of these experiences serves as an overview of the challenges facing many Black women K–12 art educators.

Adopting an *outsider-within* positionality framework, I focus on the marginalization of Black women in the K–12 art education discourses, the distortions of their experiences, and the position of their narratives outside of the field of art education. I begin with a discussion of an *outsider-within* positionality theoretical framework, which emphasizes how race, gender, and power unequally intersect. I subsequently offer a synopsis of previous studies that elaborates on the lack of Black women’s perspectives in K–12 art education. Lastly, I highlight the insufficient preparation many Black women receive during their pre-service art education and studio art programs. These programs often rely on white master-narrative curricula.

*Outsider-within Positionality: A Theoretical Framework*

Theory is a way to explain and understand phenomena and some theories counter and challenge existing narratives. From a Black feminist perspective, an
An outsider-within positionality framework (Collins, 1986, 2000) provides a foundation for investigating the gendered, racialized, and marginalized experiences of Black women K-12 art educators. An outsider-within positionality framework analyzes the exclusion of Black women’s ideas, talents, and contributions from academic institutions (Bhambra, 2015; Collins, 1986, 2000; Guinier, 1997; McCoy, 2015; Nayak, 2015; West, 2017). Therefore, an outsider-within positionality theoretical framework is most appropriate for my study.

Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 1999) developed the outsider-within positionality framework for producing Black feminist thought. She stressed the marginalization of Black women and generated distinctive standpoints on self, society, and family. Scholar Gurminder Bhambra (2015) considers Collins’s outsider-within framework to be a way to examine the positionality of Black women, who work within white institutions, and to explore the shared problem of racialized and gendered oppression. Scholar Ana Claudia Pereira (2015) agrees, saying, “Collins develops an underlying theory of difference and inequality to explain how social groups are forged and how individuals are hierarchically placed in them” (p. 2329). Although White families sometimes considered Black women domestic workers honorary family members, Collins’ theory explains the subordinate unprivileged position of Black workers.

Despite their perceived insider status observing the lives of White families, Black women understood they would never be equal to or have the same power as the families. They were outsiders-within the White families for whom they worked. Black women quickly learned the limitations of their position and the difficulties of
navigating racial and gender barriers in a white system that did not acknowledge their worth. Many Black women’s teaching positions and educational status are deemed unequal by White counterparts within white academic institutions, preventing them from becoming full privileged insiders. In questioning the possibility of their becoming full insiders with rights and privileges, Black women are inside of the educational structure. Black women in K–12 institutions hold degrees and are licensed educators, but they are not afforded the same privileges as the dominant group.

While Black women work within white institutions, they are not privileged insiders according to the social structures of race and gender. Brown (2012) contends, “Black women who enter organizations under White men’s control, such as the academy, are not afforded the full rights and privileges in hierarchical and cultural structures controlled by this insider group” (p. 21). Black women work in and have lived through a legacy of disempowerment that they inherited because of their inferior positions in a white system that invalidates their presence. Black women live in a space that curriculum theorist Denise Taliaferro Baszile (2006) calls “the nexus of race and gender hierarchies; we be in the space in between, not quite here and not quite there” (p. 200).

Collins’s (2000) outsider-within positionality framework reveals how Black women struggle with gendered oppression and refuse to be defined by scholarship that makes assumptions. Scholars Jioni Lewis, Ruby Mendenhall, Stacy Harwood, and Margaret Brown Huntt (2018) describe how gendered oppression is rooted in stereotypes: “Gendered racism attempts to capture the complexity of oppression experienced by Black women based on racist perceptions of gender roles” (p. 53).
White scholars have perpetuated stereotypes of Black women based on the women’s gender and race. hooks (1994) describes white institutions’ overwhelming ignorance of the gendered experiences of Black women as disturbing. The dominant white group assigns Black women a particular set of gender norms based on racist patterns of discrimination.

An outsider-within positionality framework challenges the myth that Black women’s voices are too foreign to understand (Nayak, 2015) and reclaims the value of learning about the lived experiences of Black women. Narratives by Black women in art education are crucial to conducting an outsider-within positionality framework analysis. These narratives help scholars better understand the challenges the Black women face in developing curricula using teaching resources focused on White, Eurocentric male artists; locating Black women artists; and implementing non-biased curricula.

Many Black women grapple with the intersecting double burden of being a woman and being Black in a predominantly white society. They also experience the pressure of assimilating, changing their appearance and behavior to ward off racist and sexist biases and receive “full” insider status (Collins, 2000; Knight, 2007; Wesley, 2018). Inequality has made some Black women question their hairstyles and their clothing. Many Black women are conscious of their tone of voice and their facial expressions so as not to offend anyone. Artanya Wesley’s research on the status of Black women is a constant reminder that even when Black women educators are employees or bona fide members of educational institutions, they are still highly likely to face oppression within those institutions because of their non-White and non-male
identities. Wesley (2018) posits, “The exclusion of Black females’ participation within mainstream institutions propelled White males’ ideas, opinions, and interest and suppressed Black females’ ideas and interests” (p. 14). For example, while Black women may be employed in schools and invited to dominant-group assemblies, they still experience discrimination, marginalization, isolation, and tokenism when dialogue commences (Brown, 2012; Hill-Brisbane, 2005; Howard-Hamilton, 2003; West, 2017).

Whitehead (2008) stresses the importance “for women of color to occupy space in the theory of knowledge because of historical exclusion. Theories needed to be created that use gender, ethnicity, race, and class as categories of analysis” (pp. 23–24). An outsider-within positionality framework in the field of art education fosters a viewpoint of marginalization that the K–12 art curriculum does not typically address. The conversations among individual Black women about how race and gender influence their teaching practice can lead to new knowledge. By becoming conscious of the artists they include in their curricula and teaching resources, Black women art educators can adopt a collective standpoint of empowerment to expose white dominance in the field of art education.

**Seeking Black Women K-12 Art Educators’ Voices**

Black women art educators enter a field where they are few compared to their White counterparts. Many researchers state that K–12 art educators are predominantly middle-class White women; these White women considerably outnumber Black
women in the field (Desai, 2010; Galbraith & Grauer, 2004; Kraehe, 2015; Lawton, 2018; Leveston, 2011; Spillane, 2015). Scholarly literature in art education often gives a limited view of women’s experiences that does not include the narratives of Black women art educators. Few scholars explain Black women art educators’ experience in pre-service education (Kraehe, 2015; Leveston, 2011; Sion & Coleman, 2019) and higher education (Acuff, 2018; Acuff, Hirak, & Nangah, 2012; Lawton, 2018). The authors highlight the racial and gender concerns of Black women in the field of art education. However, researchers in the field of art education have not thoroughly investigated the challenges and impact of the racial and gender concerns that Black women K–12 art educators experience during their day-to-day work and in curriculum development.

The lack of validation in the scholarship is a pressing issue for many Black women, limiting their collective voice and presence in art education (Acuff, 2018). Mainstream Eurocentric White artists and scholars in art education consume much of the art and literature presented in art education. While White scholars have produced an overwhelming amount of literature, Black scholars have also contributed to the field. Indeed, some Black women scholars have focused parts of their research on the K-12 environment and the inclusion of Black artists. For example, Whitehead (2008) states “As a Black American woman artist educator, I was interested in the impact (if any) of feminism and ethnicity in the lives of other women artist educators of color” (p. 22). As part of her case study, Whitehead interviewed two Black women and two Native American women artist-educators using a feminist theoretical approach. She focused on the limited research concerning feminism and ethnicity specific to
artmaking in K-12 art education, as well as pre-service, and in-service art education programs. Whitehead’s findings reveal the limited number of narratives of women-of-color artists in art education teaching resources. These narratives expose an oppressive system created for non-European male artists. Furthermore, Whitehead highlights how often Black women and women-of-color artists use their artwork to address racist and sexist injustices that the K–12 art education curricula and teaching resources do not represent. She advocates for the presence of women-of-color artists in teaching resources and claims that women-of-color artist-educators’ narratives are just as valid as the narratives of White, Eurocentric male artists. Whitehead (2008) suggests the stories of the women in her study strengthen the field of art education in the following ways: “(a) helping us reshape the material we present to students, (b) continuing to challenge monolithic white and patriarchal modes of authority, and (c) presenting role models for others who challenge the status quo” (p. 34). The stories of Black women artists are seldom included in K–12 teaching resources, which makes the race and gender of artists difficult for art teachers to acknowledge and incorporate into their curricula.

The nominal number of Black women in the field of art education is another concern. According to Lawton (2018), Black women remain underrepresented in art education classrooms at the primary, secondary, and college levels. Often an art department has only a single Black woman art educator. Using a critical race theoretical framework, Lawton (2018) questions Black women’s choice to pursue a career in art education. She asks, “In a field dominated by women, why are so few of them women of color?” (p. 375). To answer this question, Lawton uses narrative
inquiry to interview nine Black women art educators who represent the K–12, collegiate, pre-service, and retirees. Lawton examines the limited understanding of Black women art educators’ experiences as art students, as well as Black women art educators’ relationships with their mentors, professional career choices, and decision-making processes. She believes many Black women drop out of art programs or choose not to enter the field of art education at all because of the lack of role models. Lawton addresses racial and gender inequality from a Black perspective by sharing her experiences and narrative as a Black woman, researcher, educator, and student. She examines the underrepresentation of Black artists and Black art educators in visual art and art education programs.

Wilson (2017) examines the stories of three Black art teachers, two high school teachers and one retired middle school teacher, to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers’ relationship to the art world. Wilson addresses her own racial identity as a Brown art educator and her journey as a practicing artist-educator. Wilson highlights her purpose:

By examining the life experiences of Black art teachers, I could support my own initial musings and understandings of how individuals, myself included, within a non-dominant group, navigate, negotiate, and ultimately structure their pursuits to become agents of their possible selves. (p. 51)

Based on her consciousness of the whiteness of the field of art education, Wilson emphasizes the power of creating a curriculum for K–12 students that addresses racial identities.

Whitehead, Lawton, and Wilson stress the importance of acknowledging Black
women in art education. All three women identify as Black or Brown art educators and provide their experiences and perspectives of navigating the white field of art education.

**White Narratives in Pre-Service Art Education Programs**

Literature that considers the racialized and gendered oppression that Black women endure in pre-service art education programs is vital to understanding the *outsider-within* positionality framework. Black women art educators enter K–12 pre-service art education programs often feeling marginalized based on their race and gender in a white space (Lawton, 2018; Kraehe, 2015). Black women in pre-service programs learn early on about the racial and gender barriers they will have to navigate. Educator Menthia Clark (2006) relays her experience as Black woman student:

> Reflecting upon my educational experiences, I am aware that this drain in my exposure to successful Black women has been consistent, because of the exclusion of Black people’s contributions in the curriculum. Essentially, I was taught that as a Black female in America, I have no existence, and that which is, is not worthy of being taught. (p. 21)

Clark’s experience is unfortunate but true, and art education pre-service programs trigger the same sentiment for many Black women. The Eurocentric curricula designed and taught in the field of art education rarely include the artistic contributions of Black artists, especially Black women artists (Wilson, 2017). Gztambide-Fernandez, Kraehe, and Carpenter (2018) assert, “As a field, the arts in education has been late to reckon with its racist past and white supremacist present” (p. 2). The education that
Black women receive in their pre-service art education program is crucial in understanding their future curricular experiences.

Many Black women in pre-service art education programs find that they are the only Black educators in their cohorts. Early in her teaching career, a Black woman learns that her place is outside of the academic conversation. She may learn only about White artists or fail to receive support from her White instructors. A case study conducted by Kraehe (2015) focuses on two Black women students’ experience preparing to begin student teaching. Kraehe describes one of the participant’s experiences in this way:

Black artists and their artwork were not a part of any coursework that Brianna and the other art education students were expected to take in order to become an art teacher. . . . This may have been, at least in part, because there were not curricular content or living examples of race-conscious art teachers to students in this art teacher preparation program. . . . Acquiring and integrating unsanctioned knowledge of race into her vision for teaching was a difficult process that went unnoticed by others. (p. 206)

Kraehe (2015) captures the other participant’s experience:

Even though Cherise was committed to culturally engaged teaching, the lack of preparedness did not equip her with the critical sociocultural knowledge needed to recognize, understand, and respond effectively to racial inequality. . . . Cherise acknowledged, “I didn’t know how to talk about [race], plain and simple, and I wasn’t prepared for the potential questions or responses that I would receive from my students.” (p. 208)
The pre-service students' narratives demonstrate their unpreparedness to talk critically about race and gender and the complicated process to engage in race-based projects outside the Eurocentric discourse. However, as the only Black students in their program, they broke their silence and discussed how race influences their pre-service teacher learning.

In Wilson’s (2017) research examining the stories of Black art educators, one of the participants is a Black high school art teacher named Betye. Betye shared with Wilson that she was the only Black person enrolled in her predominantly white educational programs. She sought mentorship from her white school about Black artists to support her artistic pursuits; however, she did not receive it. The limited support that Betye experienced is a recurring theme in many Black women’s narratives about their pre-service art education programs.

The master narrative of whiteness in education poses a challenge for Black women educators in creating curricula (Acuff et al., 2012; Dixson, 2003). Acuff et al. (2012) questions the master narrative script imposed on graduate art education courses and the need to address and hear the voices of Black artists. She explains her experience as a graduate student: “As a student, learning about the History of Art Education was always uncomfortable. It wasn’t that I believed the information was invaluable or irrelevant, but as a Black woman, I simply felt alone, isolated, and outside the conversation” (p. 7). Based on this experience, Acuff decided to counter the master narrative as the professor of an undergraduate History of Art Education course, consciously adding Black artists’ contributions to her discussion of art education history. Based on her pre-service teaching experience, Whitehead (2008)
acknowledges the lack of knowledge many K–12 art teachers have about teaching non-European artists. Pre-service teacher’s limited exposure to women-of-color artists makes classroom conversations about race and gender challenging.

Art educators Amber Coleman and Danielle Leveston share their experiences as two Black women art education graduate students in pre-service programs who are navigating the white field of art education. Coleman co-authored an article describing her experience as a Black woman in a pre-service art education program. Coleman reflects on her pre-service experience as one of the few Black students in her class. She often felt her White instructors did not try to understand her desire to learn more about Black artists. For example, Coleman expressed that her art teachers were always White and did not teach about Black artists. She indicates: “In an art history course, I remember wondering why the professor never provided us with any contemporary examples of artwork by Black people or people of color” (Sion & Coleman, 2019, p. 38). As a Black student, Coleman did not feel she had the power to address her concerns about white normativity in art education. She feared possible backlash.

Leveston (2011) wrote an autoethnography for her art education master’s thesis debating the inclusion of Black artists and Black students in a visual arts program. Leveston examines her own experiences as a Black woman and student pursuing a degree in art education. She recalls an instance when a White student in her undergraduate studio art class did not know Black artists existed. Leveston (2011) observes the Black artists mentioned in her visual art courses. She states:

According to the general perception of what is considered relevant art, otherwise known as “the canon,” we can see that an indirect sense of racism
can permeate itself into the general ideas about why we make art, what it can be, how we view it, and why we appreciate it. Many artists of African descent are not considered a part of this ‘canon,’ which again, mainly consists of White male artists of European descent. . . . It is not often that students in the art classroom hear about many Black artists on a regular basis. (p. 7)

Coleman and Leveston both provide firsthand narratives of the difficult experiences they had as the only Black art students in their programs and as students who did not receive support from their White art teachers. Despite her identity as a Black woman, Leveston questions whether her pre-service teacher preparation in predominantly White suburban communities prepared her to teach in urban areas with students of color. Coleman credits her mother, a Black woman art educator, for sharing with her the work of Black artists that she did not see in the classroom.

Another challenge in pre-service art education programs is the biases of and pushback from White art education students. Art educator Sunny Spillane, a White art teacher, describes teaching an undergraduate art education class. She noticed in her pre-service Foundation Art Education course the frustration White students felt when students of color pointed out the reading assignments were written from a white perspective and did not prepare them to enter the K–12 setting. Spillane considers her attempt to create a non-biased environment by incorporating Black artists to be a failure. Spillane (2015) recounts how some students were not pleased with her decision, saying, “Several of my white students expressed privately that they were uncomfortable with such things as an art exhibition focused exclusively on African American contemporary artists” (p. 64). White students are often uncomfortable
discussing the critical issues of race and racism because they do not have to confront the problem daily (Martin, 2015). I appreciate Spillane’s honesty in expressing her lack of cultural understanding of her Black students and her attempt to create a safe space for them. However, Spillane does not indicate whether she continued to talk about Black artists as her students of color requested or succumbed to her White students’ discomfort. Race and social justice scholar Robin DiAngelo’s (2011) research focuses on the reasons why White people ignore talking and teaching about race in the classroom. DiAngelo (2011) claims:

Reasons why the facilitators of these courses and trainings may not directly name the dynamics and beneficiaries of racism range from the lack of a valid analysis of racism by white facilitators, personal and economic survival strategies for facilitators of color, and the overall pressure from management to keep the content comfortable and palatable for whites. (p. 55)

Whiteness in the field of art education helps explain the detachment White teachers may have from their Black students’ experiences of prolonged racial inequity (Dewhurst, 2019). Art educator Marit Dewhurst (2019) contends, “Our binary thinking prevents us from a deeper understanding of art and of pedagogy that could come from including more perspectives and approaches in our work” (p. 159). The biases some White art educators and White students have towards Black people hinder the White art educators and White students from showing empathy for others.

The literature from these scholars exposes a dominant theme: the limited discussion of artists’ race and gender that is necessary to help prepare future Black art educators for curriculum development. The expectation placed on Black women art
educators to recognize White artists and scholars demonstrates the pressure to conform to whiteness. Coleman reflects on her pre-service experiences as playing the “game of school,” a game that required her to be on the white team, so to speak (Sion & Coleman, 2019). As a result of these pre-service experiences, many Black women art educators develop strategies for presenting inequities in relation to the intersections of race and gender in their curricula that go beyond what they learned in their pre-service programs and educational institutions.

**Conclusion: (Un)Preparing Black Women for Art Education**

The literature written by Black women art educators indicates that race and gender play a significant role in pre-service art programs; moreover, the lack of Black artists presented during pre-service art programs impacts novice Black art educators’ future curricular experiences. Some Black women art education students are frustrated that their White professors shut them down in graduate art classes because of their questioning. They do not receive information about Black artists or are told, “Your work is too ethnic” (Lawton, 2018, p. 379) or their art is “African art” (Kraehe, 2015, p. 205). The literature captures the experiences of some Black women in pre-service art education programs. Coleman describes her annoyance with White art teachers who provided minimal help when she asked for advice on how to capture her skin tone in a self-portrait she was painting.

This review of the literature indicates that Black women art educators invest in their education at institutions that rarely, if at all, include the narratives of Black artists. Black women art educators have made great strides in their research and
teaching practice. However, there is a vast amount of work that is needed to support Black women’s visibility in art education. Even though the amount of literature written by Black women in art education has increased (Acuff, 2018; Kraehe, 2015; Knight, 2019; Lawton, 2018; Wilson, 2017, 2019; Whitehead, 2008), there remains a gap in the scholarly understanding of Black women’s curricular experiences and racial concerns in a predominantly white field.

The research literature reveals some pre-service art education and undergraduate studio art programs’ unwillingness to incorporate Black artists in their syllabi. Because of the underrepresentation of Black women artists in undergraduate art programs, Black women art teachers may not be fully prepared to create curricula that address race and gender. Courses in art education and studio art tend to reflect the lives of White, Eurocentric men and the men’s interpretation of art. These courses do not always include the narratives and artistic practices of individuals from diverse cultures (Knight, 2000). The information received in pre-service programs is a significant influence on teachers as they prepare to enter the classroom.

An outsider-within positionality framework suggests that Black women art educators are in a field that will hire them yet fail to represent their likeness in curricula and teaching resources. Pre-service art education programs do not critically build racial knowledge for many Black art educators. Kraehe (2015) warns that when “teacher preparation programs and teacher education research ignore these and other sociocultural influences, the distinctive frameworks, idioms, and practices that define us as a field many also function surreptitiously as hegemonic tools of domination and exclusion” (pp. 208–209). Some Black women art educators in pre-service programs
have problems learning about non-European artists. This exclusion may cause the educators difficulty in knowing where to find teaching resources focused on Black women artists to include in their curricula.

The literature review provides insight into the barriers many Black women experience pursuing a degree in art education. The lack of instruction about Black artists and the isolation of being the only Black educators in their cohorts influence Black women’s curricular decisions. The research literature reveals many Black women art educators experience the disappointment of lacking full, supported, and equal access to Black artists compared to White artists. In pre-service art education programs, lectures rarely focus on Black modern or contemporary artists that Black women could use in creating their curricula. Knight and Deng (2016) highlight the failure of pre-service art education programs to prepare art educators to write diverse curricula. Instead, students learn to perpetuate Eurocentric values of art.

Lawton questions Black women’s absence from art education. Black women may question their career choices when do not see themselves reflected in the field. Wilson (2019) boldly states, “I suggest that pre-service art teachers need a fresh way to examine Whiteness and the power invested in its creation and how this investment impact every part of their personal and professional lives” (emphasis original, p. 74). This literature review reveals a lack of Black women art educators and Black women artists’ narratives. Adopting an outsider-within positionality framework, Black women art educators give voice to navigating an educational system dominated by Whites.
Chapter 3.

METHODOLOGY: NARRATIVE INQUIRY THROUGH INTERVIEWS

Often the stories of Black women are not heard, documented, or shared as valuable knowledge in white institutions. In my experience as an art educator, I have found that research is focused on students’ learning of techniques and terminology in art education rather than on the experiences of teachers. The goal of my study is to listen and document the stories of 21 Black women K–12 art educators. Listening to their stories improves scholars’ understanding of how the Black women art educators feel about their curricula and teaching resources, as well as their own underrepresentation and the underrepresentation of Black women artists in art education.

The qualitative method of narrative inquiry enabled me to obtain data on Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences. This chapter begins with an overview of why narrative inquiry is meaningful when discussing lived experiences and how art educators use narrative inquiry. I subsequently discuss how Black feminist approaches to narrative inquiries are critical to analyzing Black women’s experiences of race and gender. I also discuss the criteria for selecting participants, the demographics of the Black women K–12 art teachers, and virtual snowball sampling. Finally, I describe data collection, methods of data analysis, and my role as both participant and researcher.
Honoring Lived Experiences Through Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a process of gathering stories that give meaning to individuals’ lives, provide insight into individuals’ lived experiences, and elucidate cultural and social differences (Akoto-Sika, 2013; Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013; Meier, 2013; Trahar, 2009; Webster & Mertova, 2007). According to teacher-education scholar Jean Clandinin (2013), narrative inquiry is “an approach to study human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experiences as a source of important knowledge and understanding” (p. 17). Narrative inquiry helps researchers and educators to study the lives of Black women art educators, honor their lived experiences, and understand their practice (Dixson, 2005; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007, 2012). Educator Freema Elbaz-Luwisch (2007) contends,

Understanding teaching requires that we pay attention to teachers both as individuals and as a group, listening to their voices and the stories they tell about their work and their lives. Narrative research on teaching has proceeded from the assumption that teachers’ knowledge itself has a storied form and is developed out of teachers’ stories about their work . . . with teaching materials, and with themselves. Because of the concern for lived experiences, narratives inquiry typically begins with a focus on individual teachers and their personal understandings. (p. 359)

Many teachers have taught for years without discussing the barriers or challenges they experience. Subtle microaggressions, blatant racism, and a fear of retaliation may deter some educators from talking about their experiences. Elbaz-Luwisch (2014) explains the frustration of teachers when they are not “valued or taken seriously within the
school. . . [S]chool is not always a place where one is able to speak out, to express one’s view or to bring one’s values and ideas to bear in interactions with colleagues” (p. 138). Narrative inquiry affords researchers and educators the opportunity to create awareness of teachers’ experiences.

Narrative inquiry uses several methods of data collection that allow researchers and educators to focus on the life of an individual and tell the person’s story in a space where the person can safely speak out and elaborate on experiences. Some of these methods are interviews, document collection, biographical studies, oral histories, and field notes (Creswell, 2013). Reading teachers’ narratives provides a new understanding of issues central to teaching by putting faces and voices to the stories (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Knight, 2007).

Narrative inquiry usually starts with the researcher’s experiences and concerns, which the researcher uses to develop the research question (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The basis of this study is my curricular experiences as a Black woman high school art educator using predominantly White, Eurocentric male artist-themed teaching resources; the underrepresentation of Black women artists; and racial oppression. As both participant and researcher, I indirectly explored how the women in the study and I myself experience our racial and gender identities as art educators in a field dominated by Whites. The curricular experiences of Black women, including their stories of racial and gender biases present in K–12 curricula and teaching resources, are a vital source of knowledge and conversation about confronting oppression in education.
The Relationship Between Narrative Inquiry and Art Education

Narrative inquiry serves as a powerful tool for art education scholars and educators. In particular, it allows researchers and educators to investigate the relationships between historical and social perspectives of race, gender, and lived experiences. Art educators use narrative inquiry to gather stories on topics such as the lives and practices of students enrolled in pre-service programs (Kraehe, 2015), the experience of entering the field of art education (Buffington, Williams, Ogier, & Rouatt, 2016), social injustice and the power imbalances of images (Delacruz, 2014), the practice of artist-educators (Markello, 2013; Wilson, 2017), feminism and ethnicity (Whitehead, 2008), and the role of the teacher-researcher (Meier, 2013; Rolling, 2010). Like other art educators, James Haywood Rolling Jr. and Sharif Bey (2016) argue that narrative inquiry provides art educators the opportunity to express their realities, identities, and challenges. The authors relate: “Narrative inquiry practices afford a platform from which to express our personal challenges, struggles, and dilemmas as African American male(s) reconciling our cultural and political identities” (Rolling & Bey, 2016, p. 310). The narrative inquiry platform offers a scholarly space for Black art educators to tell their stories and not have a privileged insider perspective to give a voice to their experiences.

Narrative inquiry is a vehicle to unpack and understand the outlook of the personal experiences of an art educator (Markello, 2013). Art educator Melanie Buffington conducted a collaborative narrative inquiry project with her graduate students. The students relayed how they decided to become art teachers. The students
described their experiences during childhood and of family support and mentorship that impacted their decision to enter the field of art education. Buffington et al. (2016) use narrative inquiry to capture the new teachers’ experiences with their support networks and to strengthen the field of art education. I share this goal of strengthening the field of art education by capturing the narratives of Black women art educators.

**Marginalized Voices: Black Feminist Approaches to Narrative Inquiry**

A Black feminist approach to narrative inquiry is crucial in identifying and collecting data that shows Black women art educators’ exclusion from the curriculum-writing process and the lack of Black women artists featured in teaching resources. The Black feminist perspective questions the scarcity of Black women art educators in the classroom and Black women artists in the curriculum development process to expose racial and gender biases. I collected and shared the stories of the participants in this study using an *outsider-within* positionality framework, which focuses on the social construction of whiteness that denies Black women equal representation in art education. I critically examined Black women K–12 art educators’ stories of racial and gender inequality, as expressed through narrative inquiry to uncover new ways of gathering information.

Gathering stories serves as a powerful educational tool of self-agency (Amoah, 2013, 2014; Collins, 2000; McClellan, 2012; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; Tamboukou, Andrews, & Squire, 2013). From a Black feminist perspective, narrative inquiry upholds marginalized voices and provides insights into marginalized individuals’ lived experiences of racialized and gendered oppression. For example, law professor Jewel
Amoah sees a Black feminist approach to narrative inquiry as a way for women of color to tell their own stories of oppression and challenge the laws in the United States. Amoah (2013) contends,

The practice of Narrative functions to allow traditionally marginalized and disempowered groups, such as women and people of color, to reclaim their voices. In addition, by laying claim to personal Narrative (i.e. the telling of one’s own story), oppressed people are able to create their own sphere of theorized existence, and thus remove themselves from the marginalized position to which the dominant society has relegated them. (p. 85)

Using a Black feminist narrative approach, Amoah considers the social construction of race that is used a racist legal system to deny people of color equality in the legal realm.

Critical race theorist and educator Adrienne Dixson (2003, 2005) considers Black feminism a way to explore and document stories related to gender, race, and class in Black women’s pedagogy. Adopting Black feminist approaches, Dixson analyzed two elementary school Black women music educators about their experiences. Dixson (2005) identifies what she calls a “search for goodness” in the educators’ experiences (p. 115). Dixson recalls her grandmother lifestyle of advocating for women’s rights in her neighborhood as an introduction to Black feminism (p. 110). Dixson (2005) relates,

This search for goodness is especially important when we consider the volume of literature, with the exception of more recent research by scholars of color.
Specifically, with respect to Black women teachers, rarely has a positive light been shown on us as women and teachers. (p. 115)

Dixson analyzed Black women K–12 music educators’ narratives to identify how racial and social justice discourses inform the Black women’s approaches to their teaching practices.

Sharing the narratives of Black women helps create awareness among those individuals who are not conscious of non-White people. Black women art educators’ shared experiences provide a nuanced understanding of how the social structure of oppression Black women face differs from White women’s and Black men’s perceptions of equality (Collins 2000, 2017; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1997; Lorde, 2014; Nayak, 2015; Thornton & Zambrana, 2017). Black women who navigate a white field and experience a particular racial and gender script can break their silence.

**Selecting Participants**

To grasp the meaning of teaching in the white field of art education, I specifically selected licensed Black women art educators who currently teach in the K–12 sector to participate in this study. The participants’ willingness to speak about their curricular experiences helped illuminate the racial and gender barriers that Black women art educators face. I established criteria to aid me in my selection of potential participants. A potential participant must:

- identify as African-American, Black, and/or of African descent;
• have been born in the United States or have lived for five years or more in the United States;
• teach in a K–12 institution; and
• hold state teaching licensure.

Locating the Demographics of Black Women K-12 Art Educators

Scholars in art education emphasize that White women outnumber Black women in the field of art education, potentially making Black women a hard-to-reach population (Kraehe, 2015; Lawton, 2018; Leveston, 2011; Spillane, 2015). Educational researchers Soheyla Taie and Rebecca Goldring (2018) studied elementary and secondary public schools throughout the United States during the 2015–2016 school year for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). They determined that 80% of teachers are White, 7% are Black, and 77% are women (Appendix A). The Stats in Brief section of the U.S. Department of Education’s March 2015 report, Data on Public Elementary and School Art Educations Instructors, describes who teaches art education in schools rather than just the availability of art education, as previous NCES reports did (Sparks, Zhang, & Bahr, 2015). The report provides the percentage of full-time and part-time K-12 teachers in visual art and music based on schools’ non-white student enrollment, poverty level, student enrollment size, and facilities.

The 2017 NCES-commissioned statistical analysis report by researchers Richard Ingersoll and Lisa Merrill, A Quarter Century of Changes in the Elementary and Secondary Teaching Force from 1987–2012, reveals the percentage of non-white
teachers from years ranging from 1987–1988 and 2011–2012 throughout the United States. In 2011–2012, 76.1% of teachers were female, 6.4% were Black, and 87.6% were White. Moreover, there were 666,200 non-white teachers; 251,900 female teachers; and 20,100 teachers working in art and music (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017; Appendix A). Ingersoll and Merrill (2017) acknowledge the skewed racial/ethnic composition of teachers: “The elementary and secondary teaching force in the United States has long been predominantly White” (p. v). Ingersoll and Merrill (2017) use the broad language of “non-white, non-Hispanic teachers” to capture a combination of different non-white subgroups: “It includes: Hispanics or Latinos, regardless of race, Blacks or African Americans, non-Hispanics; Asians or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, non-Hispanic; American Indian/Alaska Natives, non-Hispanic; and those of two or more races, non-Hispanic” (p. 26). Interestingly, the report mentions the number of White female teachers increased by 49%, while the number of non-white female teachers increased by 102% from 1987–1988 to 2011–2012. The report does not break down the racial groups to provide a clearer understanding of the racial disparity among elementary and secondary educators in the United States.

The United States Department of Education’s 2016 report, *The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce*, provides similar information about the racial diversity of teachers as that provided in Ingersoll and Merrill’s (2017) report; however, the 2016 report uses percentages to capture racial diversity. Although the report mentions the retention of non-white teachers from the 2011–2012 to 2012–2013, the report does not break down retention by gender or subject. The report also uses generic terms such as “teachers of color.” “Teachers of color” includes Black, Hispanic, and
Asian/Pacific Islander teachers, as well as teachers who identify as two or more races. The report concludes, “Despite the suggested benefits of diversity, the elementary and secondary educator workforce is still overwhelmingly homogenous” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 31). When I read the report’s conclusion that White teachers outnumbered teachers of color, I marveled at the report’s claim that the racial demographics of teachers are homogenous throughout the United States.

In trying to locate demographic information on Black women K–12 art educators, I looked at the Humanities Indicators, which are part of a report by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences titled *Demographic Characteristics of Humanities Teachers in Public Schools*. The authors of the report stated they had taken the data from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Teacher and Principal Survey. The 2015–2016 findings indicate that humanities teachers tend to be white, middle-aged women (Humanities Indicators, 2017). The report further states that the gender distribution of humanities teachers is similar to the gender distribution of art teachers. The majority are White women in humanities is at 68% (Humanities Indicators, 2017). The authors expressed difficulty in tracking teachers’ demographics due to the changes in the survey. When I searched the Humanities Indicators website for racial demographics, nothing came up except the race/ethnicity of college-bound seniors. As with the earlier reports on the gender and racial identities of teachers, the Humanities Indicators grouped Black (African American), Asian (Hawaiian, Pacific Islander), and Native American (Alaska Native) teachers together as the subgroup “non-white.” The report data did not reveal the racial and gender breakdown between Black and White women.
The School and Staffing Survey (SASS) on the NCES website provides the total number of public school teachers and the percentage of teachers by race for 2011–2012 (Appendix A). The SASS surveys principals and teachers in public and private K–12 schools across the United States. I revisited the NCES website and entered “Black women art educators,” and nothing appeared. When I searched for Black women and White women more generally, data on college enrollment emerged. I also searched for information about the gender of teachers, and a page that showed information about teachers’ level of education, salary, and evaluation came up. Undeterred, I found The Condition of Education data from May 2019 on the NCES website. One of the chapters, “The Characteristics of Public School Teachers by Gender and the Characteristics of Public School Teachers by Race,” estimated that in 2015–2016, 77% of teachers were female, 80% of teachers were White, and 7% of teachers were Black (McFarland, Hussar, & Zhang et al., 2019; Figures 3-1 and 3-2). These charts indicate very little has changed regarding the race distribution in education. The majority of the elementary and secondary teachers in the United States are still White and female.

After frustratingly searching for the demographics of Black and White women art educators in the United States, I contacted Joel McFarland, a statistician at the NCES and one of the researchers of The Condition of Education report. I asked McFarland whether he could provide information on the race and gender of teachers in art education. McFarland responded,

Thank you for contacting NCES. I looked through the publications I manage and could not find any tables that show teacher breakdowns by race/ethnicity,
gender, and field of instruction. I’m reaching out to a few colleagues and will let you know if they find any available NCES resources on this topic. (personal communication, November 6, 2019)

The NCES issues data on the percentage of teachers in public elementary and secondary school by race and gender. Yet data showing the demographic breakdown of Black and White women K–12 art educators seemed not to exist.

To continue my search for the demographics of Black and White women K–12 art educators in the United States, I went to what I considered the next logical place, the National Art Education Association (NAEA). I contacted NAEA membership service representative Christie Castillo and asked if the association had demographic information on Black women K–12 art teachers. She informed me in an email that the NAEA asks all members to voluntarily complete a demographic survey. Castillo stated that the NAEA’s records indicate only 1% of the K–12 teachers surveyed selected African or Black American as their race/ethnicity. When I asked for the data, Castillo responded, “Unfortunately, we are unable to share NAEA member information and data” (personal communication, October 15, 2018). I sent emails to the four NAEA regional committees, hoping they could provide the demographics of women educators in their region, but only two responded. One of the regional representatives informed me the NAEA has not collected such demographic data in the past and has no data to share.
Figure 3-1. The Characteristics of Public School Teachers by Gender from *The Condition of Education 2019* report.

**NOTE:** Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Teachers were classified as elementary or secondary on the basis of the grades they taught, rather than on the level of the school in which they taught. In general, elementary teachers include those teaching prekindergarten through grade 6 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being kindergarten through grade 6. In general, secondary teachers include those teaching any of grades 7 through 12 and those teaching multiple grades, with a preponderance of grades taught being grades 7 through 12 and usually with no grade taught being lower than grade 5.  
Figure 3-2. The Characters of Public School Teachers by Race from *The Condition of Education 2019* report

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Figure 2. Percentage distribution of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity: School years 1999-2000 and 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>1999-2000</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Not available.

# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Data are based on a head count of full-time and part-time teachers rather than on the number of full-time-equivalent teachers. Data for 1999-2000 are only roughly comparable to data for 2015-16. In 1999-2000, data for teachers of Two or more races were not collected as a separate category and the Asian category included Pacific Islanders. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

I did not receive the data I sought until Owen David Deitz, the fine arts education consultant for the Pennsylvania Department of Education/Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction, contacted me. One of the NAEA regional representatives had forwarded him my email. Deitz emailed me this research on the demographics of Black and White K-12 art educators in Pennsylvania. In response to Deitz’s email, I asked for further information on his data and process. In 2018, Deitz had completed an informal project that involved data for the school year 2016–2017. He compiled his findings in *Data Review: Arts Education Access in Pennsylvania Schools*. In the report, he explains the purpose of the project, saying, “The purpose of this white paper is to provide a review of available data regarding access to arts education opportunities in PA schools” (Deitz, 2018, p. 1). Deitz retrieved the data he had on teacher training, recruitment, and retention in the arts and the availability of art education in public schools. While the data captures the number of actively employed teachers of visual art, music, dance, and theatre in Pennsylvania, I focused on the gender and ethnic descriptions of the visual art teachers in his research.

Deitz’s process began with gathering data from the data department of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The information Deitz received came from the Teacher Information Management System (TIMS). The data included information about the race and gender of teachers that is beyond the scope of this project. TIMS is public information; however, as Deitz explained to me, the information is not accessible to the public. In other words, a person who does not work at the Pennsylvania Department of Education cannot search the PDE website for the information, nor will the data department provide it to researchers. After receiving
Excel spreadsheets from the data department that included the race and gender breakdown of Black women and White women, Deitz decided to include the information in his research. His reasoning was to analyze the retention and recruitment of teachers because he realized the demographics of the students in schools do not match those of the teachers. Deitz said, “Art teachers are white women, not who the students are” (personal communication, November 7, 2019). Deitz expressed concern about biases against women of color pursuing degrees.

The report shows the race and gender breakdown of K–12 art teachers in Pennsylvania public schools, charter schools, and career technical centers in 2017 (Appendix A). Excluded from the report are the K–12 art educators in private or parochial schools in Pennsylvania. Deitz explained that to effectively review the TIMS data provided on the Excel spreadsheets, he had to assign classifications to individual schools, school types, and full time equivalency (FTE). The FTE counts all the teachers employed in all the school districts.

The PDE collects demographic information from each school district using each teacher’s personal professional identification number (PPID). Each teacher receives a PPID; however, this PPID is not linked to the teacher’s name. As shown in Appendix A, Deitz analyzed the data based on the FTE and not the actual number of teachers in each school district. For example, if an art teacher works part-time or only two-thirds of a contract, Deitz considered the work to be equivalent to .66 FTE. Deitz considered two part-time art teachers to be one full-time art teacher. These part-time teachers may teach more than one subject. For instance, Deitz’s chart shows that there are 22.27 Black women elementary art teachers; however, that is not the actual number
of bodies based on the FTE system. In other words, if there are two Black women elementary school art teachers who are part-time, then they are counted as one Black woman art teacher. In actuality, there may be a few more teachers than what the chart reveals.

The data for the 2016–2017 school year shows a combined number of 48.39 Black women art educators compared to the 2,395.58 White women art educators in the state of Pennsylvania. The data also shows there are significantly more White women than Black women art educators in Pennsylvania. Deitz shared invaluable data on the race and gender of art educators in Pennsylvania. The United States Department of Education and NAEA were unable to provide this data.

Social Media Virtual Snowball Sampling

In the United States there are fewer Black educators than White educators. Recognizing the lack of data available to compare Black women art educators to White women, I feared I would not find enough participants for my study in order to develop a cohesive narrative. To achieve the desired sample size, I conducted virtual snowball sampling via emails, Facebook, and LinkedIn to reach Black women K–12 art educators for potential inclusion in the study. Virtual snowball sampling is a technique widely used on social networking sites (SNS) for “hard-to-reach” populations (Baltar & Brunet, 2011). In gathering the initial snowball sample, I sent emails to my acquaintances in the art world, art education, and K–12 education at large. However, the majority of those I corresponded with informed me that I was the only Black art educator they knew (Figure 3-3). Ultimately, Facebook became the
most effective tool for virtual snowball sampling. Facebook made it possible for me to expand my sample size to reach potential participants. I posted my recruitment letter on 35 group pages I am affiliated with on Facebook. The 35 groups together have an estimated 305,714 members (Table 3-1). I made the first Facebook post at the end of Figure 3-3. Facebook Snowball Participant’s Response

9/20/18, 12:43 PM

Hi Rob
I am compiling a list for my research of K-12 Black (African American) women art educators in the United States as possible interviewees. Do you know of anyone I could contact? Thanks Indira

9/20/18, 9:11 PM

Hmm...unfortunately, I don’t know any (which is sad in itself...granted I haven’t worked in too many different schools to have known many art teachers, but the ones I know are all white. Have you reached out to Mike? He knows a lot of teachers up there!

Thanks I did contact Mike.

That is a really interesting topic! There should be more diversity in art ed (well in all ed!)
Table 3-1. Name of Facebook Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art Education Groups</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Teachers/Black Studies Groups</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D/Ed.D Groups</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Associations</td>
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<td>Feminist Group</td>
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<td>Museum Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Page</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Art Page</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Facebook groups contacted to present the source and number of organizations from where samples were drawn.

September 2018. This post allowed me to create a list of individuals for future contact.

Once I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I posted the official recruitment letter on November 11 and 12, 2018. The recruitment letter was posted, shared, and then reposted by members of the Facebook groups, notifying Black women art educators of the study (Figure 3-4).

As a result of my efforts, I received over 20 responses during the first week via email and direct message on Facebook. I quickly realized the need for my study and the need for Black women who teach in the K–12 sector to voice their concerns. Thirty-five women responded from different regions within the United States. I was astonished by the quick responses I received from Black women who were interested
in my study after I posted the recruitment letter on Facebook. For example, I received
a Facebook direct message from a Black woman who teaches art in Qatar. While she
did not meet the criterion that required participants to be current teachers in the United
States, her response indicates that my recruitment letter had been reposted
internationally (Figure 3-5).

Figure 3-4. Facebook Recruitment Shared

Andrew l shared a post.
November 17 at 10:18 AM · 📣

Art ed folks, if you are or know any black women in our field, please
reach out to Indi Indira.

Indi Indira posted in National Art Education Association Women’s Caucus.
November 11 at 11:56 PM

My name is Indira Bailey and I am a Ph.D Candidate at Penn State
University. I am conducting research as a part of an Art Education and
Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies dual-titled doctoral degree program
at PSU. The research aims to examine Black women art educators
curricular experiences in K-12 schools.
I am seeking current K-12 women art educators who identify as African-
American, Black, and/or of African descent, who were born in the United
States, or, have lived for five years or more in the United States. I would like
to include participants from elementary, middle, and high school in public
or private schools throughout the United States. If you are interested in
participating, please send an email to ivb5106@psu.edu confirming that
you would like to take part in the research. Please share

You and 3 others 1 Comment

Like Comment Share

Andrew l Janice l and Lib fyi.
Like · Reply · 1w
I sent another email to the 28 women who qualified and expressed interest in the study, inviting them to participate in the research. Twenty-one women accepted the invitation, in which I explained their participation was completely voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any stage. I was cautious to avoid offending the participants and clearly stated they did not have to answer any questions they felt were too personal or intrusive. In Table 3-2, I present the participants’ demographic information, including years of employment, state of employment, age, grade level taught, and educational level. To protect the participants from any potential retribution from their employers, I use pseudonyms and do not list the names of their schools or cities.
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<td>K-5</td>
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<td>N. Carolina</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>K-9</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keisha</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>Ed.D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Ed.D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>MAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaime</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>MFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Names changed to protect anonymity. The demographics represent the participant’s age, location, years of service, grade level taught, and education status at the time of the study.
Collecting Perspectives of Developing Curricula

I collected data in the form of interview transcripts, documents, lesson plans, and field notes. Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) recommend that narrative inquiry include various kinds of data, such as teacher stories, autobiographical writing, interviews, documents, field notes, photographs, and other personal artifacts. The data I collected focused on the experiences the participants decided to share with me, as I recognized that everyone has a story to tell.

In participating in this study, the Black women K–12 art educators shared their perceptions and perspectives of developing curricula, locating teaching resources, and incorporating Black women artists. Qualitative narrative inquiry provided me with the opportunity to center the participants’ curricular and lived experiences and collect documents.

Semi-Structured Interviews and Guiding Questions

Twenty-one Black women K–12 art educators throughout the country agreed to participate in a telephone interview. Because the participants lived throughout the United States, I decided that the most practical type of interview was a telephone interview that I could record on my computer. Professor of educational psychology John Creswell (2013) emphasizes, “A telephone interview provides the best source of information when the researcher does not have direct access to individuals” (p. 165).

Educational scholar Christine Bold (2012) states that when collecting narratives through interviews, researchers can use three categories of interviewing techniques: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. While structured
interviewing has a fixed set of questions, unstructured interviewing is similar to an informal conversation with no set agenda. I chose the semi-structured interviewing method described by Bold so that each participant could speak freely and give detailed information about her experiences. Semi-structured interviews rely on open-ended questions rather than a fixed set of questions or no particular questions at all. Open-ended questions allow participants the flexibility to provide additional information without giving fixed or rehearsed answers for the study. The participants are able to answer the questions with narrative-like responses rather than snippets of information.

I used the following open-ended, semi-structured interview questions to investigate how Black women art educators feel about their K–12 curriculum choices and the teaching resources used in the classroom. The interview questions that I created for the study assisted the participants in providing answers about the subject matter. The interview protocol provided a structure for participants to ask follow-up questions. The following are the guided questions:

**Question 1:** What is your curriculum?

**Question 2:** What artists, if any, do you include in your curriculum? Why?

**Question 3:** What are your experiences concerning developing and implementing the curriculum?

I created the first question to understand Black women’s participation in the development of their curricula and the teaching resources they used. The second question inquired about where the participants found information on artists and if they used Black women artists in their curricula. The final question sought to uncover each of the participant’s personal experiences as a Black woman art educator. The women
in the study did not answer “yes” or “no” to the interview questions; many of them went into great depth, expressing thoughts that they had never shared publicly. In addition to asking the participants the interview questions, I asked supplementary questions to prompt more in-depth responses. For example, as part of the first question, I asked, “Do you use textbooks?” I did not want to make assumptions about the answers or create scenarios for the women based upon my own experience. Based on the women’s responses to the central and supplementary questions, I asked follow-up questions for clarification. For example, I asked a participant, “When you say ‘role model,’ do you mean yourself or the artists that you are showing?” The follow-up questions served as a gateway to understanding the women’s curricular experiences. I thanked the participants after the interviews for sharing their experiences. I asked if I could contact the participants in the future.

Before completing her interview, each participant received an email with IRB-approved materials and the following information: the purpose of the study, the interview questions, an assurance of anonymity, and my contact information (Appendix B). I sent another email confirming the date and time of the interview. Each interview took place over the phone and lasted between 30 to 60 minutes depending on how much the participant had to share. I used my computer to record the interviews digitally. Before recording the participants, I asked them about the demographics of their students and funding. Once the recording began, each participant verbally consented to participate in the study, in accordance with The Pennsylvania State University’s IRB-exempt research policies. I kept all information confidential and secure to minimize any risks or inconveniences to the participants in the study.
**Role as Researcher-Participant**

As the researcher-participant, I indirectly explored how I and the women in the study experienced our race and gender identities in a field dominated by Whites. I used autobiographical accounts from my experience as a teacher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), answering the same interview questions as the participants and analyzing my responses through the same approach. Incorporating my own story into the study allowed me to become a part of the broader landscape of stories presented in the study. Creswell (2013) explains that both participants’ stories and the researcher’s personal story can shed light on educators’ experiences. I understood that my and the participants’ curricular experiences as Black women art educators may or may not be similar. Regardless of the presence or absence of patterns, I diligently documented the curricular experiences so that I could capture the collective concerns and issues of Black women.

As a participant, I knew my story was necessary. I am a Black woman, I am a Black woman artist, and I am a Black woman art educator who wishes to understand if other Black women K–12 art educators have had similar curricular experiences. Was I the only one questioning White, Eurocentric male artist-themed teaching resources? Was I the only one having difficulty locating teaching resources featuring Black women artists? Who else had racial and gender concerns? Like the participants, I had to reflect consciously on my experiences and think about my behavior. Emotions swelled up in me as I remembered the years I had taught art. Anger, hurt, and excitement emerged at the same time. In listening to the participants, I felt relieved that the study included more than my voice.
Although the participants appeared to share my enthusiasm for the study, I recognized that as the researcher, I had to put aside my ego and listen to what the participants actually said. More importantly, I had to listen to what they did not say. I understood I could only speak for myself and not for Black women in general. In interviewing the other Black women, I engaged in what Brown (2012) refers to as “sister-to-sister talk . . . the shared position of Black women” (p. 22). The sister-to-sister position cultivates trust, as I represent the participants’ narratives with respect and honesty. Even though the participants did not personally know me, the participants became comfortable and open with me because of my familiarity as a high school teacher and as a Black woman. One of the women told me she was glad she was not the only one expressing her thoughts. Another woman admitted I was the first Black woman she had spoken to about her feelings. Understanding the trust that the women had placed in me, I aimed to tell their stories just as they relayed them to me to the best of my ability. Dixson talks about how one of her participants allowed her to interview her only because Dixson, too, was a Black woman. Dixson (2005) recounts her participant’s words:

You know, I only agreed to do this because you’re a sista. I have been in a lot of people’s research. They hear about the school and me, and they want to come and do a study. I’m just tired of them coming here and me helping them out to get their degrees. So, when I saw what you were trying to do, and that you’re a young sista, I thought it was finally an opportunity for me to help one of my people. ‘Cuz you know, not many of us get out of there with a doctorate. (p. 106)
I cannot claim that the women participated in the study only because I am Black, but I believed they were relieved another Black woman was telling their stories. Black women listening to each other is vital, and only Black women can understand each other’s plight. Collins (2000) warns, “This process of trusting one another can seem dangerous because only Black women know what it means to be Black women. But if we will not listen to one another, then who will?” (p. 104). I do not think some of the women would have revealed specific details about their experiences if I were not a Black woman.

My goal during the interviews was to record the women’s feelings and thoughts about being in a white space exactly as they shared them. I honored the position I occupied in the study as a Black woman, but I remembered that I was the researcher and was mindful of the fact that the stories the women shared were emotional for them and brought up some painful memories. The questions I asked the women elicited various emotions, including doubt, anger, fear, distress, and contentment. The questions made some of the women pause and think before answering, putting them in a different mode of consciousness. Some of the women had never thought about their curricula or teaching experiences in the way that the questions required. For example, I asked, “Do the teaching resources you have access to include Black women artists?”

As I listened to the stories some of the women relayed to me, I reflected on my own experiences with racism. I struggled at times separating my experiences with the participants’ experiences. My goal was not to gather a group of angry Black women to express their frustration about their mistreatment. However, it was that anger that
drove the research. I am reminded of Rachel Griffin’s (2012) words, “I AM an Angry Black Woman. Unapologetically, rationally, and rightfully so” (p. 138). The anger of many of the participants that others did not hear their voices or acknowledged their presence unifies our experiences.

Analyzing and Interpreting Narratives of Black Women K–12 Art Educators

Using the theoretical framework of the study, I conducted data analysis to describe the patterns, relationships, and themes in the stories of the women and to offer an interpretation. During the process, I identified emergent themes and sub-themes related to the research question and the theoretical framework.

The individual interviews with the participants helped me to see collectively how many Black women feel about their role as K–12 art educators and their thought processes in selecting artists to include their curricula. For example, participants described how they felt about their teaching resources, the availability of textbooks and technology, and the search for Black women artists. Their comments helped me answer the research question about their curricular experiences.

Three-Dimensional Space Approach: Looking Inward, Backward, and Outward

I used the three-dimensional space approach to analyze data to compose the narratives of the participants’ stories from the past to present standpoints. I moved back and forth from the personal to the social context, making connections among the participants’ experiences in the field of art education (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). The layers of the three-dimensional space approach
are *interaction, continuity, and situation*. The first layer is *interaction*, which refers to the analysis of an interview transcript for the personal and social experiences of a participant, including at the internal and external conditions of the participant’s environment. The second layer is *continuity*, which focuses on the history, current, and future occurrences that lead to new experiences. The third layer is *situation*, which refers to the location where the events took place or the intention of the event. Using Jo Anne Ollerenshaw and John Creswell’s (2002) three-dimensional space approach and an *outsider-within* positionality framework, I developed a meaningful understanding of Black women art educators’ curricular experiences and racial and gender concerns in K–12 institutions.

Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) created a table adapted from Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Table 3-3). Applied to Black women art educators’ curricular experiences, the three-dimensional space approach helped me to move away from the actual interview transcripts and ask, “What are the women telling me?”, “What are they not telling me?”, and “Why is this significant?” The three-dimensional space narrative approach analyzes the women’s stories by looking inward, looking backward, looking outward, and looking at time and place in an attempt to understand intersections of race and gender in the field of art education. Figure 3-6 is an example of the chart I created to organize and analyze the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Continuity</th>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Situation/Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions</td>
<td>Look outward to existential conditions in the environment, with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view</td>
<td>Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times</td>
<td>Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines</td>
<td>Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Clandinin and Connelly (2000).

I manually transcribed each of the participant’s interviews. I took notes during and after each interview, documenting the perceptions, perspectives, and reflections I found in the transcripts. While conducting the interviews, I highlighted specific statements the participants made and the tone in which the participants made them. I printed out each of the transcribed interviews to prepare for coding and data analysis.

After transcribing each interview, I referred to Johnny Saldaña’s (2016) book, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, to determine the most appropriate codes for deciphering the data. I used a mixed coding method that combined values coding and dramaturgical coding. Combining the methods enabled me to record the participants’ narratives and create themes. Saldaña (2016) explains that values coding is a way to identify the importance individual’s attribute to themselves, other people’s ideas, and situations. Values coding has three categories: values, attitudes, and beliefs. Black women’s values, attitudes, and beliefs about their curricula, teaching resources, and artists were essential factors in creating emerging themes and categories.
Figure 3-6. Data Layout Chart
Using values coding, I organized Black women’s perspectives, knowledge, and experiences of navigating the white field of art education.

Dramaturgical coding, which uses vignettes, is the second method that helped me investigate the experiences of Black women. Focusing on stories that reflect conflicts, strategies, and emotions is a legitimate way of understanding participants’ thoughts and responses to the interview questions. Saldaña (2016) expounds, “Dramaturgical coding attunes the researcher to the qualities, perspectives, and drives of the participant. It also provides a deep understanding of how humans in social action, reaction, and interaction interpret and manage conflict” (p. 146). The categories of dramaturgical coding are objectives, conflicts or obstacles, tactics or strategies, attitudes, emotions, and subtexts. I used aspects of dramaturgical coding to explain the experiences of Black women based on their responses to racial and gender inequalities. I ultimately combined eight categories from values coding and dramaturgical coding to use in my analysis: attitudes, beliefs, values, tactics, objectives, conflicts, emotions, and vignettes.

To establish the emergent themes using the code categories, I reread the interview transcripts and highlighted keywords and phrases that appeared more than twice with colored markers. Each colored marker reflected a particular code category. This color-coding helped me to find patterns that I then used to develop the emergent themes and subthemes. For example, I used a green marker to indicate conflict. Every time one of the participants reflected on a conflict, I circled and underlined the word or phrase and put the abbreviation C/V in the margin of the transcript (Figure 3-10).
Figure 3-7. Coding Highlight Example

IB - I understand what do you think is missing from your curriculum

The curriculum that I am trying to put together I would say at the new school my challenge here is the kids didn't have our for three years before I was there so they are kids who are in the fifth grade who have not had art since the fourth grade not since the since they went to third grade and I'm challenge with starting bringing them up to level with their learning about the basics of Art and having a certain confidence they have when you have doing creative work and thinking creatively and exposed to other artists I would say time the time to do better planning and preparation because a lot of times I am just like trying to stay afloat entice how I kind of feel about it stay how to stay afloat and manage all the school business part of teaching and trying to have our experiences that are enriching with the limited resources that I have at the time so time and resources I would say I have a sort of very dramatic negative impact on designing and teaching a curriculum 37.12

IB - can you talk a little bit more about which about what you mean about isolation

Well when I was working with the other school both of the other schools the high school and the technology and environment based curriculum because I'm working with a particular School seem like the school had a particular theme I'm doing something different from the teacher who is in the a traditional classroom and so it's not like I can always share ideas and share lessons with that person because my lesson is going to have these other features or I'm added in other standards they may not necessarily have to include on a regular basis and then like to our teachers don't have to and have to have a lot of meet up and toss ideas around and creative time together and it creates like you are working by yourself a lot and because you are the only person teaching your subject you are never on an instructional team so to speak you are included in mediums different from everybody else

IB - how would you factor in race and gender in this isolation

I would say an organization I just joined this summer school for art leaders and then with the National Art Educators Association and I've just gotten involved in the area the three organizations race is definitely an issue and how teachers of color feel and my County about the large organizations there is a bit of I feel like I'm pushing into something because I used to work at the and maybe if all the artist teachers I was one of or two of 6 who were African Americans and with these other organizations there is a discussion about bringing more African Americans into the organization's because they have been not exclusive but the membership is majority white females and I'm sorry about 41.00
I repeated the color-coding process for each participant, underlining phrases and keywords by hand. To help develop my understanding of how the narratives were intertwined, I created a code grid that included a column with the participants’ names and rows with the values and dramaturgical codes. I transferred the participant’s phrases and keywords into a color-coded chart on 18x24 newsprint.

Figure 3-8 is an example of how I combined the values and dramaturgical coding chart with all of the participants’ keywords and phrases. The code categories allowed me to analyze the participants’ oral communication during the interviews and develop a more profound understanding of the Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences.

Creating a hand-drawn chart of keywords and phrases instead of using a computer program to generate codes helped me to visualize the participants’ words and thoughts. I began to see the patterns, first within the individual participants and then among the participants as a collective group. I found myself visualizing the participants’ experiences. Going back to the audio recordings and hearing the women’s voices over and over again helped me to gain a holistic perspective of Black women art educators’ curricular experiences and develop categories. I began to notice overlapping patterns of individual words that several of the participants repeated. For example, under the code category emotion, the word “frustrated” and other similar words such as “fear” and “anger” repeatedly appeared. The data code chart allowed me to see the repeated words, thoughts, and ideas of each of the participants’ similarities to one another.
Figure 3-8. Value and Dramaturgical Coding Chart
Using the values and dramaturgical coding chart, I cross-compared the code
categories and created three groups. In the first group, I combined the attitudes,
beliefs, and values of the participants. In the second group, I combined tactics and
objectives. The final group consisted of the conflicts, emotions, and vignettes shared
by the participants. I selected these combinations after observing many of the repeated
phrases and keywords. For example, under attitudes, beliefs, and values, I combined
keywords, phrases, and notes describing how the participants felt about Black women
artists. Table 3-4 shows the lists of phrases, keywords, and thoughts that overlapped
into related themes and subthemes.

Based on the group list of codes, I narrowed the words and terms down to one
or two phrases. In combining the group list of keywords, I organized the data to reveal
themes for further analysis. After I analyzed the groups of code categories and key
phrases, I began to conceptualize four emergent themes. Based on the data, I created
the category of curriculum development to capture the content and authors of the
teachers’ curricula and curriculum guides. The sub-categories of curriculum
development, Black women artists and student learning, both involve the participants’
beliefs and attitudes about their curricula. Figure 3-9 illustrates the development of
emergent themes from the initial stage of color-coding words, during which I used a
code map to identify the codes and sub-codes of the narratives.
Table 3-4 Phrases and Key Words about Black women artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Women Artists (BWA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- unconscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lack of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- unawareness in number of black women artists in resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- it never occurred to me- I really never thought about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-sometimes add BWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-can’t think of names-I can’t recall-have to think first/ I’m trying to think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-easier for look for other artists -convenience/assessiblity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-don’t think BWA is necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-token artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-too difficult to look up-use more familiar-covering BWA a task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-uncomfortable talking about/lack of confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- no reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I tried to include- I am stuck/what can I do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- maybe BWA is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- awareness of the important of BWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- underpresentation of BWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Black male artists easier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I think I can add BWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- conscious of behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I probably should have BWA books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-that’s a good question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-fear information will get lost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Value and Dramaturgical Coding chart: Example of my coding analysis to locate patterns that indicate types of beliefs, attitudes, and values of Black women artists voice by the participants in the study.

As part of the three-dimensional space narrative structure developed by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), I engaged in the first step of interaction, analyzing the data by looking inward at personal and social experiences regarding internal conditions and participants’ points of view. In completing the second step, continuity, I looked at the past, present, and future of the narratives. I considered the participants’ memories and their current experiences, and I looked forward to their professional
practice. During *situation*, the third step, I focused on the intentions behind the participants’ actions.

Analyzing the data and developing the themes used in the research required several phases. The purpose of the study, research question, and theoretical framework helped me select the codes, categories, and themes. In the process of analyzing the data, I checked and reviewed the audio recordings several times to ensure I had accurately and coherently analyzed and coded the participants’ stories.

Member checking was conducted verbally throughout the interview process to ensure that I was obtaining honest and open responses. During each interview, I restated questions and summarized information for accuracy. I carefully listened to each participant’s remarks as not to misconstrue her intentions. All of the participants agreed I could contact them for an unstructured interview if I needed further
explanation of their answers. My overall goal in the analytical process was to share the authentic and original narrative of each participant. To ward off personal biases based on how I would answer the question, I refrained from interrupting the participants. I restated questions that the participants did not answer. For example, I asked Robin whether she used textbooks. She replied, “Yes, I use them, I have a Smartboard in my classroom” (personal communication, December 3, 2018). By listening to her answer, I understood she either did not understand the question or did not hear me. I informed Robin that I was asking about whether she used textbooks, and then she answered the original question. Some of the women were nervous about answering the questions correctly. I assured them there were no right or wrong answers and that I would use pseudonyms rather than their real names.

Trust was vital during the interviewing and analytical processes. One of the women was very concerned about backlash and asked me not to mention the name of her town because she was the only Black woman artist in the town. I was determined to avoid putting anyone’s job or safety in jeopardy. I quoted the women word for word to avoid any misunderstandings.

**Conclusion: A Safe Space to Talk Through Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is a methodology that allows a researcher to gain access to the thoughts and emotions of marginalized individuals. Combining narrative inquiry with a Black feminist perspective allowed me to create what Collins (2000) identifies as a safe space for Black women to speak freely. Collins (2000) notes, “This issue of Black women being the ones who really listen to one another is significant,
particularly given the importance of voice in Black women’s lives” (p. 103).

Narratives help Black women break the silence on experiences that they usually do not share. Black feminists emphasize the silencing of Black women’s voices and the challenge that Black women’s narratives pose to the racist and sexist perspectives seen in literature (Amoah, 2013; Collins, 2000; Nayak, 2015). Narrative inquiry enables Black women to create portraits in which they are the artists expressing their feelings, their realities, and their injustices to an audience who may not otherwise take the time or make a conscious effort to understand unfamiliar life experiences. A dynamic of a Black woman researcher listening to a Black woman participant can facilitate the development of trust based on the women’s similar experiences of race and gender. The three-dimensional approach helped me analyze and interpret the narratives of the participants’ past, present, and future curricular experiences.

The study included 21 full-time, licensed Black women art educators who teach in the K–12 environment in the United States. The participants ranged in age from 20 years old to 60 years old. They had a combined 289 years of teaching experience in K–12 public, private, and charter schools, ranging from a new teacher with 1 year of experience to a more veteran teacher with 27 years.

Locating demographic information on Black women K–12 art educators was daunting. However, an open call for participants through virtual snowball sampling on Facebook gave me access to a larger pool of Black women art educators. After receiving IRB approval, I conducted semi-structured interviews. I manually collected, transcribed, coded, and analyzed the data into identified patterns and emergent themes.
Chapter 4 shares Black women K–12 art educators’ thoughts about navigating the white field of art education.
Chapter 4.

BLACK WOMEN K–12 ART EDUCATORS NAVIGATING A WHITE FIELD

In this chapter, I offer a preliminary narrative to the analysis contextualizing Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences. In analyzing the women’s curricular experiences, I looked beyond the White, Eurocentric, male artist-themed teaching resources and the underrepresentation of Black women artists. I considered how race and gender intersect for some Black women in art education. The intersectionality of Black women’s position means that their race and gender are inseparable from one another. Lawyer and civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) coined the term “intersectionality” in order “to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s employment experiences” (p. 1244). Because the focus of the study is Black women, I have chosen not to ignore the fact that race and gender are significant factors related to Black women’s curricular experiences. In reflecting on my personal experiences with racism and sexism as an art educator, I realized that I have had unsettling encounters I tolerated or felt I had to tolerate because of my race and gender. In inquiring about the teaching resources the participants in this study used or how the participants felt about Black women artists, I made sure to also ask the participants about any racial or gender concerns they had encountered.

In this chapter, I share the feelings of some of the Black women to offer a glimpse of lived experiences that can affect their curricular choices. Adopting an outsider-within positionality framework, I show the emotional impact of the racialized and gendered experiences of the participants in the study. First, I share the racial
barriers that exist in pre-service teacher preparation programs and that precluded many of the women from learning about Black women artists. Second, I describe the various ways in which some Black women felt isolated. Third, I relay intimate stories about how many of the women felt hurt and silenced based upon an unequal power structure. Lastly, I show how some of the Black women art educators in this study have struggled to continue to remain professional in the face of racist and sexist interactions.

**Negotiating Race and Racism in Pre-service Programs**

I did not major in art education as an undergraduate attending Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Rather, I majored in communication design and only years later entered the alternate route certification program in New Jersey. However, as an art student at Pratt Institute, I took the required art history classes and quickly realized the classes featured only White, Eurocentric male artists. When I took the Women’s Art History course, I was surprised to find that the required textbook featured only White women artists. For my final project, I decided to research Black women artists, and I went to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York. At the time I was an art student at Pratt Institute, the Institute’s library did not feature a sufficient number of Black women artists in its collection. I was overwhelmed by the wealth of knowledge I gained about Black women artists while visiting the Schomburg Center for Research. However, I was disappointed that I had never heard of these artists while attending Pratt Institute. As the only Black woman art student in my cohort, I often felt alone and like an outsider in my art program. I realized then if I
wanted to learn about artists other than White, Eurocentric artists, I would need to research the artists on my own.

In listening to the experiences of the 21 Black women art educators who participated in this study, I came to the realization that pre-service teacher education is a significant factor in understanding the women’s unconscious thoughts about incorporating Black women artists into their curricula. In an attempt to understand the curricular experiences of the Black women art educators, I listened as many of the participants shared their experiences of receiving information on White artists in their undergraduate pre-service art programs. For example, Courtney, who has been an elementary art teacher for 15 years, described how she was one of two Black art students in her program. She learned about master artists like Michelangelo, DaVinci, and Van Gogh, but she did not learn about any Black artists. Courtney recounted,

I guess coming up through my art education program, I mean, that's what we studied. We studied about all those artists. Those mainstream artists that you normally learn about. That's where it came from college, and so we went through the program. That's basically what you focused on, and then by the time you get through your program and you get your own school, those are the things you want to focus on. (personal communication, December 2, 2018)

Paula, a first-year high school art teacher, described a similar experience in her graduate art education program. She was the only Black person in her cohort. Paula expressed, “I was not exposed particularly to Black women—Black artists in general to be honest . . . I’ve definitely been kind of learning for myself so I can be a resource for my students, because it’s not taught” (personal communication, November 23,
Black women art educators enroll in pre-service art programs that rarely reflect artists of different racial backgrounds (Acuff, Hirak, & Nangah, 2012; Kraehe, 2015; Lawton, 2018; Leveston, 2011; Sion & Coleman, 2019).

Black women artists and art education students are in a subordinate position thanks to the racial barriers they face in navigating white institutions while pursuing their degrees. Many Black women art educators grapple within their pre-service programs as they attempt to learn about Black women artists, often encountering backlash from their White professors. Whitney, a 27-year veteran middle school art teacher, gave the following account:

I remember asking, raising my hand and asking my professor, “Why there aren’t more Black art in the textbooks’ – and I asked, ‘why aren’t we learning about Black artists in class?’” He was a White professor, and I was the only Black student in the class; but, it was important to me because I knew who I was teaching, and this was during my master’s program that I asked this question. He said, “Well, we teach to what is in the textbook—it’s not [in] any of the textbooks” . . . I remember being very frustrated as a beginning teacher, and I was ready to quit because I said to myself nothing that I learned in my preparation program or in the textbooks is helping me with these kids.

(personal communication, November 24, 2018)

The field of art education has hardly changed its pre-service art education and studio art programs to include the perspectives of Black women. Though Paula began teaching 26 years after Whitney did, Paula and Whitney described similar experiences
with the underrepresentation of Black women artists in their pre-service art education programs.

Art education programs usually ignore Black women’s questioning learning about Black artists in their programs. Paula related a dispute that she had with her department when she was an art education student. She informed the director, a White woman, that a renowned Black woman artist was attending the university. The director of the art program did not believe her until a local museum featured the artist’s work and mentioned the artist attended the school. After this public acknowledgment that the Black woman artist attended the college, the department featured the artist in an exhibition. Paula stated,

Tooth and nail, I told you about this lady, and you did not believe me, and literally in a month they had this whole event surrounding her, and then eventually they did an activity about her within the space, and it was kind of—like for me, you didn’t listen to me, it’s slapping you in the face because it was clear she went here. (personal communication, November 23, 2018)

Paula felt the director dismissed her because the director found the thought of a Black woman artist attending the college unfathomable. The limited opportunities for learning about Black women artists leave many Black women who are pursuing art education degrees feeling like *outsiders-within* their pre-service programs.

DiAngelo (2011) describes the defensiveness White teachers and administrators perform when confronted with race. Teachers and administrators respond with anger, denial, or “emotional incapacitation” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 55). The promotion of whiteness that Black women see in their pre-service art education...
programs may affect the women’s future curricular experiences. Kraehe (2015) raises the question, “How do preservice art teachers negotiate race and racism in art teacher education?” (p. 200). She describes how pre-service programs overlook the importance of race for incoming teachers of color and how race shapes the incoming teachers’ development. Listening to Black women’s stories about their experiences in pre-service art education programs is disheartening, given the field of art education’s long history of exclusion and racism.

The underrepresentation of Black women artists is not the only issue that some of the women in the study cited. Catherine, a first-year elementary art teacher, expressed concern about the lack of Black women in pre-service programs. Catherine relayed,

Where I did my undergraduate studies in art, the majority of the time, I went to a primarily white school. But the majority of the time, I was the only person of any color in any lectures in art . . . it kind of makes me sad that’s there is not as many Black women art teachers. I met more Black guy art teachers than I have women. I could count them on my hand. (personal communication December 2, 2018)

I remember having the same concerns as Catherine when I was an undergraduate art student at Pratt Institute. I had a class taught by the first Black male illustration teacher at the school; however, I did not have any classes taught by Black women. Black women entering the field of art education lack role models who look like them and are able to advise them (Lawton, 2018; Leveston, 2011; Sion & Coleman, 2019). This absence may affect how some Black women view their future in art education.
Many of the women in the study stated that they were the only Black students in their pre-service art education programs. Donna has taught in an elementary school for 15 years and as an adjunct for 5 years. She offered a different perspective of pre-service art education programs. During her tenure as an adjunct, Donna counted the number of Black women in the master of art education program: “I taught this course for five years and that’s five times in the fall and I only had one black woman” (personal communication, December 6, 2018). I am reminded of Lawton’s (2018) question, “Why are there so few people of color teaching art?” (p. 374). During my interviews with the women in this study, I questioned my rationale for entering art school. When I attended high school, I had two Black women art educators. They never directly advised me to pursue art education, but I recognized that their presence at an early age in my life was a significant contributor to my decision to enter the art world. I am grateful to have had Black women art educators in high school, but they are few in the field of art education.

Robin, an 18-year veteran teacher, noticed fewer Black women art educators staying in the field and even fewer hired in her school district. Robin observed,

A lot of the strong African American women are retiring, and all of the new coming in out of the colleges are young and White, and they’re not many African Americans at all. The ones who are coming are African Americans males, and there are not many African American females that are coming into the district. (personal communication, December 3, 2018)

When I left my school district to pursue my doctorate, the school district did not hire another art educator. Today the school district has no Black women art educators.
Pre-service art education programs are a challenge for many Black women, as the programs feature predominantly white curricula and White teachers. Black women enroll in pre-service art education programs as part of their career choice to learn and teach art. They enroll in courses and engage in student teaching just like the White students do, yet the programs’ curricula often leave them feeling alone and as if they were outsiders.

**Isolating Experiences**

As a high school art educator, I worked alone. After five years, I transferred to another location in the district where I was one of three art educators in the art and design department. The department hired another art and design teacher a year later, making for a total of five teachers. While we each taught different aspects of art and design, I was the only Black art educator in the school district. There was one Hispanic woman and three White women in our cluster who taught art and design. I thought that as educators in the art and design department, we would talk about or collaborate on projects. Yet I often felt alone and isolated because I was not a part of the hegemonic White faculty in the school. Lawton (2018) describes her experience as the only Black woman in her institution and the isolation she felt. My experience of isolation was not as specific as those of some of the women in the study. Sally, for example, has taught for 20 years; prior to this study, however, she had never met another Black woman art educator. Even when she attended the art education conference in her state, Sally commented, “I was the only Black art teacher there, so I don't have a connection. I
know we must exist, but I don't have a connection. I don't know any” (personal communication, December 9, 2018).

There are many ways to experience isolation, from encountering a lack of administrative support, to needing to design a curriculum alone, to recognizing that one is the only art educator in the building or the only Black woman art educator in the school district. Sharon, a 15-year veteran art educator, expressed the loneliness she felt in sharing her ideas and lesson plans. She described how “[y]ou are working by yourself a lot and because you are the only person teaching your subject, you are never on an instructional team” (personal communication, November 23, 2018). Whitney relayed similar sentiments about working alone:

Being that I have 27 years experience, I’ve learned how to work through that-being lonely-nobody to talk to–to bounce things off of to share and that’s when you realize you are the sole resource; then you take a responsibility. You stand up for the program. You speak up for the program. You represent the program, you know. You get what the kids need because they are relying on your expertise to do that-not just the kids, the subject of art itself-when you are the only art teacher in the building. (personal communication, November 24, 2018)

Art education is an isolating experience for many teachers, as they are usually the only ones who teach their subject in the building. First-year high school art teacher Denise described feeling as if she were in a bubble because there is only one other person in her department. Isolation is more than being the only art teacher in the building or district, however; racialized and gendered oppression also contribute to
isolation. Black women art educators have to question if their experiences of isolation stem from their race and gender or their profession.

Art education associations act as a source of information for curriculum development and professional development. These conferences may feel uninviting, though. Sharon described how race is a significant factor in her feeling isolated from art education organizations:

Race is definitely an issue, and how teachers of color feel, and in my county about the large organizations, there is a bit of outsiderness. The membership is primarily White females and so– I felt like, and I always feel like I'm pushing into something . . . there is a discussion about bringing more African Americans into the organization because they’ve been kind of not exclusive, but the membership is majority like I said, White female [sic]. (personal communication, November 23, 2018)

When I attend state and national art education conferences, I immediately look around to see if any other Black women are there. I can often count the Black women in attendance, especially in the workshops. I look through the conference catalog to see if any Black women are presenting. I attend the women’s presentations if for no reason but to give my support, so when the women look out into the audience, they see another Black woman’s face. When I conduct workshops and give presentations, if one Black woman attends, I feel grateful.

When a Black woman sees that all of the conference organizers in an art education association are White, the person may question whether her presence is welcome. I once attempted to join the conference committee for my state art education
association. There was a problem, however; one Black woman already was serving on the committee. I knew if I wanted to move up in the association and advance my career, I needed to be active on committees. I noticed the art teachers who received awards and recognition were mainly White women who served on committees. Although my goal was not to receive an award, I wished to have the same opportunity as White art educators for career advancement. When I asked to join the conference committee, the committee’s chairperson told me they did not need any more volunteers and that I should present at the conference first. I replied that I had presented workshops at the conference for over five years. The notion that having one Black woman on a committee constitutes inclusion promotes the “we have one theory” (Conway-Jones, 2006, p. 127). This form of blatant tokenism prevents more than one or two Black women from taking full advantage of opportunities to advance their careers in art education. After the conference committee denied my request to join, I stopped attending the art education conference in my state.

Isolation was not a major concern for some of the participants. For example, Catherine worked with a supportive team. She described her experience:

At the school that I teach, there are three other full-time art teachers that I work very closely with them . . . and give each other feedback, give each other advice daily. We’re a very close-knit team, and we also develop lessons together. (personal communication, December 2, 2018)

Catherine’s positive experience as a first-year teacher is atypical, according to many of the Black women in the study. Brenda, a 23-year veteran art educator, works with other Black male art teachers in her district and does not feel the isolation that others
in the study described. However, she attributes her friendly relationships with her colleagues to her longevity with the school district and her experience teaching different grade levels. When Black women work in a supportive environment, they display a sense of self-worth, feel less anxiety, and have limited stress.

**Screaming to be Heard and Respected**

Black women’s voices have been silenced and ignored from white social institutions in the United States (Collins, 2000). Collins (2000) relates how “Everyone has spoken for Black women, making it difficult for us to speak for ourselves” (p. 124). In listening to the narratives of the Black women who participated in this study, I realized that I, too, have experienced hurt feelings because of some White colleagues. For example, the district superintendent once walked into my classroom with another man accompanying him. I stood there with my artist’s apron on and holding paint in my hand. The superintendent introduced the other man as the superintendent of all the schools in the county. I reached out my hand to shake his, and he pulled out a white envelope and gave it to me. I opened the envelope and saw my name and the words “County Teacher of the Year.” My students were clapping for me. I was overjoyed. I represented all the educators in my county and was a candidate for the title of State Teacher of Year and possibly National Teacher of the Year. Later that afternoon, my principal called the entire school to the auditorium and announced I was the County Teacher of the Year. I was an ecstatic, honored, and proud teacher. I returned to my classroom, and my students told me that as I walked up to the stage, some of the White teachers had walked out of the auditorium. I did not want to react in front of my
students, but I said to myself, “Here we go again.” I stood there hurt in front of the students in the classroom. I wondered to myself, “What else do I need to prove I am worthy, prove I am a human being?” As a Black woman, I felt inferior and that my mere presence was unsettling to my White colleagues. The experience served as a confirmation for me that my Blackness was a significant issue, a topic that is not often discussed in the K–12 environments.

Other women in the study recalled similar instances of feeling hurt and remaining silent. Wendy, who has taught middle school for 14 years, became emotional during the interview. Wendy shared, “I had to prove myself. This right here always turns emotional to me because, coming in, the art department did not want me in. They had no idea what it is I could do, but they just did not want me in . . . and I'm coming in as an outsider” (personal communication, December 8, 2018).

Robin recalled feeling ignored due to her race and gender. She related how her administration gave a second-year White male art educator her art materials and put him in charge of ordering supplies for the following year. Robin believed that because she had spoken out publicly about injustice within the school district, her administrators were punishing her. Robin described how she feels:

I think . . . [r]ace and gender do affect how I don't get any materials. I think that if I were not black and if I was not female, I would receive materials. . . . I was screaming about supplies last year and screaming about the supplies this year. I've been screaming about supplies for the last couple of years. I scream so much. I don't even talk about supplies anymore. I just make do with what I have. . . . So I wonder, I wonder, if I was a White male, would I have been
given the materials, given the opportunity to order. I don’t know; it doesn’t feel very good. I’ve been shunned as a teacher by the administration. I believe, if I was not a Black woman, I would not be treated like this. (personal communication, December 3, 2018)

Frustrated and disheartened, Robin described how she wrote to her administrators about not receiving art materials. They eventually gave her a gallon of glue and 10 scissors for the school year. Few of the Black women expressed being uncomfortable going over their administrator’s head voicing their concerns. Sally echoes the same concern with her administration, but only because she has the support of the Black community. Sally explained her silence:

I think because unfortunately in society I’m a black woman. I’m African-American. I’m a woman. I’m in the field that they don’t consider valuable compared to other fields, so I know that I’m overlooked and misunderstood and underestimated and underfunded. . . . They know better; they just don’t do better. (personal communication, December 9, 2018)

Donna described how her White art administrators did not validate or respect her voice when they used her presentation in an art education in-service equity workshop. Donna narrated the event by saying that she does not understand why the art administrators failed to ask her to participate in the event, knowing she conducts equity workshops. Donna questioned whether she should say something or remain quiet. Despite feeling hurt and excluded, Donna submitted her ideas for the program. The administrators sent her an email stating they were going in a different direction. When Donna entered the workshop and saw the pamphlet, she realized that the administrators had used what
she had written without giving her any credit. Donna relayed, “I definitely felt like, you know, I definitely felt insulted, and I never said anything” (personal communication, December 6, 2018).

The majority of the participants recalled events or situations in which they felt hurt, ignored, and silenced. These instances may affect curricular experiences. Anna, who has taught for 18 years, voiced her annoyance at the perceptions of Black women. She said, “If you are a black woman you know you are perceived as angry-if I’m passionate, I am perceived as- I’m not seen- I am called other black women that they [have] seen in town” (personal communication, November 25, 2018).

For Whitney, feeling ignored by her curriculum-writing team left her defending her voice. The team members challenged her and asked to provide data when she shared her ideas. Based on these experiences, Whitney decided to go back to school and earn her doctorate in the hopes that others would believe her and take her seriously. Whitney’s story corroborates Acuff’s (2018) argument about Black women’s voices threatening the dominant narrative in art education. Black women contend with intersecting oppressions different from those faced by White women, White men, or Black men. Isolating experiences vary for Black women K–12 art educators; however, racialized and gendered oppression influence individuals’ experiences of agency and voice in curriculum development.

**Battling Racism**

In 2012, the Committee on Multiethnic Concerns (COMC) invited me to serve as a guest speaker for the Grace Hampton Lecture Series of the National Art Education
Association (NAEA) conference in Fort Worth, Texas. My school district denied my request to attend the conference. I found out my colleague, a White woman art teacher was attending a conference in California. I asked her how she was able to obtain approval for her trip. She responded, “I deserve it.” The COMC provided me a letter as documentation that the committee had invited me to serve as a guest lecturer. I explained to the school district’s administration that I was a guest lecturer while the other art teacher was attending a conference. I further emphasized the importance of my attending the NAEA conference since the school district did not provide professional development for art educators. Again, the school district denied my request. I could not fathom why the White woman art teacher was able to attend a conference without an official invitation. The administration finally agreed when I reminded the superintendent that I was the County Teacher of the Year representing the school district. The superintendent made his message very clear: I could go this one time to the conference because I was the County Teacher of the Year and the finalist for New Jersey Teacher of the Year. As a Black woman, I felt that my race was an issue and that despite an invitation to serve as a guest lecturer at a national art education event, I had to prove my worth. I did not have the privilege to say, “I deserved it.”

Discussing racism is complicated, especially when discussing racism means returning to the place the injustices occurred. Several of the Black women in this study communicated stories of racialized and gendered encounters they had had as professional art educators. Wendy described her concerns about race and gender as “winning mini battles” with her White colleagues (personal communication,
December 8, 2018. She paused during the interview and told a story about White teachers tearing images of Black artwork off the walls in the hallways she hung up throughout the school. Wendy relayed how some of the White teachers complained to the superintendent’s office for how she wore her hair. Wendy recalled the racism she experienced:

I have fought racism tooth and nail since I walked through the door. I mean, only if they could figure out a way to silence me legally if they could. . . . I know it is because of the gender and the racism. . . . It was said to me ugly things like the only reason, a White male said to the White male principal “the only reason why you allow her to do that, it's because she's good looking for a black woman.” . . . I have to work, and I know I do three times harder than your average teacher to get some of the simplest things. If I was a White female and walked in, I could have it. (personal communication, December 8, 2018)

I listened intently as Wendy described how the White art educators in her building do not welcome Black art and Black art educators in the school. Wendy continued to discuss her experience with the White art educators in her building:

They came up to me and put a finger in my face and told me, “We don't know who you think you are, but we want you to know you're nothing . . . and we don't need your kind to come here. We don't want to hear that, and we don't want to see it”. . . I had to prove myself, I have to prove that I was better than artistically; and I was smarter than, better than, wiser than, stronger than all of them. (personal communication, December 8, 2018)
The school district hired Wendy, and on the first day of school when she entered her classroom all the furniture and art supplies were missing. Wendy elaborated:

How evil were they? They even took everything on my first day of class to let me know how they really feel about me. They took every table and chair and all the supplies that had my name on it—on the boxes out of my classroom. So, my first day of school, I had nothing, not one piece of paper and one pencil, and that night they came and did it. (personal communication, December 8, 2018)

Wendy described how her furniture and art supplies disappeared on her twice. The second time was when the educators in her building moved into a new facility. When one of the White male art educators retired, Wendy said, she found some of her art supplies in the back of his closet.

Racialized and gendered encounters unfolded in different ways for the women in the study. Dana, a 26-year veteran art educator, explained the backlash she receives from parents when she tries to take students in her predominantly White school district to the inner city to see Black art. She recalled,

I thought that was stupid. So, I would do field trips very specifically to the museum. But that wasn't enough, I had a friend who ran a gallery, a Black woman who ran a gallery and we would go to her gallery, and another friend who ran a gallery. I would take them to his gallery, so this is some ways an exposure to the city and to take them outside their comfort zone having them exposed to artists who are working artists. (personal communication, November 25, 2018)
The battlefield of racism does not always feature colleagues and administrators. Some of the participants engaged in racist and sexist confrontations with parents and students. Catherine described battling gender discrimination by Middle Eastern male students who are culturally accustomed to viewing women as lesser than men. Anna said that she was called the “N” word by one of her middle school male students. She saw this confrontation as an opportunity to teach students about racism. Anna explained, “I get to educate them. When they call people niggers in the classroom, they refer to me as one, I get to be black” (personal communication, November 25, 2018). Anna’s experiences of racism were not always as blatant as racial name-calling. Selecting a Black person to manage race-related issues as if the person’s minority status makes the person an expert on race is another form of racism. Anna felt she “was forced to teach sensitivity workshops, like four of them for the staff and for the coaches because they refer to one of the black students as a negro and she should be good at sports because she was black and that prompted the first sensitivity workshop” (personal communication, November 25, 2018). Instead of handling the topic of racism independently, the school district selected Anna to address racism. Anna believed the district had selected her because she is a Black woman.

The expectations associated with being Black put unfair pressure on Black educators to fix racial and gender issues that White administrators and teachers are uneasy addressing. Law professor Danielle Conway-Jones (2006) describes Black women as the “go-to” people for racial or gender concerns (p. 126). Conway-Jones relates how her institution sends students who are writing about race and gender to her
office. She highlights how a Black woman is automatically selected by white institutions to dissolve or explain racial tensions. Black art teachers like Anna are selected to handle racial and gender concerns, but they are not selected for curricular decision-making positions based on their knowledge.

Racism goes beyond name-calling, backlash, and the denial of professional development opportunities. Many Black women in the study expressed consciousness about their appearance and tone of voice. Helen has taught art for 22 years and is aware of her Blackness in the classroom and how that affects her teaching practice. Helen acknowledged that her race and gender affect her teaching practice:

The way the things that I say in my classroom, how I correct my students, the tone that I take, or the choice of even my wording . . . even though we think we’ve grown over the 200 years, the current administration, and in the news that you see every day let us know we may not be as far along as we thought we were in the classroom. (personal communication, November 28, 2019)

The battles many Black women art educators fight are not always direct. Subtle forms of microaggression constitute a significant factor that often goes unnoticed in many educational environments. Jennifer Martin (2015) describes these feelings as racial battle fatigue, “micro-assaults, micro-insults, and micro-invalidations” against people who deviate from the hegemonic norm (p. xvi). These racial and gender battles Black women art educators often navigate take place behind the scenes when they are writing their curricula. Micro-aggressions, which are rarely discussed among Black women K-12 art educators, also influence their curricular experiences.
Conclusion: Navigating Intersecting Issues of Race and Gender

This chapter’s analysis of the intersecting issues of pre-service teacher preparation, isolation, emotions, and racism for Black women art educators serves a prelude to the discussion of the women’s curricular experiences in the following chapter. Black women K–12 art educators’ narratives of navigating a white field go beyond curriculum development and suggest themes that lay the foundation for a critical inquiry into the field of art education. Scholars Ashley Patterson, Valerie Kinloch, Tanja Burhard, Rynn Randall, and Arianna Howard (2016) believe that when Black women share their experiences through narratives, the women create a pathway to discuss individually and collectively overshadowed and minimized intersecting oppressions. Black women art educators occupy a terrain in which they must look at all aspects of the power structure in K-12 art education.

Black women’s narratives are not usually the focus of attention in the field of art education. The Black women in the study shared their pre-service experiences of having White teachers who could not adequately prepare them to teach about their own culture. Leveston’s (2011) master’s thesis questions how the field of art education can help Black students feel welcome in the classroom and whether pre-service art education programs doing a disservice to Black women who enter the field. Narrative inquiry can help the field of art education recognize that White, Eurocentric male artists are predominant in Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences.

The stories that the participants shared about isolating experiences were not always about a lack of other art teachers in the building. Another concern the women shared was that they did not see other Black women in art education, whether in their
own school districts or at art education conferences. When Wendy described her teaching experiences as winning mini battles but not the war, I paused and tried to digest the meaning of the term “battle.” The narratives of Black women art educators’ curricular choices reflect conflicts, confrontations, and clashes or battles with colleagues, administrators, and parents. The pressure of assimilating to the dominant culture is uncomfortable for many Black women. Navigating a white world requires Black women to fight for the right to be acknowledged and respected (Nayak, 2015). The narratives of the 21 Black women K–12 art educators in this study capture the battles in which they fought, surrendered, and triumphed.

As the Black women art educators drew from their lived experiences, their voices became louder. There was a sense of pride among the women in expressing their feelings even though the act of recollection triggered some painful moments and memories. Parts of their narratives were reflections on the past and their current circumstances. Even though I had some curricular experiences similar to those of the participants, the participants and I had differences in perceptions. Collins (2000) argues that Black women’s experiences are not monolithic. The narratives of the Black women in this study are unique to them and their particular teaching experiences; however, reading their stories sheds light on the racial and gender inequality they have experienced. The Black women in the study were not seeking empathy but a platform to voice their feelings.

The narratives of these women navigating a white field raise questions about Black women’s overall curricular experiences in the field of art education. In Chapter 5, I present the findings of my study. I discuss how the emergent themes that I
uncovered in my analysis of the data serve as a foundation for addressing curricular beliefs, attitudes, the identification of teaching resources, the underrepresentation of Black women artists, and the incorporation of Black women into art education.
Chapter 5.

BLACK WOMEN K-12 ART EDUCATORS’ CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

The 21 Black women art educators who participated in this study possessed dignity, endurance, courage, and resilience. The narratives of the participants provide a glimpse into their lives and insight into their curricular experiences. The choices they made potentially affected their curricular decisions. Embracing the outsider-within positionality framework, I present the impact of the biased teaching resources used by participants in this study. The intention of this study is not to apply participants’ stories to the larger population of Black women K–12 art educators. Rather, I aim to center the decisions many of these women made and illuminate how race and gender have significantly influenced their curriculum development.

In this chapter, I relate the women’s concerns about and challenges with their curricula, support networks, teaching resources, and the incorporation of Black women artists. In my analysis, I examine how White, Eurocentric male artist-centered artists influence the field of art education and are represented in teaching resources and ultimately the curriculum. Investigating the distinct experiences of the women revealed the following emergent themes, or consistent and comparable patterns across stories (Figure 5-1). The first theme is curricular beliefs and attitudes, focusing on curricula’s authors and validity for students. The second theme is the teaching resources that are available to and practical for art teachers. This theme is divided into two subsections: textbooks and technology. The third theme is the underrepresentation of Black women artists in K–12 teaching resources. The tokenism of Black women artists is a subsection of this theme. The fourth theme is the incorporation of Black
women artists into curricula. In the subsection, I recommend strategies for incorporating Black women artists and art educators into the field of art education.

**Theme 1: Curricular Beliefs and Attitudes**

As a teacher of commercial illustration courses at a vocational high school, I developed and wrote my curriculum based on industry standards for the commercial art field. I wrote my curriculum and conducted my research without guidance from the school administration. After listening to the participants in this study, I realized I was not alone in the curriculum-writing process. Out of 21 of the women in this study, 16 wrote their own curricula, usually with the help of curriculum guides provided by their school districts; however, the other five women received their curricula from their
school districts. Jaime, who has taught high school art for 13 years, is one of the art teachers whose district provided her with a curriculum. When I asked her to describe her curriculum, Jaime said:

That's the interesting question; we do not have a specific curriculum. I would say the curriculum was created by some people that I have no idea who they are. I don't even know how to explain it. It’s kind of weird. I don't know. . . . Over the years, we had various people “write” a curriculum but, it doesn't—far as I'm concerned having had to use it. It doesn't cover what it should cover, so we just make do with it. (personal communication, November 27, 2018)

Even though the majority of the women enjoyed the flexibility of developing their own curricula rather than adhering to district-issued curricula, a few faced the challenge of writing their curricula alone.

The women in the study who wrote their own curricula experienced limited support and leadership. Even when a participant received a curriculum guide, she did not always find the guidance she hoped to receive. Robin, who teaches in a low socio-economic urban school district, struggled with the required curriculum guide, believing that the curriculum was biased and did not expose her Black and Brown students to Black artists. She made a conscious decision not to use the district-issued curriculum guide as a model. Robin stressed:

I was in protest of it because I felt like it was, I felt like it was damaging. I felt it was damaging because it set apart to me who they actually wanted to expose the students too as artists, and I don't think it really fit what the students could relate to. A lot of what they felt the “Masters” in art were not my idea,
personally, what they should be exposed to. So, I work with my own curriculum … I actually wrote letters in protest of it because they mentioned several countries, but Africa was never mentioned and [of] all the artists they mentioned in their list there are only two African Americans artist mentioned. (personal communication, December 3, 2018)

The race and gender of the person who writes the curriculum or curriculum guide that is distributed throughout the district is an important influence on curricular choices.

Jaime was concerned about the author of her school district’s curriculum. She explained that a White woman had created the art curriculum three years ago without the input of the other art teachers. Jaime critiqued the district’s art curriculum for failing to consider racial and gender inequality. She believed if a Black person had written the art curriculum or participated in the process, the curriculum would have had a different angle. Jaime said:

If a black woman had done it, I do think it would have been slightly different. Maybe the references would have been a little bit more current . . . it would have been some African Americans or Hispanics in a curriculum to use as a reference. Maybe it would have been drafted differently, maybe there would have been some order put to it, [be]cause it is haphazard. But, I think, and maybe, and not for nothing, maybe a Black woman would have put more thought into who would be learning this—not just kids, but Black kids, Brown kids, Middle Eastern kids. So maybe a Black woman would have put more thought not only who's teaching it, but [also] who's learning it. (personal communication, November 27, 2018)
Denise was also acutely aware of how race and gender affect her curriculum choices. She expressed sentiments similar to those of Jaime when describing how her teaching objective as a Black woman differs from that of a White woman. Denise acknowledged:

I think my objective might differ from—I do know that I’ve met other art teachers that are white, and their objective is not social justice, but mine is. So, like that’s part of my pedagogy is social justice. So, and that is definitely from my experience as a Black woman and as a Black artist and whereas those life experiences may not have motivated a colleague who is white and who really likes Van Gogh. (personal communication, December 9, 2018)

Even when a Black woman teacher participates in the curriculum-writing process, as Whitney did, there is no guarantee that the curriculum-writing team will consider the teacher’s suggestions. With frustration in her voice, Whitney related her experience on the art curriculum team: “They still do what they want to do. . . . They include you just to say we have somebody Black on here. But I don’t see my part included, so sometimes it feels like a waste of time” (personal communication, November 24, 2018).

Discussing the curriculum-writing process is challenging when the focus is largely on white perspectives. Donna indicated that she does not feel heard when discussing the curriculum, saying, “I felt like whenever I walked into a space and had to talk about the curriculum or interact with students, I always have to be brave and perhaps even courageous to talk about the elephant in the room—that most of [what] we do is white-dominated” (personal communication, December 6, 2018). Some of
the Black women in this study wanted to participate in the curriculum development process but the administrators of their school districts’ curricula did not consider them.

Jaime expressed a fear of intimidation, believing she had nothing to contribute to her school district’s art curriculum. After realizing the slanted views present in the district’s art curriculum, Jaime became more interested in participating in the curriculum-writing process so that she could contribute a Black perspective. She said:

In order for me to change that, I have to be a part of it, and that's why I would like to have been a part of that curriculum making. I've never written a curriculum, but I am sure I would put in my five cents if asked. (personal communication, November 27, 2018)

Not all of the women questioned the curriculum-writing process. Anna confessed she did not inquire into who had developed her curriculum. Anna explained:

Well, I thought it was coming from outside of the school. But yeah, it is given to me through our school counselor, and according to her, it was coming from the higher-ups. I don’t know where it is coming from, but I just know at the end of the year, they are going to judge me based on what my kids have learned. (personal communication, November 25, 2018)

A few of the Black women in the study expressed nonchalance about expanding their curricula beyond their districts’ issued curricula; they primarily focused on meeting the state standards. Some of the newer art educators who participated in the study, such as Catherine, who is part of a teaching team, and Paula, who has mentors to help her, expressed few problems with their curriculum. Each of these women had a supportive network of colleagues, former professors, and art friends.
Michelle, who has taught for three years, claimed that for the first time during her tenure, the visual art coordinator had gathered art teachers throughout the school district to write an art education curriculum guide. Unlike most of the women in the study, Courtney liked her district-issued curriculum because the curriculum had various sections, which she believed give her significant flexibility. The women displayed differing beliefs and attitudes towards the curriculum-writing process, regardless of whether they wrote their curricula using a guided process or whether their districts had issued the curricula.

In an attempt to better understand the flexibility of the curricula that the participants described to me, I asked each participant an additional question: What did the participant think was missing from her curriculum? The participants’ answers ranged from more reading, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM), to critical thinking. However, the majority of the women cited a need for artists who represent the populations of students in their classrooms. Paula felt:

I mean just from this conversation, I think... co co-creative space that look like the students in the room. I know there are the elements and principles of art, and there’s these things I grew up with, you know, in my classroom. I am not saying there is no value in those things; I just think it is one-sided; and having space people can have access to find artists that look like them.

(personal communication, November 23, 2018)

Some participants did not answer the question regarding notable exclusions from their curricula very quickly. For example, Brenda claimed her school district no longer has an art supervisor; in fact, no one has revised the curriculum in the last 15 years. In
response to my question, Brenda said, “Well, we don’t really have one. The few times when they had some people write one again it was very random. So, you know, I don't think we have enough curriculum for me to point out what's missing” (personal communication, November 27, 2018). Anna replied, “That is a very good question since I am writing it. I don’t know what is missing” (personal communication, November 25, 2018).

The purpose of my inquiry was not to find fault or compile a list of issues; rather, my goal was to examine the level of conscious thinking, attitudes, and beliefs of Black women K–12 art educators that could affect their curricular experiences. The study revealed that a majority of Black women K–12 art educators believe students’ learning is a priority and the incorporation of artists who culturally represent the students is needed. However, art education curricula are often not thoroughly considered or designed to move beyond a Eurocentric standpoint that privileges the White population. Non-white perspectives are often absent from the decision-making process for art education curricula (Rouke, 2018). Many Black women art educators believed their voices are absent from their curricula, regardless of who wrote the curricula. A few Black women K–12 art educators found implementing a curriculum that includes gender and racial perspectives challenging; for others, the creation of this type of curriculum was not a significant concern.

Theme 2: Identification of Teaching Resources

The narratives of Black women K–12 art educators are vital to understanding their curricular experiences, and in particular, their selection of teaching resources. As
the previous section showed, the majority of Black women participants enjoyed the freedom of writing their own curricula. However, the Black women’s thoughts about locating teaching resources using textbooks and technology varied.

**Textbooks**

In following my school district’s directive to use textbooks in the classroom, I searched the art education catalogs from, Dick Blick, Nasco, Sax, Triaco, and Utrecht, as well as from two art education publishers, Davis and Glencoe. I noted that the art education catalogs and publishers primarily featured Eurocentric/Western male artists. Wilson (2017) concludes that the textbooks used in creating K–12 art education curricula reflect the Eurocentric framework of White male and female artists. My study reveals 11% of the participants do not use textbooks, 7% seldom use textbooks, and 3% do use textbooks (Figure 5-2). The majority of the women in the study believed the textbooks were antiquated, biased, and insufficient for use in the classroom and that the textbooks did not enhance student learning. Denise explained that based on her observations of the textbooks, she saw no need to use them at school. Denise added, “I find, like a lot of the textbooks that are out there are really based on classical Westernized art . . . that is not what I want to focus on for my students” (personal communication, December 9, 2018). Anna expressed a similar attitude towards textbooks. She stated:

I had textbooks when I first arrived, and I just could not use them. I didn’t think they were good enough to keep using. So, I have packed them up and put them in storage somewhere. They were so antiquated and so out of date. The
vocabulary was way above the heads of the students I was teaching. I just thought I could do this better. . . . I am tired of them, European White men. . . . so I spend very little time on them. (personal communication, November 25, 2018)

Wendy conveyed her frustration about receiving 40-year-old textbooks from a retired art teacher. She said, “The textbooks are so old, and the pictures were of obsolete art techniques and featured no Black artists throughout the book” (personal communication, December 8, 2018). I asked Wendy why she had not ordered new textbooks, and she told me her school district had repeatedly denied her request for, new textbooks. Robin relayed a similar experience with textbooks. She explained, “No textbooks, there [were] years, about ten years where we were sent textbooks, but they

Figure 5-2 Textbooks used in the Classroom
were never enough for all the grades. Each art teacher of the school may have been sent one year the textbooks. I have no textbooks now” (personal communication, December 3, 2018). Many school districts did not provide updated textbooks or even a sufficient number of textbooks.

Whitney was one of the few teachers who expressed optimism about using textbooks, but she, too, described the challenge of using them. Whitney explained:

I am a big believer in using textbooks. Most of the time, they are chosen for us, and we actually need some new textbooks because I don’t have enough in my class right now for every student to have one. (personal communication, November 24, 2018)

Leah, who has taught middle school art for eight years, said that she uses textbooks published by Davis. The textbooks serve as a supplement to the artmaking, providing students with procedures and definitions. Leah stated, “I do use textbooks. I have three different textbooks from Davis Art. I go back and forth with, and I like to use the readings to supplement the artmaking that we’re doing” (personal communication, December 6, 2018). Keisha has taught for 24 years and used an outdated version of Glencoe’s *Understanding Art* so that her class would adhere to the school district’s reading requirements. Keisha said that she seldom used this textbook, indicating, “I look[ed] at it, let[’s] see, since 2000, 2002, I pretty much know the sections that I need, and I will periodically pull out of it depending on the reading level of my class” (personal communication, November 23, 2018).

This study revealed a common theme: Black women K–12 art teachers did not perceive art education textbooks as useful in developing a diverse curriculum. Many of
the Black women believed the textbooks predominantly feature White, Eurocentric male artists. If their school districts gave them flexibility in designing their own curricula, very few women in the study chose to use textbooks. Textbooks mainly served as a supplement for providing students with art terminology or meeting a school district’s reading requirement. For the women in the study who did have textbooks, other challenges arose, such as language barriers, limited budgets, and inadequate technology, which led them to seek out other teaching resources.

**Technology**

Technology is an accessible format that allows teachers to display artwork quickly to an entire class. The participants in this study indicated that the Internet is a significant contributor to their search for the teaching resources needed to develop a curriculum. Many of the school districts supplied the women with Chromebooks, iPads, and Smartboard projectors. Yet having access to this technology did not guarantee access to the teaching resources that would enhance student learning. Having taken technology classes outside of her school district, Wendy eagerly waited eight years for the opportunity to use technology in her curriculum. However, she said that she barely uses the Chromebooks she received: “I just got them last month—all these years I begged for. I got used broken Chromebooks” (personal communication, December 8, 2018). Wendy believed that having technology in the classroom is necessary for students to learn about different artists. However, the old Chromebooks she received were not powerful enough to load current programs or download images.
The Black women who used technology conducted online searches for teaching resources. While most of them did not look at specific websites to find artists, they did see museum sites, Google searches, school websites, online magazines, social media, Pinterest, and YouTube videos as significant teaching resources (Table 5-1).

Courtney described how she locates artists on the Internet:

I go to the Internet, and I type in the artist name. I start looking at sites that have either the site directly related to that artist, and they have a website, or I just start during my own research pulling up resources—print it out—pieces of artwork, showing on my screen in the classroom . . . but it's not a specific website that I actually go to find the artist; I go and do the research. (personal communication, December 2, 2018)

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Roberta has taught elementary art for 14 years and said she typically researches online by following artists on Instagram (ING). She described how she “search[es] general google . . . there’s a lot of social media, a lot of the artists I follow—for example, ING. I get a lot of information through that social media is huge and the student[s] can relate to that” (personal communication, November 30, 2018).

In listening to the Black women art educators’ stories, I realized that the Internet was helpful to them in accessing information on art terms and techniques. Jamie highlighted how one specific website has helped her:

I look online. . . I used to have a couple of websites I would keep handy. One of them is the Art Encyclopedia that [has] definitions of the genres, which I like about that; I keep that handy. There was another that had definitions from A to Z of art terms, and I like that, but they don’t have that one, it’s down.

(personal communication, November 27, 2018)

Felicia, a fourth-year art teacher, named art teachers’ websites such as the Art of Ed (www.artofed.com) and the non-profit Art in Action (http://www.artinaction.com), both of which provide free teaching resources. When she is not using these specific sites, Felicia explained, “It is really just a Google search basically on what I want” (personal communication, November 28 2018).

Technology did make it easier for the majority of the Black women to locate teaching resources, whether they located the resources using various sites on the Internet. Using technology was not mandatory, and none of the women stated that they had received professional development training for using technology for curriculum development. While the school districts rarely provided art education resources on
their own websites, Courtney and Keisha both indicated that their school districts provided teaching resources beyond the curriculum guide. The director of fine arts in Courtney’s school district distributes teaching resources during meetings based on the state standards. Keisha’s school district offered an approved list of teaching resources on its site only after the district received complaints about the use of 10- to 20-year old textbooks.

The experienced Black women art educators in this study did not rely solely on textbooks and technology. Over the years, they had accumulated teaching resources from outside of their school districts to create their own unique art libraries. Brenda shared how she had acquired her teaching resources:

From my own collection of books—from my collection of posters in reference materials that I have accumulated over the years . . . when I first started teaching, I accumulated a lot of reference materials, so that's what I basically—what I used. (personal communication, November 27, 2018)

In contrast, relatively new teacher Paula asserted, “I have been pulling heavily from some mentors that I have gained along the way—some lessons I have taught in the past, or I have seen mentors teach” (personal communication, November 23, 2018). Other relatively new teachers discussed working with teams and relying heavily on the Internet. Newer teachers indicated that they experience close connections with their teaching institutions, while many of the veteran teachers did not report having similar support. Felicia relayed how she receives books donated by universities, while Whitney said she received donated art calendars that she uses as prints.
As I listened to the Black women art educators, I recognized they eagerly sought teaching resources in books, on online sites, and during museum visits. They vocalized their beliefs and attitudes in connection with their curricula and teaching resources. The majority of the participants claimed that they had the flexibility to create their own curricula even as they acknowledged the challenges of having predominantly White, Eurocentric male artists in K–12 art education textbooks and online teaching resources. The majority of Black women adamantly believed in conducting their own research instead of relying on antiquated textbooks, random websites, and district-issued resources in writing their curricula. Whitney took an activist stance, citing K–12 art education textbook publishers’ responsibility to produce materials that address race and gender. If the publishers did not produce these types of materials, Whitney said, teachers must accept responsibility for locating the resources on their own and teaching students about artists of different ethnic backgrounds. Whitney expressed:

First and foremost, we the teachers have to speak up on their behalf. We have to go get the prints, even if it is online; even if it is [to] bring in our own work to them so they can see it, then it needs to be addressed. (personal communication, November 24, 2018)

Even though the Black women who wrote their own curricula had no particular script to follow, the women’s level of frustration was evident when I listened to them discuss having to use Eurocentric-themed teaching resources.

The Black women in the study were clear about what they wanted their students to learn. Using technology was not always a quick replacement for textbooks.
School districts did not always provide useful teaching resources for the women to create curricula that moved beyond White, Eurocentric male artists. The Black women found designing a curriculum that demonstrates to students the freedom of expression by non-White artists challenging, particularly because of the need to locate diverse teaching resources.

**Theme 3: Underrepresentation of Black Women Artists**

In developing my curriculum, I realized Black women artists were rarely, if ever, featured in K–12 art education teaching resources. For example, Davis is a significant publisher of art education textbooks, fine art images, e-books, and curriculum development resources, especially for the K–12 classrooms. Davis was founded in 1901 to help art educators develop art curricula. The publisher’s 638-page book, *Discovering Art History* (Brommer, 2007), which is intended for middle to high school students, focuses primarily on European art movements and artists from Greek antiquity around 1600 BC to Surrealism in the 1950s. In the first subsection of Chapter 15, titled “American Art 1900–1950,” the textbook author mentions only one Black female artist, Edmonia Lewis. The next subsection in Chapter 15 highlights American art and scenes of American life; however, the subsection does not mention any Black women artists. The entire book lists only four Black women artists.

Scholars claim that art education underrepresents and silences the voices of Black women artists, reinforcing the struggles of racism and sexism (Grant & Kee, 2013; Whitehead, 1999, 2008). In their textbook survey, Grant and Kee (2013) conclude that “Black women artists of the Harlem Renaissance are also frequently
missing from these textbooks” (p. 236). The underrepresentation of Black women artists in art history and art education textbooks is not uncommon, and this underrepresentation makes it difficult for educators to incorporate the artists into their curricula. Art historian Lisa Farrington (2005) highlights the need for the representation of Black women artists:

Some thirty years ago, when I was first introduced to the subject of African-American women artists, no cohesive historical record of these women existed. … It is my hope that this book will serve to incite others to unearth and to produce work on African-American artists so that we might all benefit from the knowledge of how these women lived, worked, and produced some of America’s finest visual art. (preface, p.1)

Black women artists historically have experienced underrepresentation in educational teaching resources, regardless of the level of instruction. Farrington is one of the few art historians who focused specifically on Black women artists. In the field of K–12 art education, specific teaching resources on Black women artists are limited.

Each year, I anticipated receiving art education catalogs in the mail. I was disappointed by the catalogs, and this disappointment compelled me to look elsewhere for resources on Black women artists. I made a conscious effort to look outside my school district’s approved art education catalogs for textbooks and teaching resources that would help me to develop a curriculum that included the art and narratives of Black women. Crystal Productions is a significant art education company that sells prints and distributes K–12 art education teaching resources to other art education catalogs. In the current 2020 Blick art catalog for art education, Crystal Productions
features one Black woman artist, Faith Ringgold (see Figure 5-3). In examining the company’s website (http://www.crystalproductions.com), I found that the company’s prints/posters depict various artists and styles of artwork. Crystal Productions features five Black male artists, Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, Allan Rohan Crite, John Biggers, and William Johnson. Some of these Black male artists have several images are repeated as posters.

Black women K–12 art educators have many teaching resources available to them, whether they use textbooks, the Internet, museums, or district-issued lessons. Some school districts provide art education lessons for each grade level. Donna recalled the extensive number of lesson plans as well as teaching resources at her disposal. I asked Donna whether she found that the lesson plans available in her school district underrepresented Black women artists. Donna responded:

Yes, absolutely. I think there’s a big emphasis on cultures, so a lot of things, like Native American art, they’re not really naming any specific tribal people who made the art or often there’s like a reference to non-living artists and often that’s not Black women that are reference there and there’s different emphasis on White male artists in general when it is mentioned. (personal communication, December 6, 2018)
Despite the various ways of gathering teaching resources that the women in the study had, they reported that they did not see many Black women artists represented in their art education teaching resources. Jaime observed, “I didn't see any at all. I didn't see any resources featuring any Black women at all. So underrepresented, it's not even a
phrase; they just were not there” (personal communication, November 27, 2018). Courtney agreed with Jaime, adding, “We have a variety of artists, not a lot of Black women artists at all. I'm just thinking about it” (personal communication, December 2, 2018). The limited number of Black women artists reveals racial and gender inequality and inequity in curricula and teaching resources. The Black artists shown in textbooks are usually men and the women shown in textbooks are usually White women. Anna observed that in looking over her textbooks, “I didn’t see Black women. There were Romare with his collages, that was the only Black person in that book” (personal communication, November 25, 2018). Black women art educators in this study were unanimously agreed that Black women artists are underrepresented in their K–12 art education teaching resources. Sharon described how White males, the “master artists,” are over-represented in art education (personal communication, November 23, 2018).

The flexibility of designing a curriculum did not ease the struggle of locating Black women artists to include, even when the participants had access to technology. For example, Michelle, who has taught for three years, indicated that searching for Black women artists on the Internet is just as challenging as looking through K–12 art education textbooks. Michelle revealed, “That question is hard because, I specifically Google. Yes, there definitely is an underrepresentation online. There is no—like specific website like that, but you definitely have to do your research, and that’s what I tend to do” (personal communication, December 1, 2018). Felicia similarly reported that she primarily uses the Internet to find teaching resources but that she believes the search for Black women artists is difficult. She revealed:
Yeah, yup, actually the way I was able to find certain artists that I didn’t even know about was to get very specific about African American visual artists or African American female visual artists then picking from there, but very much underrepresented. I was surprised with some like Kara Walker, for instance, when I first saw—I highlighted her a lot with the silhouettes and everything and actually there were other lesson plans. (personal communication, November 28·2018)

Like Felicia, many art educators are surprised to find information of contemporary Black women artists currently exhibiting their artwork.

The majority of the 21 Black women art educators searched for individual Black women artists or conducted random Google searches based on the topic they were teaching. Denise related her experience using art education websites like the Art of Ed, and the online art magazine, Widewalls, as well as Google Art and Culture, to search for Black women artists. She observed that the art education websites do not show as many Black women artists as non-art education sites do. Sally similarly noticed the underrepresentation of Black women artists on art education websites. Sally said she conducts Google searches in an attempt to find Black women artists and “to make sure that diversity is there and sometimes the art education sites don’t have black women represented in them” (personal communication, December 9, 2018).

Interestingly, not all of the Black women K–12 art educators paid attention to whether Black women artists featured in their teaching resources. Paula, one of the relatively new art educators, admitted that she did not check for Black women artists among the teaching resources on her school’s website. She said, “I have not checked
'I haven’t looked for books, I mainly use it just for art supplies, to be honest, but you can buy books and literature on there” (personal communication, November 23, 2018). However, she realized during the interview with me that she should check her school district’s website to see if the district included resources featuring Black women artists. Carol, who has taught for eight years, had a different approach to the underrepresentation of Black women artists in teaching resources. She said that she believes, that more Black women artists have emerged in recent years. While I agree that more Black women artists appear in teaching resources than they did a decade ago, I contend that these teaching resources usually represent the same artists.

**Tokenism**

The tokenism of Black women artists in art education teaching resources is a concern for some Black women art educators. Lesser-known Black women artists are often excluded in K-12 art education teaching resources. According to Paul Usherwood (1990), women in art have been denied prestige and power from mainstream museums and galleries for centuries. Usherwood argues:

> For instance, more needs to be known about those exceptional women artists who did find advancement and acclaim. Such women may seem unrepresentative but inasmuch as they were beneficiaries of “tokenism,” they were part of the mechanism used to repress women artists. (p. 14)

In other words, the White patriarchal system of the art world is set up to benefit only a few women artists, and these artists are used as a means to stifle the success of other women artists. The institutions in the art world heavily influence what constitutes and
displays as high art thus ignoring the importance of racial equality (Cahan, 2016). Art historian Susan Cahan (2016) explains that tokenism began to emerge in mainstream art museums in the 1960s. Museums selected one or two Black artists, usually men, and exhibited their artwork. I observed that in the textbooks I used, white mainstream museums featured the same artists. These white mainstream museums consciously omitted Black women artists, and this omission has filtered into K–12 art education teaching resources.

The decision-makers in the art field who select artists to feature in art education teaching resources, books, posters, and videos may not always see Black women as renowned artists (Farrington, 2005, 2017). While the majority of the participants in this study did incorporate Black women artists into their curricula at some point during the school year, they largely used Faith Ringgold. Although no one in the study used the term “tokenism,” 66% of the women indicated that they used Faith Ringgold in their curricula because of the availability of her artwork in K–12 art education teaching resources. Helen noticed that in the series of art education textbooks in her classroom, a particular Black woman artist appeared several times. Helen noted:

There is always the standby Faith Ringgold. That's the first thing that comes to my mind that she's in several of the books with different artists that are not commonly known. You don't hear from those [artists] in the textbooks. . . . I would say out of Black females, there are probably only three Black females for a textbook, and sometimes they repeated Faith Ringgold in more than one book. (personal communication, November 28, 2018)
Robin argued that art education teaching resources display tokenism in an attempt to preempt charges of racism and sexism. She asserted:

Yes, there’s a few they don’t mention. They always mention just a couple, just enough to have some color, but I do my own research to get information. I do use Faith Ringgold, she has her own website and she has her own resources.

(personal communication, December 3, 2018)

Felicia indicated that among her personal library of art books are two books that focus solely on Black women artists, and one of the books Faith Ringgold’s art. Felicia explained the ease of incorporating Faith Ringgold, saying, “Faith Ringgold, like she has been around for a long time and has a lot of work out there. There were some lessons plans already in place for them, but other than that, there is not a lot at all”

(personal communication, November 28, 2018).

The participants said they used other Black women artists in their curricula, such as Kara Walker, Alma Thomas, Elizabeth Catlett, Selma Burke, Emma Amos, Mickelene Thomas, Edmonia Lewis, Cynthia St. James, Amy Sherald, Augusta Savage, Alison Saar, and Betye Saar. Like Faith Ringgold, these Black women are renowned artists. However, there is less information about them, if any at all, in K–12 art education teaching resources. The field of art education has made a wealth of information about Faith Ringgold available, limiting the visibility of other Black women artists. The 2020 Dick Blick art education catalog includes a *Great Women Artists* DVD series, which features Mary Cassatt, Frida Kahlo, and Georgia O’Keefe and no Black women artists. *Great Women Artists* DVD series advertisement reads, “This series of programs presents an in-depth look at some of the greatest women
artists of all time. It features spectacular imagery and many rare historical photographs” (Blick, 2019, p. 622). Below the Great Women Artists DVD series is the Getting To Know DVD series that features Faith Ringgold (Figure 5-4). While Faith Ringgold is not listed as a great female artist, she is the only Black woman artist in the book and media section of the current Dick Blick art education catalog.

Artists represented in the K–12 art education teaching resources are mainly exhibited in mainstream museums and among private collectors. When these mainstream museums and galleries do not represent or purchase artwork from Black women artists, art educators rarely select the artists for inclusion in their curricula. Wilson (2018) investigates Black artists’ strategies to gain acceptance in the mainstream art world, highlighting, “The legacy of underrepresentation of Black artists within museum and gallery spaces provide yet another sobering example of the ordinariness of racism” (p. 416). Art institutions’ selection of predominantly White male artists excludes many Black women artists and influences K–12 art education publishers and scholars, as well as the development of teaching resources.

Black women art educators in this study reiterated the need to conduct their research to develop their curricula. The difficulty of locating Black women artists or finding a variety of Black women artists led many of the Black women to gravitate towards artists easier to find, such as White male, White women, and Black male artists. The field of art education has made incorporating Black women artists into curricula burdensome, ignoring the racist past that has led to a Eurocentric definition of art and that influences the artists presented in art education teaching resources even today (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Kraehe, & Carpenter, 2018).
Great Women Artists DVD Series
This series of programs presents an in-depth look at some of the greatest women artists of all time. It features spectacular imagery and many rare historical photographs. 45-minutes.

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Getting To Know... DVD Series
These entertaining, animated DVDs present an intelligent yet approachable introduction to the world’s greatest artists in the style of Mike Venezia’s award-winning children’s books. Praised by Booklist, School Library Journal, and Video Librarian, these DVDs are loved by teachers, librarians, parents, and kids alike.

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Who is the Artist? DVD Series
Friendly narration and beautifully reproduced artwork make this DVD series a great introduction to the life and work of famous artists. Students will learn to recognize the artists by their styles, techniques, and subjects. The interactive approach of each video encourages students to evaluate the paintings as they are presented. At the end, they are shown other paintings by the same artist and asked to identify “Who is the Artist?” The complete set presents 18 artists and more than 75 works. Each DVD is approximately 30 minutes long.

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Theme 4: Incorporation of Black Women Artists into the Curricula

Although I knew that Black women artists are underrepresented in K–12 art education resources, I believed that the Black and Brown students I taught should see Black women as artists. I intentionally sought teaching resources other than the K–12 textbooks and posters I saw presented in the field. Whenever I found articles on Black women artists in Black magazines, I cut them out and shared them with the students. For example, in teaching linoleum cut printmaking, I used an article about Elizabeth Catlett in *Ebony* magazine to supplement the few sentences about her available in my art education textbooks. Donna shared a similar experience of seeking references and printing them out to discuss and display in her classroom. She relayed that she observed race and gender bias when locating resources on Black women artists:

> If I want to run in and find a white male artist, I just easily pop down to the Hirshhorn or the National Gallery and walk into their gift shop and find something immediately. But, if I want to pursue and find like a reproduction of a Black woman artist work, I know because I consciously look for it, it would be really hard. (personal communication, December 6, 2018)

Despite the difficulty of locating Black women artists to incorporate into their curricula, the majority of the Black women art educators in the study incorporated them at some point during the school year (Figure 5-5). Even though many of the women stated they included Black women artists in their curricula, they did not necessarily mean regularly. When the Black women participants used a Black woman artist in their curricula, they usually presented the artist either alone or in conjunction
with other artists. Several of the Black women developed and created lesson plans focusing on Black women artists as an instructional aid for students (see Appendix C).

Figure 5-5. Black Women Artists

![Bar Chart: Black Women Artists]

Note: Participants who incorporated Black women artists into their curriculum.

Black women art educators overwhelmingly stressed the importance of teaching their K–12 art students about Black women artists. While some of the educators may not have foregrounded Black women artists in their curricula and teaching resources, all of them felt strongly about the artists’ significance in the field of art education. Felicia maintained the importance of exploring Black women artists in the classroom, especially for Black and Brown girls who need to see themselves in places other than reality TV shows.

One, because Black women artists are underrepresented, and it is only 4% of women’s work that is actually in museums. The majority of my students are
females. We have a low population of males—the ratio of males to females.

So, it is really important for these young Brown girls to see themselves—to see a future for themselves or the possibility of it—but not just the future for themselves—just to see the representation and its expression of Black women in different examples out in the world. Like I said, they are able to see much, and some of them don’t see a lot outside a lot of the reality TV shows, like *Love in Hip Hop*. You know those types of shows. I’m not knocking that realm, but I like for them to see other things so they can explore these possibilities. (personal communication, November 28, 2018).

Robin shared why she believes including Black women artists in her curriculum is important:

> I think it is important because it's been my experience with students when they have not been exposed to African American artists that they will not see themselves as artists. They really don’t identify with the whole—who an artist actually is. They will think the artist is something that they do, and that's not something feasible for them. They may like to draw, and they might be good at drawing, but they don't see themselves as an artist. It is important to me to share with them artists that they can identify with, and when they look at the picture of the artist, they see themselves. (personal communication, December 3, 2018)

Sally shared her belief about the role of a Black woman art educator:

> Oh yes, definitely, I think it's my responsibility to try to address—to speak to all my student population. So, I have male students, so I have male artists in
there, female students and female artists, African-American. So, I think it's part of my responsibility as a teacher to be able to make them feel included in the lessons that I teach about artists. About Black women, because I think we are underrated [and] looked over. I think that it is for my young women—my young black women, I think that they need to see someone that looks like them, someone that [they] can connect to. (personal communication, December 9, 2018)

Sharon considered the futures of her students and the field of art education when showing Black women artists:

Yes, I really, I think it is important, especially [when] my student population is majority African-American. I think it is relevant that I emphasize it, especially for the purpose of encouraging kids to move in the direction of the visual arts and whether it [is] becoming an artist or moving into fields where they can use their creative talent. So yes, I think it's very important for the girls to encourage that—that gets them to focus and feel confident and feel inspired by women artists. (personal communication, November 23, 2018)

Denise, the majority of whose students are White, highlighted the importance of showing her art class Black women artists:

Because, they need to know that one, contemporary art is topical—is culture and they need to have some basis of, I mean, a lot of these kids already are in love with Black women, but they don't understand the art that they're making or what its basis [is]—like giving them some type of context it's great. Also, developing empathy, understanding somebody different than you are, a lot of
my students are not Black, but they consume Black Culture. So, giving them some kind of basis to kind of—to know what they are looking at, also because their stories are important just as important as talking about Michelangelo and DaVinci and also because I have students who never to see themselves in the projector. They [have] never seen—I do have African American students, I have Hispanic students all they see in art is Western European artwork and that has been held up as the high art, and I want to show them that's not necessarily the case. (personal communication, December 9, 2019)

Dana also shared her approach to teaching her non-Black students about Black women:

Why is it important, because I feel their exposure is fairly limited in some ways. . . . It was always important to get them outside of the school, you know, and in an environment that exposes them to other things. I think it’s a very socially conscious place, they think they’re socially conscious, and they try to be by doing all sorts of community service. . . . I think that the advantages that many of the students have in terms of their privilege they don't understand certain cases how—how to relate to how to talk how to understand others, and so my being there was being trying to—to really focus on that idea of exposing them to a different culture to different cultures. (personal communication, November 25, 2018)

Whitney provided her perspective on the significance of teaching about Black women artists:
Selma Burke, I always talk about her story. I have a book that I read to them with her story. I have them look at the dime and see what a relief sculpture is and how it started off as a regular sculpture and how in during her day how Black people and women were considered too stupid to be artists. So, a man took credit for what she did. I think it is important that kids know these things. It’s not in the curriculum anywhere, and sometimes we have to be the walking curriculum, and that’s what I feel I have to be a walking curriculum for this community of people that I work with. (personal communication, November 24, 2018)

Brenda’s position as a Black woman prompted her to show students Black women artists, understanding that they may not receive the same information from someone else:

Because, I am a Black woman. I've always chosen to include both African American artists and women artists and African American women artists in a way that I probably wouldn't if I wasn't a Black woman that my colleagues don't. My White female and White male colleagues definitely don't teach much about African Art or African Art History and African American Artist as I do. (personal communication, November 27, 2018)

The attitudes and beliefs of Black women art educators in the study reveal Black women artists are essential for K–12 students to encounter, regardless of the students’ gender and race. Many of the Black women confessed they would like their students to encounter more than White, Eurocentric male artists in their teaching resources. They specifically would like Black girls to notice and understand that there are careers in
art. Gender and skin color do not influence talent. Teaching about Black culture is just as significant as teaching about white culture.

The availability of Black male artists in K–12 art education teaching resources left some of the Black women feeling trapped despite their desire to incorporate Black women artists into their curricula. Michelle talked about why she believes educators should incorporate Black women and their rich history into her curriculum. However, Michelle related, “I probably should, as I’m talking to you, I probably show more maybe male Black artists more and I don’t think of the specific reason” (personal communication, November 1, 2018). Leah believed incorporating Black women into her curriculum is essential but admitted that the incorporation of these artists does not always happen. Courtney also believed teaching about Black women artists are important but acknowledged: “Although we do not do it as much as we should do, I could be honest about that. Yes, it is important, but we do not do it as much as we should do it . . . have more male black artists than females, I cover them more than I do female artist[s]” (personal communication, December 2, 2018). The lack of diversity in teaching resources in the field of K-12 art education seemingly makes the incorporation of Black women artists too complicated and time-consuming.

Two of the participants related that they did not teach about Black women artists as part of their curricula even though they recognized the artists’ underrepresentation in teaching resources and their significance in art education. I wondered why they did not teach Black women artists during the school year. Anna was open about why she has never used Black women artists in her curriculum. She
cited a lack of training and said that she did not feel comfortable talking about Black women artists. Anna explained:

No, I actually, I really haven’t, sorry. I don’t know why not, I really don’t know. I don’t think I know enough about Black female artists these days. I really don’t think I know. I think I am ignorant in that department; therefore, I haven’t taught it. (personal communication, November 25, 2018)

Anna’s apologetic attitude suggested shame; Anna appeared to believe she was not qualified to talk about Black women artists even though she herself is a practicing Black woman artist. I am reminded of Collins’s (2000) notion of a safe social space where a Black woman can develop her consciousness to speak without feeling objectified. Anna is not alone in this feeling of shame; Jaime also revealed she did not include Black women artists in her curriculum. Jaime acknowledged:

I honestly don’t have a reason why. . . . I’m coming into Kara Walker’s things now, so the more I think about her—I look at her work and stuff like that—then I’ve seen her exhibits in different places. I feel like, I can, I can try to bring her in. (personal conversation, November 27, 2018)

The Eurocentric White male definition of art led some Black women art educators to avoid considering any artists that fall outside of the norm in the field of art education.

Black women art educators who exclude Black women artists’ experiences exhibit what I describe as unconscious oppression. Exhibiting unconscious oppression is failing to look beyond blatant oppression or injustices and recognize subtle yet unjust treatment. In other words, while individuals are aware of oppressive behavior, they experience an inundation of specific images that leave them unconscious of the
images that are missing or only rarely seen. Unconscious oppression affects curricular decisions about which artists to teach based on the availability of Eurocentric teaching resources.

Felicia continually stated she did not wish to seem biased by showing her students Black women artists. Felicia did not feel she was doing anything wrong by showing her student Black women artists, but she was conscious of talking too much about them. Was talking about Black women artists an offensive act? Do White art teachers consider themselves biased when they teach primarily about White artists? I sometimes questioned my own unconscious oppression in teaching from mostly Eurocentric textbooks and teaching resources. I wanted the students I taught to be able to identify Van Gogh and Rembrandt paintings. At times, I was more concerned with the students knowing traditional European artists than Black women artists so that the white art world would see them as knowledgeable.

I listened to the women explain their teaching resources and name the artists they used in writing their curricula. I noticed they gave the names of White male artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Pablo Picasso, Vincent Van Gogh, and Claude Monet readily and without hesitation. When asked about the names of Black women artists, the majority of the participants paused. Many of the women said they could not figure out the names right now, they were trying to think of the names, or they had forgotten the Black women artists’ names. Carol admitted, “I'm trying to think, I do, but I can't think of any right now” (personal communication, November 23, 2018). Many of the participants’ narratives illustrated their lack of consciousness about including Black women artists in their curricula compared to White artists. As a
former high school art educator, I clearly understood the variety of factors that influence the selection of an artist for a particular assignment. These factors include the project theme, budget, grade level, course load, classroom time, and school activities.

I did not aim to create a list of Black women artists to appease the field of art education. Nor did I desire to put Black women on the spot or shame them into naming Black women artists. The participants’ comments made me wonder why the participants readily remembered White European male artists’ names but not those of Black women artists. Many of the Black women art educators were aware of racism and the underrepresentation of Black women artists. Their inability to recall the names of more than one or two Black women artists attests to the indoctrination of Eurocentric White male art and the effect on their curricular choices. From the participants’ narratives, the field of art education has continuously promoted racial and gender disparity in the field by featuring only a few Black women artists in art education teaching resources compared to White artists.

**Recommended Strategies**

Black women artists have made significant contributions to the art world that the art world has not acknowledged (Collins, 2002; Farrington, 2005, 2017; Patton, 1998; Robinson, 1996). Some art education scholars have stressed the importance of Black and women-of-color artists in K–12 curricula (Wilson, 2017; Whitehead, 2008). The women in this study managed the underrepresentation of Black women artists in different ways. I highlight ten recommended strategies based on discussions with the
participants about how to increase the presence of Black women artists in curricula and Black women in the field of art education (Figure 5-6).

Figure 5-6. Strategies Incorporating Black Women in Art Education

The first strategy is for Black women K–12 art educators to attend to their conscious attitudes. Both Donna and Anna claimed that educators must be conscious of the kind of artist they are selecting as the first step. Anna acknowledged, “First, I need to be conscious of my behavior. I am saying oh my god—there is a Black woman who painted a portrait of Obama. I could teach about her, you know, she’s current, it's a start” (personal communication, November 25, 2018). During the interviews, some of the Black women started to realize that they did not know as many Black women
artists as they knew of White male artists. Finding Black women artists was not always a priority for many of the participants; they often prioritized finding artists who were readily available for the given lessons. Some of the Black women did not consider Black women artists for teaching about specific artistic techniques because they did not know where to find such artists. The majority of the Black women art educators who were artists themselves made more of a conscious effort to include Black women artists in their curricula, even if it was their own artwork.

The second strategy is for Black women K–12 art educators to continue to conduct their research. In thinking beyond the Eurocentric White male artists featured in K–12 art teaching resources, few women looked for resources about Black women artists outside of the resources provided by their school districts. Felicia said, “One thing is doing it ourselves, at least for me. Doing it ourselves and writ[ing] the curriculum, that’s my goal to be able to make these type[s] of things available” (personal communication, November 28, 2018). All 21 participants stated they conducted their own research on artists. Like Felicia, many of the Black women felt they had no choice but to conduct their research if they wished to diversify their district-issued curricula or curriculum guide. According to the Black women educators, the textbooks they used were ineffective and websites were helpful only if the women were seeking a particular Black woman artist.

The third strategy is for pre-service programs to provide educators with more exposure to Black women artists. This exposure would help future art teachers to prepare for issues of race and diversity before they enter the classroom. Sally emphasized:
Teachers are getting training teaching of White male Masters. Those [are] artists that we always hear about, Monet and Cezanne, and sometimes we hear about Mary Cassatt. When you get to the Modern Era, you got Warhol and the Dada artists and a lot of emphasis on males when you are being trained as a teacher, and so I think it could start from there in a pre-service level. (personal communication, December 9, 2018)

A few of the Black women shared their experiences of backlash from White professors when the women asked about Black women artists. Black women participate in programs that prepare them to teach diverse learners. According to the narratives of the Black women in this study, these pre-service art education programs have failed them by excluding or failing to acknowledge Black women artists compared to White male artists.

Curriculum development is the fourth strategy. The women in this study expressed a desire for inclusion in the curriculum development process and for the opportunity to provide actual input in curriculum-planning conversations. Robin believed that providing her perspective during the designing of the curriculum could help the district to avoid the exclusion of Black women artists. Jaime made her opinion clear about the inclusion of teachers’ voices: “Having more input in of the actual art teachers would be I think that's something that can get Black females into curriculum because we have to teach it” (personal communication, November, 27, 2019). Keisha explained with the influence of the Black Lives Matter movement, her school district pushed toward implementing information about Black people as a requirement in the curriculum, but there is no initiative for inclusion of Black artists in the art curriculum.
The participants spoke openly about their beliefs and attitudes about their curricula, and their responses varied greatly. A few of the Black women expressed a desire to be on a curriculum-writing team and make their voices heard.

The fifth strategy is to provide professional development at the district level and statewide. Helen expressed the desire for teachers to have access to workshops about Black women artists; with this training, teachers could help their students learn about Black women artists’ work and lived experiences. Felicia claimed she did not receive effective professional development. She stated, “As we really don’t have professional development, we are on our own with a lot of stuff, and that’s not fun” (personal communication, November 28, 2018). Michelle added, “I think professional development would really be helpful to really focus on art importance, on why you need to do it, and how to do it” (personal communication, December 1, 2018). Helen, Felicia, and Michelle are a few of the women in this study who expressed a desire for productive professional development opportunities that relate to art education.

The sixth strategy is for schools to hire more Black women art educators. Most of the participants indicated that they work alone or are usually the only Black female teacher in the building. Wendy was frustrated about being the sole Black educator trying to promote Black art. Robin shared, “I think a strategy is to have more Black art teachers who are women” (personal communication, December 3, 2018). She believed her voice, if recognized, could help make sure the field of art education considered Black women artists and did not forget them. The field of art education consists predominantly of White women. The lack of Black women art educators is visible in
district supervisory jobs and leadership positions at state-level and national art education conferences.

The seventh strategy is for museums to exhibit more Black women artists in their collections. Museums are an essential learning resource for art educators; however, museums underrepresent Black women artists’ artwork, making it challenging for Black women K–12 art educators to use the museums effectively in their curricula. Donna related her thoughts:

I don't think that for the most part, museums and galleries really do art teachers any favors, the fact that we are frequently not featured as artists in those spaces … and I go to museums on the regular basis. So, I know in 2018, if this is still true, we're still as Black women, we are still not figuratively prominent in many art institutions. (personal communication, December 6, 2018)

However, as Donna pointed out, there are few exhibitions or museum collections that include art by Black women. The majority of the Black women interviewed claimed museums are a vital resource for them to teach students about artists.

The eighth strategy is for educators to invite Black women artists into the classroom and to take their students to the artists’ studios. Felicia spoke of showing her Black women artist friends’ work to her students: “I have a few friends-artist friends who are doing some independent things—I’ll end up bringing in their videos artwork. . . . I brought two of my artist friends in” (personal communications, November 28, 2018). Dana also said that she invites Black women artists into her classroom to expose her students to the women and their art. Many of the Black
women in the study did not consider inviting local Black women artists into their classrooms.

The ninth strategy is for schools to display Black women artists’ artwork at times other than Black History Month and Women’s History Month. While these two months are excellent opportunities to exhibit Black women artists’ artwork, they limit the exposure students have to Black women artists. Helen related her perspective:

I know that schools in the month of February, most schools do Black history research projects but something that can be launched throughout the year, not just for February . . . teachers are more conscious of presenting children with opportunities is to research female artists in particularly female artists of color. We could do a better job at that. That could be done school-wide, county-wide, or district-wide. (personal communication, November 28, 2018)

While Black History and Women’s History month are essential, Black women artists are usually limited to these two months. Art education K-12 teaching resources of Black artists focus primarily on men and women artists focus mainly on White women. The lack of available artwork from Black women artists or the same token artists is evident in the challenges of displaying Black women artists during and beyond Black History and Women’s History.

The tenth and final strategy for incorporating Black women artists into the curriculum is for educators to conduct scholarly research about Black women artists and use narratives from Black women art educators. Whitney highlighted the need for the field of art education to take research on Black women artists seriously:
They need to see the research out there because this country they only talk data. So sometimes you got to put it in their face—and for one that you are doing with this research is really good because maybe these textbook publishers will look at the research and say we need to add more Black women artists in the textbooks. (personal communication, November 24, 2018)

Research conducted and published by Black women lets the field of art education know they are capable of scholarly investigation. More importantly, Black women offer a different perspective than their non-Black peers, and this perspective often includes race.

The ten strategies are not a fixed list of ways to incorporate Black women artists into curricula. There are various other ways of incorporating more Black women artists into K–12 art curricula that the 21 Black women described. However, these strategies are a start, according to many of the participants in the study.

**Conclusion: Acknowledging Black Women in Art Education**

The Black women in the study were honest, sometimes unsure, and relieved to discuss their experiences with their curricula, teaching resources, and the underrepresentation of Black women artists. As art educators, they were optimistic; however, they believed the field of art education still needs to address race and gender equality in pre-service programs, teaching resources, art associations, and art administration. As a participant, I understood the plight of many of the Black women in the study. The four emergent themes and subthemes suggest more research is needed to support Black women art educators who teach in the K–12 environment in
expressing their decisions and concerns about their curricula and teaching resources. Knight and Deng (2016) highlight the challenge facing women-of-color art educators to confront and design curricula that include their positionality. The overwhelming responses from the participants in the study confirmed that diversity, equality, and inclusion do not exist in the K–12 art education field’s current teaching resources and curricula.

The study captured the firsthand experiences and opinions of the participants. These experiences and opinions are evidence of the dominance of white Eurocentric teaching resources in art education; the experiences and opinions also reveal how many Black women art educators navigate a white field. The Black women art educators described their past and present life experiences. Black women’s usage of predominantly White, Eurocentric male artists influenced many of their beliefs and attitudes about incorporating Black women artists into their curricula.

Several of the women revealed their school districts did not ask where they located teaching resources or offer suggestions. As a result, the majority of women conducted their own research and gathered their own resources. Few of the women asked questions about their curricula or the curriculum guide given to them. Even though the most of women did not receive a scripted curriculum, many of the women realized the Eurocentric male artist theme of their curricula. Many of the Black women found themselves questioning the presence of Black women artists in their teaching resources and wondering how to better incorporate them into their curricula. As I reflected on my own curricular experience, I saw that I, too, wondered about the number of times I used Black women artists compared to White male artists. I
understood from the Black women in the study that the students they taught significantly influenced their selection of artists. As the Black women in the study expressed, the work of Black women artists is not as readily available as that of White male artists.

The study’s data is useful for the field of art education; including art supervisors, pre-service art education programs, and curriculum developers who might be unfamiliar with Black women art educators’ curricular experiences. The data highlights how race and gender issues influence curricula, and in particular, the widespread availability of White, Eurocentric male artists and the limited inclusion of Black women artists’ work.
Chapter 6.

BLACK WOMEN’S VOICES MATTER

In reflecting on my collected data, I considered my original purpose as a narrative inquirer seeking to understand how Black women K–12 art educators navigate the white-dominated field of art education. I wondered whether they, like me, had used White, Eurocentric male artist-themed teaching resources to develop their curricula. I did not want to assume I had the answers to this study’s questions. Nor did I want to consider my voice as representative of all Black women K–12 art educators. Therefore, I present the narratives of 21 Black women art educators who teach in the K–12 environment. My data collection and analysis focused on the educators’ stories and reflections and answered the research question: What are the curricular experiences of Black women K–12 art educators?

In this chapter, I expound why Black women in art education matter and the significance of their voices. I explain the relationship between Black feminism and the outsider-within positionality in the field of art education to provoke a conversation about racial and gender oppression. I provide an overview of each chapter, as well as a discussion of the results of the dominant narrative. Lastly, I discuss the study’s implications and areas of future research and offer my concluding thoughts.

Black Women Matter in Art Education

Black women art educators have claimed there is inequality and inequity in the field of art education (Acuff, 2018; Knight, 2007, 2019; Kraehe, 2015; Lawton 2018;
Leveston, 2011; Whitehead, 2008; Wilson, 2017, 2018). Whether these claims focus on pre-service teacher education programs, curriculum development, available teaching resources, or underrepresentation in the field and associations, the claims suggest Black women art educators feel like outsiders. Many educational institutions are fully aware of the biases toward Black women in art education but are unwilling to discuss or listen to concerns. As DiAngelo (2011) asserts, “Because most whites have not been trained to think complexly about racism in schools or mainstream discourse, and because it benefits white dominance not to do so, we have a very limited understanding of racism” (p. 61). DiAngelo’s assertion of most Whites not having training about racism may seem like an excuse for racist actions. However, DiAngelo is highlighting the lack of conscious thought from the dominant white group and the racism experienced by non-White teachers, colleagues, and students in the field of art education.

The significance of this study lies in the stories of lived experiences and perspectives collected from the 21 Black women art educators. This study extends prior research by focusing on the race and gender of the participants and examining how each individual thinks about her curriculum, teaching resources, and Black women artists. The participants’ shared narratives highlight racism and micro-aggressions that shape their personal and professional experiences as Black women K–12 art educators. They unapologetically discussed the issues and concerns they have about teaching in the white field of art education. The art field’s historical foundation and male-dominated curriculum confirm many of the Black women’s stories of racial inequality (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Kraehe, & Carpenter, 2018). White dominance in
art education influences the artists who appear in teaching resources and the art educators who hold leadership positions.

A few of Black women in the study explained their exclusion from the curriculum development writing process and their desire to join the team. Even though the majority of the participants expressed teaching resources focused heavily on White, Eurocentric male artists, I found the Black women K-12 art educators who rarely considered Black women artists concerning. I was surprised by the little effort made by some of the women to seek their own resources of Black women artists and incorporate them into curricula. The common theme that emerged from the analysis of the interviewees’ curricular experiences is the underrepresentation of Black women artists. The Black women’s narratives in this study revealed the availability and convenience of White artists in K-12 art education teaching resources potentially made the task of seeking Black women artists time-consuming and tedious.

My intention is not to challenge the importance of learning about White, Eurocentric male artists. Many of these artists are considered “Masters” and are studied intensively for their artistic techniques and subject content. For example, Sandro Botticelli, an artist from the fifteenth century, is known for his style of drawing the human body, arrangement of figures, painting techniques, and mythological and allegorical scenes. Botticelli was influential to the art world; he is considered the first Italian artist to paint on canvas instead of wood panel and used gold to accent light-colored hair (Brommer, 2007). Learning about Botticelli can help students understand composition, anatomy, painting techniques, and religious ideas of the Italian Renaissance. Yet, I believe Bisa Butler, a Black female contemporary artist is vital for
students to learn. Butler is known for painting Black people and their stories using vibrant patterned fabrics instead of paint. Learning about Butler can offer students a different concept of using traditional painting materials by introducing a new style of painting that illustrates the stories of the Black experience. Butler is one example of a contemporary Black woman artist not mentioned in K-12 teaching resources but offers a unique perspective for students to understand artistic style, painting technique, and Black culture.

Ultimately, this study challenges the art education field’s promotion of whiteness in teaching resources and practices. If White, Eurocentric male artists are the focus of students’ learning, then students will lack understanding of art by Black women artists, among other marginalized people who create art. Art educators teaching in the K-12 sector and pre-service environment must begin to consciously choose and incorporate Black women artists in their curricula, school cultures, and the field of art education as a whole. Many Black women K–12 art educators are searching for the opportunity to actively participate in leadership rather than serve as token representatives. The Black women who participated in this study recognize that they have voices and their voices matter. Their stories have important implications for how art education views race and gender.

I led this study to find if other Black women K-12 art educators had similar experiences locating Black women artists in the prominently White, Eurocentric teaching resources. By interviewing Black women K-12 art educators’ curricular experiences, I revealed the racial and gender concerns as unprivileged insiders navigating the white field of art education. The purpose of the study is not to further
marginalize Black women but rather to provide analysis of their narratives to make explicit to all educators and administrators there is an urgent need to address racism, sexism, and whiteness in K-12 teaching resources. The field of art education also must address Black women’s presence in the practice of teacher preparation pre-service programs, and the practice of promoting leadership positions in art education associations beyond tokenism. The practice of recruitment and retention of Black women artists in the K-12 and higher education sector is urgent as White women dominate the field of art education. Another vital practice in the field of art education is developing an inclusive curriculum, writing equitable teaching resources, and conducting effective professional development. The practice of publishing literature written by Black women as a reliable scholarly source is vital to show how Black women in art education matter. In this study, I emphasized a particular presence that is missing from art education, the racial, gendered, and marginalized position of many Black women from a Black feminist perspective.

**Black Feminism and Art Education**

Black feminist perspectives center the stories of Black women K–12 art educators navigating a white field. In centering these stories, Black feminist perspectives are able to address the ways Black women experience injustice associated with race and gender. The 21 Black women individual stories collectively shared similar thoughts and patterns exposing racial and gender inequalities. Black feminism in art education acknowledges Black women art educators have to contend with being Black and being a woman. These two intersecting oppressions of race and gender are
inextricable from one another (Crenshaw, 1991). By applying Black feminist perspectives to the narratives of the women in this study, I acknowledged that Black women in art education experience a different racist and sexist oppressive structure than that of White women or Black men. Collins (2000) emphasized, “Understanding the complexity of Black women’s activism requires understanding not only the need to address more than one form of oppression, but the significance of how singular and multiple forms of oppression are organized” (Collins, 2000, p. 203). Oppression based on race and gender are not a singular occurrence, but instead a series of oppressions Black women face.

Acuff (2018) argues that there is no Black feminist research methodology for investigating Black women’s standpoint in art education. She also contends, “Art education is implicated in such oppression, as seen in the underrepresentation of Black women in art education research and in the field at large” (Acuff, 2018, p. 201). Black feminist perspectives reveal there is no single occurrence that relates to the experiences of all Black women. In this study, I considered how race and gender affect Black women K–12 art educators through an outsider-within positionality framework.

An *Outsider-within* Positionality Framework in Art Education

An *outsider-within* positionality is foundational to this study’s description and analysis of Black women educators’ K–12 curricular experiences as unprivileged insiders. According to Merton (1972), the dominant group, comprised of “insiders,” holds the power and influence to grant privileges and access to information. Art education’s dominant group is Whites. There is a white power structure that keeps the
majority of Black women outside of policymaking decisions. My positionality as a Black woman art educator and artist allowed me to understand and describe how race and gender impact the curricular experiences of the participants. I appreciated the participants sharing their stories and considering their positionality in describing how being Black and being a woman influences their curricular choices.

Many Black women K–12 art educators find themselves a part of a system where they observe contradictions between the whiteness in art and white ideologies (Collins, 2000). According to Mary Howard-Hamilton (2003), Black women have an outsider-within status: The dominant group invites them into spaces in which the group has assembled, but the group ignores and silences the Black women when dialogue about the curriculum begins. Lorde (1980) warns against becoming overexcited by these invitations from the dominant insiders’ group: “The tokenism that is sometimes extended to us is not an invitation to join power; our racial ‘otherness’ is a visible reality that makes that quite clear” (p. 114). This study highlights the need for Black women art educators and allies to dismantle the exclusiveness of the white dominant group and captures how they are privileged insiders often ignoring people who are not of the same race and gender. The white dominant group of art education keeps Black women art educators in outsider-within status.

The race and gender of K–12 art educators are identifiers that often exclude them from becoming leading contributors in the field of art education. The exclusion of positions and information is not always evident. Examples of exclusion include when teachers do not receive school supplies or funding for professional development, when teachers receive outdated and damaged supplies, and when a school district
selects a White woman alone to write a curriculum. I am not discussing district-wide funding cuts here. Rather, I am explicitly referencing Black women like Robin. Robin who described how a White male teacher received her art supplies and she received a gallon of glue and scissors for the school year. I am also referencing my experience of the inequitable distribution of professional development funding when I was invited as a guest lecturer at a national conference and denied funding, while my White female colleague received funding to attend a conference simply because she wanted to go.

Based on the narratives that I gathered, I am uncertain if all the participants in this study understood their position as insiders without privilege. Wendy understood her unprivileged insider position. She believed if she were a White woman art educator, she “would have got hugged up right away—they would have jumped in with both hands and feet and would have assisted and helped me in every way they could” (personal communication, December 8, 2018). Some explained they felt like outsiders, but many of the Black women seemed too sidetracked by their daily day-to-day activities to notice.

**Gathering Stories of Black Women’s Lives**

In Chapter 1, I outlined the importance of recognizing Black women in art education who are navigating a white field through an *outsider-within* positionality framework. I indicated how many Black women are working in the field of art education without full rights and privileges held by White teachers. In the first section, I addressed the dearth of scholarship on Black women K–12 art educators’ curricular experiences and racial and gender concerns. The second section described the
challenge of locating Black women artists in K-12 teaching resources. In the third section, I discussed the importance of the narratives of Black women art educators’ curricular experiences and their teaching practice. I explained the purpose of the research question guiding the study. The fourth section addressed the significance of race and gender in K–12 art education. I emphasized why I selected Black women art educators. I also highlighted the history of whiteness in the K–12 art curriculum. Finally, I explained the definitions of terms and the limitations of the study.

In Chapter 2, I shared how the *outsider-within* positionality framework fits this study. I also discussed in the first section how some scholars have applied the *outsider-within* framework to their research. In the second section, I focused on art education scholars and relevant literature to demonstrate and reveal the need for more research and dialogue about Black women art educators. I articulated the dearth of scholarship on the experiences of Black women K–12 art educators. The third section considered the impact of the pre-service experience for some Black women entering the field of art education. I mentioned that many Black women in pre-service art education programs face the challenge of accessing information about Black women artists in the university courses taught by White professors.

To identify the curricular experiences of Black women K–12 art educators, in Chapter 3, I described how I used narrative inquiry by conducting interviews. In the first section, I explained the benefits of using narrative inquiry to gather data and shed light on Black women art educators’ lives and honor their experiences. The next section highlighted how art educators have used narrative inquiry to investigate the relationship between race and gender. To further demonstrate why narrative inquiry is
relevant, in Section 3, I showed why the Black feminist narrative perspective is crucial in exploring and producing data about Black women art educators. In this chapter, I outlined the selection of participants. I also described the difficulty of obtaining demographic information specifically about Black and White women K–12 art educators in the United States. This chapter provided a discussion of my data collection process, which included virtual snowball sampling and semi-structured interviewing techniques. I explained my role as a researcher-participant and how my identity as a Black woman art educator impacted the study. I used a three-dimensional spacing approach (Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002) and coded data to describe the patterns and emergent themes and subthemes in the data and to analyze the narratives of the participants.

In Chapter 4, I revealed the four major preliminary narratives found within the data. I gave vignettes from a few of the Black women’s descriptions of racial and gender oppression in the K–12 environment. The first section focused on how some Black women negotiate race and racism in pre-service programs. In the second section, I discussed how a few of the Black women felt isolated in their buildings and school districts, as well as at art education conferences. Section 3 presented the narratives of a few Black women who described White administrators and colleagues silencing them. The last section relayed some Black women’s emotional stories of battling racism in their school districts.

In Chapter 5, I presented the findings related to four emergent themes developed from the data of the 21 Black women K–12 art educators. The first theme was the beliefs and attitudes of those who develop curricula. The second theme was
the identification of teaching resources. The subthemes were textbooks and technology. The underrepresentation of Black women artists was the third theme, and tokenism was the subtheme. The last theme was the incorporation of Black women artists into curricula, and 10 recommended strategies comprised the subtheme. Having reviewed the data on the 21 Black women’s experiences, I now present these firsthand narratives and explain each theme and subtheme.

**The Dominant Narrative**

The themes and subthemes that emerged from the data were:

- **Curricular Beliefs and Attitudes**
- **Identification of Teaching Resources: Textbooks and Technology**
- **Underrepresentation of Black Women Artists: Tokenism**
- **Incorporation of Black Women Artists into Curricula: Recommended Strategies**

The subthemes provide context for Black women K–12 educators’ curricular experiences. The following section highlights the connection between the themes and subthemes in relation to *outsider-within* positionality framework theory (Collins, 2000).

**Theme 1: Curricular Beliefs and Attitudes**

Twenty-one Black women K–12 art educators shared their experiences of developing their curricula. Many of the women described having total autonomy in writing their curricula and believed that this curriculum-writing flexibility was
beneficial for them. Upholding the state’s art education standards was critical in designing curricula. One of the main observations I made was that many of the Black women were not involved or invited to participate in the decision-making process of creating curriculum guides or curricula issued by their school districts. Robin expressed her feelings about her colleagues excluding her from the curriculum development process (Chapter 5). Some Black women believed a Black woman’s perspective would differ from that of a White woman and would promote the incorporation of students of various backgrounds into the curricula and curriculum guides. Many curriculum development teams silence Black women’s voices. Donna expressed frustration with working on her school’s curriculum development team. She claimed:

I think that our lesson plans and materials we create are primarily created for middle to upper-income class White students. Many times, I talked about ways to be more inclusive, and … not being heard. (personal communication, December 6, 2018)

The Black women in the study expressed their beliefs and attitudes using primarily White, Eurocentric male artist-themed teaching resources in their curricula.

The data showed Black women K–12 art educators are navigating a white environment that does not always see them as equals. Opportunities to serve on curriculum development committees may seem equitable; however, the presence of a token Black woman on a committee does not constitute fairness.
Theme 2: Identification of Teaching Resources

The majority of the Black women chose their teaching resources based on their own research. The major art education book publishers the Black women used were Davis, Glencoe, and Scott Foresman. I was under the impression that textbooks were the primary resource used in the classroom. I found I was one of the few art educators in the study who used textbooks. Rarely did the participants use textbooks.

The participants gave a variety of reasons for the lack of textbook use: funding, non-English-speaking students, poor reading levels, and outdated books. However, the data indicates that the main reason the participants did not use textbooks was that textbooks perpetuate the dominant narrative of White, Eurocentric male artists, which did not represent many of the students in the participants’ classrooms. When the participants used the textbooks, the textbooks primarily served as a guide to techniques and definitions. Dana asserted:

I'm not so interested in going through the textbooks because I feel that it has a very slanted view of what art might be, and I think because I teach from the point of view of an artist. (personal communication, November 25, 2018)

Teaching resources varied based on students’ grade level and demographics. Even though many of the school districts provided technology, the participants did not have any specific structure for locating Black women artists to include in their curricula.
Theme 3: Underrepresentation of Black Women Artists

The Black women unanimously stated there is an underrepresentation of Black women artists in K–12 teaching resources. There are many examples in art education textbooks and teaching resources of the unequal representation of artists. Scholars have stated that Black women are missing in art education (Kee & Grant, 2013; Whitehead, 2008). The racial and gender biases can influence students’ perceptions of Black artists. According to Wilson (2017),

I realized that they could not conceive that Black people could be artists. I suspected that being underexposed to Black artists, who display a rich legacy of art making was one of the multiple factors contributing to their unawareness.

(p. 52)

Despite the wealth of knowledge about Black women artists, identifying information on the artists is difficult unless a person searches for a particular Black woman artist on the Internet.

Dana said the representation of Black women artists is improving; however, underrepresentation is still a significant problem for art education. The data also illustrated when Black women art educators sought out Black women artists, the results were limited. The choices available often led the educators to the same Black women artists. I did not identify why the same Black women artists continually appear in teaching resources; however, the narratives from the Black women suggest tokenism in art education. In looking at the K–12 teaching resources, one could assume representing one or two Black women artists is necessary to avoid charges of exclusion.
Theme 4: Incorporation of Black Women Artists into the Curricula

The Black women K–12 art educators provided firsthand accounts of the difficulty of locating and incorporating Black women artists into their curricula. Most of the Black women described how their pre-service art education programs lacked information about Black women artists. The limited representation of Black women artists did not prevent several of the women from looking beyond the token Black women artists. Often the participants who were artists themselves used their own artwork as examples of art by Black women. Whitney explained, “[T]here are certain artists I always chose, and I make sure to include myself in it so the student will know that they are not just working with a teacher but with a live artist” (personal communication, November 24, 2018). Art educators and artists Felicia, Helen, and Dana incorporated the work of Black women artists whom they knew personally into their curricula. Incorporating peers’ work helped Felicia, Helen, and Dana challenge tokenism, as their students visited the artists’ studios and the artists came to their classes as guest speakers.

Recognizing the significance of Black women artists, some of the participants created lesson plans around these artists and located a few teaching resources online. The study shows the broader availability of the work of White artists and even Black male artists compared to the work of Black women artists. Courtney explained her reason for selecting Black male artists over Black female artists. Courtney expressed:
We have more male Black artists than females. I cover them more than I do female artists. With technology, you can get more information, but I don't know, we tend to go to the Black male artists than Black female artists. Maybe there is more information on the Black male artists than the female artists. It's kind of, don't get me wrong, it's gotten a lot better, but when you go back and look at it in history, and you start pulling those Black male artists, it does have a lot more information. (personal communication, December 2, 2018)

The four emergent themes and subthemes observed in the data highlight the collective voice of the 21 Black women K–12 educators who wished to share their curricular experiences. The participants spoke about curriculum development, White-themed teaching resources, and the difficulty of seeking out and incorporating Black women artists into their curricula. The participants recognized the White, Eurocentric male artist-themed K–12 teaching resources. The four themes expose several patterns of racism and sexism and demonstrate the need for the field of art education to hear and listen to the voices of Black women K–12 art educators.

**Implications of the Study**

This study discussed the racial and gender barriers many Black women experience in the field of art education as they develop their curricula. The participants’ stories confirm the need for greater inclusion and diversity in teaching resources and of Black women artists in the classroom. Diverse teaching resources that include Black women artists enhance student learning. Scholars have stated that
children of color often do not know Black people are artists (Hunter-Doniger, 2018; Wilson, 2017). Conducting this study helped me to share the 21 Black women K–12 art educators’ narratives about their curricular experiences and teaching strategies in an environment that does not always treat them as equals. This study also helped me to understand I am not the only one. I am not the only Black woman art educator questioning the available teaching resources and the lack of Black women artists represented in these resources.

All students and educators, and particularly Black women and non-White women K–12 art educators, the underprivileged educators who teach in the United States, can benefit from this study. By highlighting the experiences of Black women K–12 art educators, this study helps curriculum developers, administrators, and art educators address the inequality of teaching resources and leadership positions. Black women art educators’ recognition of their positionality influences the choices they make in their curricula.

While there may be additional ways, I emphasize five ways in which the field of art education can utilize the data provided by this study. First, for administrators, supervisors, and curriculum developers, this study provides insight into decision-making processes related to curriculum development and reveals how to integrate Black women into curricula in real and sustained rather than token ways. This research also exposes the need for the recruitment and retention of Black women for art education jobs and curriculum development positions. More Black women in the field of art education would broaden the field’s overarching perspective of race and gender.
Robin explained how the Black women art educators in her school district were either retiring or leaving. The new hires are young White teachers.

Second, pre-service art education programs can benefit from the study by fostering a supportive environment for Black women. The research shows that such programs rarely consider the needs of many Black women pursuing art education in developing their curricula. By disseminating knowledge of Black women artists, pre-service educational institutions can acknowledge the diversity of students and contribute to a new pedagogical understanding of race and gender.

Art education organizations are the third entity that can utilize the findings in the study. By providing effective, state level professional development training that explicitly includes Black women artists, art education organizations can help Black women to incorporate these artists into their curricula. There is a need to promote a better understanding of cultural diversity and work against the bias and misrepresentation seen among teachers and students and in teaching resources. State-level art education organizations would benefit from creating an equity, diversity, and inclusion task force that provides space for underrepresented and marginalized groups. Such a task force at the state level could encourage Black women and non-White art educators to participate in leadership positions and opportunities.

The National Art Education Association (NAEA) established an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission (ED&I) in 2019. The participants’ gender and racial concerns in this study align with the ED&I task force initiative for students and educators who are often marginalized. The ED&I made 16 recommendations for an inclusive and equitable professional art education environment. The 10 recommended
strategies for incorporating Black women into the field of art education provided in Chapter 5 overlap with many of the ED&I’s recommendations of diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, the ED&I’s 14th recommendation is to recruit underrepresented individuals into the field of art education: “Members of color need to have someone who looks like them in the administration. If most of the NAEA membership consists of white women, then role models for color are lacking” (Knight, 2019, p. 8). Lawton expressed her excitement when her university hired another Black art educator, saying, “I have always been the only art educator of color, any color, at my past institution, having Gloria join us made me feel like VCU was truly keeping their promise to hire more faculty of color and be more inclusive” (Wilson & Lawton, 2019, p. 83). The data shows White women outnumber Black women educators, creating an unequal balance of positions and privileges in art education.

The fourth benefit of this research is that the research addresses the gap in the existing literature of Black women’s experiences in art education. Black women art educators’ perspectives of teaching art in the K–12 sector are vital to understanding how race affects curricular decisions and teaching practice. The Black women art educators in this study had different perceptions of teaching resources, the incorporation of Black women artists, curriculum development, and support. More literature recognizing and acknowledging these differences would be advantageous. Collins (2000) explains, “Just as each individual African-American woman has a unique biography that reflects her experiences within intersecting oppressions, the experiences of U.S. Black women as a collectivity reflect a similar process” (p. 246). The 21 participants’ stories provided specific, clear, and plentiful examples of how
race and gender intersect in their curricular decisions. The narratives from the study confirm the need for more research on racial equality and equity in teaching resources.

Lastly, book publishers, editors, and K–12 art education teaching resource providers could take heed of the participants’ concerns about teaching resources that do not represent their student populations. In Chapter 5, I highlighted how Crystal Productions offers only one Black woman artist’s work in poster format. I also brought attention to the underrepresentation of Black women artists in teaching resources. Davis Publications, established in 1901, believes in quality art education for all students. The publisher has an inclusivity and diversity commitment statement on its website; however, the majority of the authors and the artists Davis publishes are White.

This study, however, explicitly addresses the curricular experiences of 21 Black women K–12 art educators. I found that many of the participants did not know where to find Black women artists to add to their curricula. The study reveals the need for the field of art education to listen and act upon the recommendations listed above to assist Black women in developing professional preparedness and participating in leadership positions, as well as to aid curriculum developers, including Black women, in creating diverse teaching resources.

**Concluding Thoughts: We Are Still Outsiders**

The Black women K–12 art educators in this study voiced their experiences navigating a white field. Black women cannot separate the duality of their race and gender, thereby offering a different perspective of inequality and oppression than the hegemonic white view. I intentionally chose Black women K–12 art educators in the United States as they are licensed professional art educators teaching within educational institutions, however they are outsiders in the decision-making processes in the field at large. By sharing the narratives of Black women art educators teaching in the K–12 sector, I give agency and power to their voices.

I instantly noticed the majority of the women were enthusiastic about sharing their stories, although some were concerned about possible backlash. One woman in the study stated that she was the only Black female artist in her town and wanted total anonymity. I noticed the hesitation of one of the women whose comments seemed carefully rehearsed. She admitted to talking to a colleague about the interview questions. I also noticed the newer teachers’ had support systems of former teachers,
mentors, and directors from their school districts. The veteran teachers were more vocal and confident during the study.

The study established how racial and gender concerns impact Black women’s self-esteem and self-worth. Regardless of their success, Black women still must prove their worth: as Clark (2006) argues, “Unfortunately, a high-achieving woman of color must often work tirelessly to prove she is educated, articulate, and well spoken, and she often counteracts negative images through an equally disturbing means of silence” (p. 18). The desire to become a recognized and valued insider has left many Black women trying to shift between two worlds, which may ultimately affect their mental health. According to Lewis et al. (2013), “Scholars have long theorized that racism and sexism have a deleterious influence on the psychological and physical health of people of color and women” (p.52). Not all the participants used these specific terms; however, their narratives clearly indicated dissatisfaction with racism within the field of art education. Wendy seemed stressed when she revealed her feelings of isolation and racism. Wendy said:

If I was a white female and walked in, I could have it. I can also say that because . . . I'm kind of isolated because I'm the only one and I am kind of isolated from everybody else. I'm not part of any group. I have no invitations to anything that the rest of the teachers are invited to except to . . . I'm always excluded there's no Christmas presents for me. I'm just excluded, but everybody else knows my name because I'm the only one you see, so yes, the gender and the race gets me a lot of backlash. I'm hoping this year is a little bit better after I say it. (personal communication, December 8, 2018)
Conducting the study helped me to identify my challenges and experiences to understand, as a Black woman art educator. While conducting this research, I was at times upset, remembering painful experiences. I realized many of the women in the study had experienced some racial or gender issues with administrators, students, colleagues, and parents.

The study does not illustrate the experiences and thoughts of all Black women art educators teaching in K–12 environments. Although the study focused only on 21 women and me, our experiences reveal the limited availability of Black women’s perspectives in the field of art education. An outsider-within positionality framework helped in gathering the narratives of the Black women K–12 art educators about their curricular experiences. American Civil Rights theorist Lani Guinier (1997) describes the position of a Black woman, performing as an insider yet functioning as an outsider, saying, “In our insider roles, we are still outsiders” (p. 75). The majority of Black women K–12 art educators are unprivileged insiders during day-to-day school activities, but they are outsiders to the curricular decisions because of their race and gender.

The stories of the Black women K–12 art educators in this study suggests that a platform for demanding inclusion and sharing experiences is necessary. Greater visibility may empower Black women and Black girls as they navigate the current realities of white supremacy in the K–12 art education field. In other words, Black women art educators need a space to voice their viewpoints. Nayak (2015) calls these kinds of spaces “Black-women-only spaces” (p. 53). This space for Black women art
educators is essential to address institutional racism in art education is a different form of oppression for White women and Black men.

As I come to the end of this study, I am aware that this is just the beginning of my research. I am aware that the information I have gathered is very powerful, and I now have to take action. I knew how personal this study was for me, but I realize that it was also personal for the participants. The Black women in this study have shared with me how they are now more conscious of including Black women artists in their curricula.

The data I collected is a launching point for future research. My goal as a Black woman art educator is to continue using the data from the participants’ interviews in presentations, panel discussions, journals, and books. In my scholarship, I will address the need for diverse K–12 teaching resources and the improved representation of Black women artists. I plan to delve deeper into the demographics of Black women K–12 art educators in the United States based on my findings, I will give presentations on recognizing Black women in art education and incorporating Black women artists into curricula. Future presentations will include Black feminism and the outsider-within positionality framework in art education, the racial and gender narratives of the participants, and the themes of my research. Some of these presentations will include audience participation. For example, I might ask, “How many Black women artists can you name?” and then engage the audience in a dialogue about how many Black women artists they can name and which ones in order to highlight the influence of White male-dominated artists in teaching resources and issues of tokenism.
I also will consider other marginalized groups such as Latinas, Africans, Asians, and other non-White women K–12 art educators and artists. I am interested in other women of color who face racial and gender oppression similar to that of Black women in art education. I look forward to hearing their stories of how they navigate a white field. What are the curricular experiences of women-of-color K–12 art educators? I also plan to create art education teaching resources for the K–12 sector that specifically highlight artists of color. I intend to advocate for Black women artists and other non-White women artists. In this study, I focused on Black women artists; however, I am keenly aware of the underrepresentation of Black men artists and non-White men artists in K–12 teaching resources. I plan to include non-White men artists in the some of the teaching resources I create.

The collective voice of the Black women featured in this study may inspire and empower other Black women K–12 art educators to come forth and relay their curricular experiences. There remains much to learn from the stories of being Black and being a woman that goes beyond writing a curriculum and seeking teaching resources.
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Table 1. Total number of public school teachers and percentage distribution of public school teachers, by race/ethnicity and selected school characteristics: 2015–16

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<th>Selected school characteristic</th>
<th>Total number of teachers</th>
<th>Hispanic, regardless of race</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1,097,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 100</td>
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<td>83.4</td>
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<td>1,000 or more</td>
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<td>75 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>School did not participate in free or reduced-price lunch program</td>
<td>957,100</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>77.5</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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Percent of K-12 students who were approved for free or reduced-price lunches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student enrollment</th>
<th>6–34</th>
<th>35–49</th>
<th>50–74</th>
<th>75 or more</th>
<th>School did not participate in free or reduced-price lunch program</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6–34</td>
<td>1,254,800</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>88.4</td>
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<td>35–49</td>
<td>546,700</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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</tr>
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<td>50–74</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
<td>80.7</td>
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<td>75 or more</td>
<td>1,081,200</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>School did not participate in free or reduced-price lunch program</td>
<td>124,900</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 percent and 50 percent (i.e., the standard error is at least 30 percent and less than 50 percent of the estimate).

Reporting standards not met. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is 50 percent or greater (i.e., the standard error is 50 percent or more of the estimate) or the response rate is below 50 percent.

NOTE: Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Teachers include both full-time and part-time teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and because some data are not shown.

Table 2. Average and median age of public school teachers and percentage distribution of teachers by age category, sex, and selected school characteristics: 2015–16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected school characteristic</th>
<th>Average age of teachers</th>
<th>Median age of teachers</th>
<th>Less than 30 years</th>
<th>30-49 years</th>
<th>50-54 years</th>
<th>55 years or more</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<td>All public schools</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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<td>17.5</td>
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<td>Traditional public</td>
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<td>41.7</td>
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<td>17.9</td>
<td>23.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>‡</td>
<td>‡</td>
<td>‡</td>
<td>‡</td>
<td>‡</td>
<td>‡</td>
<td>‡</td>
<td>‡</td>
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<td>Suburban</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>41.4</td>
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<td>11.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<td>76.1</td>
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<td>16.6</td>
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<td>11.3</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>72.5</td>
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<td>13.1</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>58.9</td>
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<td>Combined</td>
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<td>17.7</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>29.9</td>
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<td>10.2</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>32.4</td>
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<td>23.8</td>
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<td>11.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>82.2</td>
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<td>57.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>11.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>77.5</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>64.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of K–12 students who were approved for free or reduced-price lunches</td>
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<td>13.9</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
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<td>11.7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
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<td>75 or more</td>
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<td>41.0</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
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<td>14.1</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

‡ Reporting standards not met. The response rate is below 50 percent.
NOTE: Teachers include both full-time and part-time teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
Table 1. Total number and percentage of elementary and secondary teachers, by teacher characteristics: 1987–88 and 2011–12

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of teachers</td>
<td>Percent of teachers</td>
<td>Number of teachers</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<td>751,800</td>
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<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
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<td>Hispanic, regardless of race</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>287,800</td>
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<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>247,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.9</td>
<td>75,500</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Less than 30</td>
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<td>0–5 years</td>
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<td>Social science</td>
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<td>239,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>English/language arts</td>
<td>169,800</td>
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<td>436,800</td>
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<td>Foreign language</td>
<td>56,900</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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¹ The 1987–88 SASS did not include measures of the teaching fields of drama and dance, nor did it include a teacher race/ethnicity measure for those of Two or more races. Hence, these categories are left blank in the 1987–88 columns.

NOTE: Due to rounding, frequencies may not sum to totals.

academic fields—English/language arts, mathematics, social science, and science—each also gained substantial numbers of minority members (math: T = 178, p < .001; ELA: T = 233, p < .001; social science: T = 128, p < .001; science: T = 107, p < .001). In contrast, the main fields of general elementary (T = 233, p < .001), vocational-technical (T = 357, p < .001), and art/music (T = 775, p < .001) each had below-average growth.

Table 5. Total number and percentage of minority teachers, by teacher characteristics: 1987–88 and 2011–12

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of minority teachers</td>
<td>Percent minority teachers</td>
<td>Number of minority teachers</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>247,700</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>499,600</td>
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<tr>
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— Not available.

† Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

¹ The 1987–88 SASS did not include measures of the teaching fields of drama and dance; hence, this category is left blank in the 1987–88 columns.

NOTE: Due to rounding, frequencies may not sum to totals. Minority refers to all those who are not White, non-Hispanic. It includes: Hispanics or Latinos, regardless of race; Blacks or African Americans, non-Hispanic; Asians or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, non-Hispanic; American Indians/Alaska Natives, non-Hispanic; and those of Two or more races, non-Hispanic.

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<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Two or more races, non-Hispanic</th>
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# Rounds to zero.

† Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 percent and 50 percent (i.e., the standard error is at least 30 percent and less than 50 percent of the estimate).

‡ Reporting standards not met. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is 50 percent or greater (i.e., the standard error is 50 percent or more of the estimate) or the response rate is below 50 percent.

NOTE: Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Teachers include both full-time and part-time teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and because some data are not shown.

## Pennsylvania Teacher Gender and Race Chart: PA Public School Arts Teachers

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</thead>
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<td>AI: American Indian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H: Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M: Multi-racial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NH: Native Hawaiian</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W: White</td>
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Pennsylvania Teacher Gender and Race Chart: PA Charter, Career Technical Center, and Intermediate Units Arts Teachers

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</tr>
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</table>
Appendix B

Institutional Review Board Approved Materials

Recruitment Script

Recruitment of Research Participants
The Pennsylvania State University

My name is Indira Bailey. I am conducting research as a part of an Art Education and Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies dual-titled doctoral degree program. The research aims to examine Black women art educators’ curricular experiences in K-12 schools.

I am seeking current K-12 women art educators who identify as African-American, Black, and/or of African descent, who were born in the United States, or, have lived for five years or more in the United States. I would like to include participants from elementary, middle, and high school in public or private schools throughout the United States. All participants must be willing to be interviewed for about 60 minutes. The interviews will be audiotaped or videotaped then transcribed.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any stage or avoid answering questions, which you feel are too personal or intrusive. Time and place for interviews will be arranged that are convenient to you. No findings that could identify any individual participants will be published, and your privacy will be protected at all stages of the research.

If you are interested in participating, please send an email to ivb5106@psu.edu confirming that you would like to take part in the research.

Best Regards,
Indira Bailey
Letter Provided to Interviewee’s Prior to Interviews

Letter of Invitation

Dear Art Educator,

My name is Indira Bailey. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Art Education and Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality dual-titled doctoral degree program at The Pennsylvania State University. I would like to extend an invitation to you to be a part of my doctoral research study. Through interviews, I will investigate K-12 Black women art educators’ curricular experiences. Pseudonyms will be used to keep all information confidential.

The interview questions are:

**Question 1:** What is your curriculum?

**Question 2:** What artists, if any, do you include in your curriculum? Why?

**Question 3:** What are your experiences concerning developing and implementing curriculum?

In the next few days, I will contact you by phone. I would like to talk with you about the invitation and answer any questions you may have. Those participants selected will need to verbally consent on the audiotape prior to before the interview officially starts.

Best regards,
Indira Bailey
ivb5106@psu.edu
[phone]
### Appendix C

#### Lesson Plans of Black Women Artists

**Kara Walker**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: Art</th>
<th>Grade level 6-8th</th>
<th>Week of:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEARNING STANDARDS</strong></td>
<td>26.B.3d Visual Arts: Demonstrate knowledge and skills to create 2- and 3-dimensional works and time arts (e.g., film, animation, video) that are realistic, abstract, functional and decorative.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Mon: Students will explore concepts of narrative art and contrast in silhouette artwork by looking at the work of artist Kara Walker. Then they will start to create a silhouette piece of their own by using silhouette templates, black construction paper, pencil, and crayon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Tue: Student will continue to work on their silhouette pieces throughout the class period.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Wed: Students will explore concepts of narrative art and contrast in silhouette artwork by looking at the work of artist Kara Walker. Then they will start to create a silhouette piece of their own by using silhouette templates, black construction paper, pencil, and crayon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Thur: Student will continue to work on their silhouette pieces throughout the class period.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Fri: Students will explore concepts of narrative art and contrast in silhouette artwork by looking at the work of artist Kara Walker. Then they will start to create a silhouette piece of their own by using silhouette templates, black construction paper, pencil, and crayon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method of Evaluation</td>
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<td>Teacher Obs.</td>
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<td>Portfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td>Homework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project/ Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Procedures/Activities (include guided practice, independent practice, differentiation by class/periods, presentation, etc) | Mon: Teacher will: Show students the work of artist Kara Walker Pose questions: What is a silhouette? What kind of story do you think Walker is trying to tell through her images? Why do you think she chose to create her artwork using silhouettes? Students will: Come up with answers to the posed questions in small groups Contribute their answers to the whole class |  |
| Teacher will: Show examples of more silhouettes Demonstrate and explain how students can create their silhouette artwork Students will: Choose the silhouette templates that they want to use for their artwork (between 6-7 silhouettes) The silhouettes they choose should work together to tell a story |
Trace their silhouettes onto the black construction paper
Cut the silhouettes out from the black construction paper
Position the silhouettes onto the drawing paper to create the desired composition
Glue the silhouettes onto the paper according to the composition you have created

Teacher will:
Encourage students to create their own silhouettes by drawing images onto the paper without using a template

**Tues:**
Students will:
Continue to work on their first silhouette artwork by using the templates and creating their own silhouettes

Students will:
Work on the small silhouette assignment

**Wed:**
Teacher will:
Show students the work of artist Kara Walker
Pose questions:
What is a silhouette?
What kind of story do you think Walker is trying to tell through her images?
Why do you think she chose to create her artwork using silhouettes?

Students will:
Come up with answers to the posed questions in small groups
Contribute their answers to the whole class

Teacher will:
Demonstrate and explain how students can create their silhouette artwork

Students will:
Choose the silhouette templates that they want to use for their artwork (between 6-7 silhouettes)
Trace their silhouettes onto the black construction paper
Cut the silhouettes out from the black construction paper
Position the silhouettes onto the drawing paper to create the desired composition
Glue the silhouettes onto the paper according to the composition you have created

Teacher will:
Encourage students to create their own silhouettes by drawing images onto the paper without using a template

**Thur:**
Teacher will:
Review the silhouette project

Teacher will:
Introduce small assignment

Students will:
Design their own silhouette on white drawing paper
This will be a single or small group silhouette, yet large enough to fill the space of a 9x12 sheet of paper
The silhouette can take on the form of an object, profile of a person's face,
### Assessment Criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Teacher observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Teacher observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Teacher observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Teacher observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Teacher observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Materials/Supplies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Silhouette PPT with Kara Walker and other images, Silhouette templates (10-15 for each table), Black construction paper, white drawing paper, pencils, scissors, glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Silhouette PPT with Kara Walker and other images, Silhouette templates (10-15 for each table), Black construction paper, white drawing paper, pencils, scissors, glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Silhouette PPT with Kara Walker and other images, Silhouette templates (10-15 for each table), Black construction paper, white drawing paper, pencils, scissors, glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Silhouette PPT with Kara Walker and other images, Silhouette templates (10-15 for each table), Black construction paper, white drawing paper, pencils, scissors, glue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Silhouette PPT with Kara Walker and other images, Silhouette templates (10-15 for each table), Black construction paper, white drawing paper, pencils, scissors, glue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selma Burke

The Ten Cent Piece – Selma Burke’s Contribution as an Artist

The Roosevelt dime is the current dime, or ten-cent piece, of the United States. Has been made the same way by the United States Mint since 1946 and it displays President Franklin D. Roosevelt after his death in 1945.

President Roosevelt had been stricken with polio, and was one of the moving forces of the March of Dimes. Roosevelt having suffered from polio since 1921, helped to found and support the March of Dimes to fight that crippling disease. After his death the ten-cent coin was changed by the United States Mint as officials moved quickly to replace the Mercury dime to honor a president popular for his war leadership. The Chief Engraver John R. Sinnock prepared models for the dime, but faced repeated criticism from the Commission of Fine Arts. He modified his design in response, and the coin went into circulation in January 1946.

Since its introduction, the Roosevelt dime has been struck continuously in large numbers. The Mint transitioned from striking the coin in silver to base metal in 1965, and the design remains essentially unaltered from when Sinnock created it. Without rare dates or silver content, the dime is less widely sought by coin collectors than other modern U.S. coins.

Controversy

Since the time of design many people can see the similarities between the dime and a plaque depicting President Roosevelt sculpted by the African-American sculptor Selma Burke, unveiled in September 1945, which is in the Recorder of Deeds Building in Washington. Selma Burke was among those alleging her work was used by Sinnock to create the dime. She advocated for her position until her death in 1994, and managed to persuade a number of numismatists and politicians, including Roosevelt's own son James of that her work had been copied and she was denied the credit.

Numismatists who support her point to the fact that Sinnock took his illustration of the Liberty Bell from the 1926 Sesquicentennial half dollar and Franklin half dollar from another designer without giving credit. The history writer Robert R. Van Ryzin claimed in his book on mysteries about U.S. coins, that Sinnock had sketched Roosevelt from life for his first presidential medal which Sinnock did design and there are photographs of the president made to prepare the dime. Van Ryzin did admit however, that with the passage of time that it is impossible to verify or rule out Selma Burke's claims.

Terms

Polio: Polio is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease. There is no cure, but there are safe and effective vaccines. Thanks to effective vaccine, the United States has been polio-free since 1979. But poliovirus is still a threat in some countries.

Mercury dime: It was a ten-cent coin struck by the United States Mint from 1916 to 1945. The correct term is the Winged Liberty Head dime that showed image of a young Liberty, wearing her winged Phrygian cap, but always was confused with the Roman god Mercury

Dime had been struck: Striking a coin refers to pressing an image into the blank metal disc, from the days when they were struck with hammers to form the metal into the image desired.

Numismatists: It is the study or collection of currency, including coins, tokens, paper money, and related objects.

Sesquicentennial: It relates to the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of a significant event.
The Ten Cent Piece – Selma Burke’s Contribution as an Artist

Please read and then answer with complete sentences.

1. Who is the current image we see on the United States dime?
________________________________________________________________________

2. What was on the dime before the current one we see today?
________________________________________________________________________

3. What does it mean to “strike a dime” or any coin?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. What is a Numismatist?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. Who was Selma Burke?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. What did Selma Burke claim had happened to her and her work?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Alma Woodsey Thomas

**Goal:** Students will create a color field painting in the style of Alma Thomas.

**Standards:** Art history, aesthetics, criticism and production.

1. Read and discuss the biography presented via hand out or screen projection.
2. Observe the art of Almas Thomas and discuss the imagery of *Iris, Tulips, Jonquils, and Crocuses* (1964). Ask students for descriptions and note comments on the board.
3. Explain to students that they will learn how abstract images come from reality-based observations.
4. The teacher will demo, classroom realistic sketch, second sketch outline of shapes and then the technique of color in the manner of Alma Thomas for the final work.
5. Student independent work for first class: Students will sketch the art class room [may include work on the walls, art supplies, classmates etc.]
6. Students will set aside what they have drawn as step one.
7. Student independent work for the second class: Students will using the sketches they made the classroom but will use colored pencils/crayons/oil pastels to create the work. Students are limited to only seeing basic shapes of square, rectangle, triangle etc.
8. Class conversations should focus upon the breakdown of shapes to the bare essentials of color, --- absolutely no shape or form or line. The class will remove all clear elements of shape and allow solely for columns and rows of color.

Rubric for the assignment is as follows: 25% initial sketch 25% name and class id 25% breakdown of color technique in the style of Alma Thomas 25% unity of the completed work.

**Materials**

Paper  Pencils  Erasers  Color pencils  Oil pastels

Images of the work by Alma Thomas  Student examples  Teacher made example
Alma Woodsey Thomas

Alma Woodsey Thomas was born in September 22, 1891 and died on February 24, 1978. She was an African-American Expressionist painter and art educator. She lived and worked primarily in Washington, D.C. and has been described as a force in the Washington Color School.

Born the eldest of four children in Columbus, Georgia, Alma’s parents were John Harris Thomas, a businessman, and Amelia Cantey Thomas, a dress designer. Alma and her family moved in 1906 to the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The family moved to due to racial violence in Georgia and her parents felt that the public school system in Washington D.C. would be better.

As a child Alma showed her artistic interest by making puppets and sculptures at home. Thomas took her first art classes at Armstrong Technical High School where she graduated in 1911. Alma then studied kindergarten education at Miner Normal School and graduated in 1913. She first worked as a substitute teacher in Washington D.C. until 1914 when she got a permanent teaching position.

Alma Thomas entered Howard University in 1921 as a home economics student but switched to become a major after studying under art department. It was in 1924; Alma Thomas earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Fine Arts and was the first woman ever to graduate from Howard University’s fine arts program. That same year Thomas began teaching at Shaw Junior High School, where she taught until her retirement in 1960.

While at Shaw Junior High, she started a community arts program that encouraged student appreciation of fine art. The program supported marionette performances and the distribution of student designed holiday cards which were given to soldiers at the Tuskegee Veterans Administration Medical Center. In 1934 she earned her Master’s degree in Art Education from Columbia University. She retired in 1960 from teaching and dedicated herself to painting. During her retirement in 1963 she participated in the famous March on Washington D.C for civil rights. Alma Thomas died, living in the same house that her family moved into upon their arrival in Washington in 1906, on February 28, 1978.

Alma Thomas’ early work was representational in manner. After taking classes at Howard University her work became more abstract. Thomas would not be recognized as a professional artist until her retirement from teaching in 1960, when she enrolled in classes at American University. Once she learned about the Color Field movement and theory she became interested in the use of color and composition. Within twelve years after her first class at American University she began creating her own Color Field paintings, inspired by the work of the New York School and Abstract Expressionism. Alma often worked out of the kitchen in her house, creating works like Watusi (Hard Edge) and The Snail.

Alma Thomas would drive into the countryside to seek inspiration, pulling ideas from the effects of light and atmosphere on rural environments to create her work. Alma Thomas’ first retrospective exhibit was in 1966 at the Gallery of Art at Howard University, where she created Earth Paintings, a series of nature inspired abstract works, including Wind and Crepe Myrtle Concerto, which is a minimalist Color-Field painting. Alma’s paintings have been compared to Byzantine mosaics and the pointillist paintings of Georges-Pierre Seurat. Thomas was, in 1972, the
first African-American woman to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and within the same year an exhibition was also held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

In 2009 two paintings, including *Watusi (Hard Edge)*, by Alma Thomas were chosen by First Lady Michelle Obama, White House interior designer Michael Smith and White House curator William Allman to be exhibited during the Obama presidency. *Watusi (Hard Edge)* was eventually removed from the White House due to concerns with the piece fitting into the space in Michelle Obama's East Wing office. *Sky Light*, on loan from the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, hangs in the Obama family private quarters. Thomas' papers were donated in several periods between 1979 and 2004 to the Archives of American Art by J. Maurice Thomas, Alma Thomas' sister.[5]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS/PREP</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardboard, Matte Board, Paint, Pencil, Markers, Colored pencil, Ink</td>
<td>Betye Saar- What is Collage</td>
<td>Elements of design- pattern</td>
<td>6-8th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS ADDRESSED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5.5A, 5B Standard 1.1A standard 7 2B Standard 8B Standard 6A,B</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO IT NOW (bellwork)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce vocabulary 1)Overlap 2) Collage 3) Pattern 4) Mixed media 5) Assemblage- students will define these terms in their own language in groups at thei tables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAILY LEARNING OBJECTIVE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To explore collage and the work of Artist Betye Saar.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Today I will learn:**
Students will create two column notes. Observe and relate- What do you see? What was the artist thinking? What was she feeling? Student will look at work from Betye Saar “Woman with Bird in Her Hair”

**I know I have learned this when:**
When I can make a preliminary sketch of an idea similar to our class discussion about Betye’s work. Students will use their ideas to create a collage in the style of Betye.

**Why is this important to me:**
It is important to learn about other cultures and styles of art. It is a part of learning about the elements of design which has been a part of each lesson this year.
SUMMARY OF TASKS

The lesson starts with prior knowledge then students receive a sheet and folds the sheet into eight squares. We discuss how lines can show emotions and discuss adjectives. Students are shown examples of what is expected and told how to use color to express mood through tone=values.

The expected time to complete this assignment is two weeks.
Faith Ringgold

Subject: Faith Ringgold

Art Focus: Pattern  Balance  Fabric Art  Illustrator  Story telling  Variety
Arts Integration: ELA (English Language Arts) & Visual Arts
Vocabulary: Collage Imagination Quilt Illustrate Scene Rich/Vibrant  Balance
Symmetrical Radial Illustrator Variety
I CAN: Explain how quilts tell stories
Identify the style of Faith Ringgold

Standards: National Core Arts Standards Creating: #1, 2, 3 Presenting/Producing:
#4, 5, 6 Responding: #7, 8, 9 Connecting: #10, 11
http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/

NC ELA standard: CCR Anchor Standard RL.2 –Determine central ideas or themes of a
text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Math: measurement of quilt squares
Social Studies: Cultures that utilize quilts to tell stories

Grade Level: 2nd – 4th grade Time Required: 3 45-min. class period

Objective: Students learn about the Contemporary American artist Faith Ringgold, and
create their own story quilt collage inspired by her book, Tar Beach.

Materials: FC Tempera Paint Brushes– medium and small Pencils, scissors and glue
Scraps of decorative paper FC 9x12 Watercolor Paper www.greatartstartshere.com
www.fabercastell.com
Prints of the two pieces of artwork and a copy of *Tar Beach*.

Visual Aides, works by the artist, Faith Ringgold (African-American female)


**Classroom Textbook support:** Scott Foresman Art Copyright 2005 (Red cover- Level 3) Page 30, 154, and 16 posters are included with the textbook set to support the study.

**Tar Beach (Part I from the Woman on a Bridge series)**

**ARTIST**
Faith Ringgold b. 1930, New York

**DATE**
1988

**MEDIUM**
Acrylic on canvas, bordered with printed, painted, quilted, and pieced cloth

**DIMENSIONS**
74 5/8 x 68 1/2 inches (189.5 x 174 cm)

**CREDIT LINE**
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Gift, Mr. and Mrs. Gus and Judith Lieber, 1988

**ACCESSION**
88.3620  [https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3719](https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3719)

Read *Tar Beach* aloud [https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=tar+beach+read+aloud&view=detail&mid=70A64A65078E7C0C326370A64A65078E7C0C3263&FORM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=tar+beach+read+aloud&view=detail&mid=70A64A65078E7C0C326370A64A65078E7C0C3263&FORM=VIRE)

During the late 1960s and the 1970s Faith Ringgold played an instrumental role in the organization of protests and actions against museums that had neglected the work of women and people of color. Her paintings from this period are overtly political, and present an angry, critical reappraisal of the American dream glimpsed through the filter of race and gender
relations. Ringgold’s more recent aesthetic strategy, however, is not one of political agitation or blatant visual provocation. Instead, she has come to embrace the potential for social change by undermining racial and gender stereotypes through impassioned and optimistic presentations of black female heroines.

Ringgold’s vehicle is the story quilt—a traditional American craft associated with women’s communal work that also has roots in African culture. She originally collaborated on the quilt motif with her mother, a dressmaker and fashion designer in Harlem. That Ringgold’s great-great-great-grandmother was a Southern slave who made quilts for plantation owners suggests a further, perhaps deeper, connection between her art and her family history. One of Ringgold’s early efforts, dating from 1982, tells the tale of the stereotyped Aunt Jemima through painted images, sewn fabric, and handwritten texts. The naive, folk-art quality of the quilts is part of Ringgold’s scheme to emphasize narrative over style, to convey information rather than to dazzle with elaborate technique.

*Tar Beach*, the first quilt in Ringgold’s colorful and lighthearted series entitled *Women on a Bridge*, depicts the fantasies of its spirited heroine and narrator Cassie Louise Lightfoot, who, on a summer night in Harlem, flies over the George Washington Bridge. “Sleeping on Tar Beach was magical . . .” explains Cassie in the text on the quilt, “only eight years old and in the third grade and I can fly. That means I am free to go wherever I want to for the rest of my life.” For Ringgold, this phantasmic flight through the urban night sky symbolizes the potential for freedom and self-possession. “My women,” proclaimed Ringgold about the *Women on a Bridge* series, “are actually flying; they are just free, totally. They take their liberation by confronting this huge masculine icon—the bridge.”

If you’d like to use this artwork in your classroom or home, here are some activities, discussion questions, and resources.
Faith Ringgold

ART DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What could this quilt symbolize or represent?
2. Why did the artist invent Willa Marie Simone? Why did she put her among these “superwomen”? How does the artist make Willa Marie different?
3. Why do you think the artist chose to include Van Gogh?
4. What could the sunflowers represent?

https://artclasscurator.com/faith-ringgold/

Quilts tell stories. We see it in the Southern Culture, Black culture, and Lumbee Indian Culture of North Carolina.

https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/how-do-quilts-tell-stories

1. Student discuss Tar Beach and the story within it.
2. Students discuss where they have seen quilts and what they know about quilts.
3. Have students jot down a favorite childhood remember to be illustrated in Faith Ringgold’s style. Share aloud your memories. Begin to plan out your final product.
QUILT PATTERNS

Decorate the patterns with Crayola® Crayons or Markers. Cut out each square. Arrange the squares into your own creative pattern for a quilt. Then glue each square to a piece of thin cardboard, for example, a recycled file folder. Trim the cardboard around the quilt design. Give to a friend, use as a decoration, or doll quilt.

A related resource on Teachers Pay Teachers:
Faith Ringgold-Fiber Artist

Look at the work by Faith Ringgold and think about some symbols that would represent you and your place in your community. What do you enjoy? What are your hobbies and interests?

Draw a symbol to represent yourself and repeat it (see examples). Use excellent craftsmanship and variety in color: CONTRASTING/COMPLEMENTARY COLORS (opposite on the color wheel).

EXAMPLE

PRACTICE HERE
Elizabeth Catlett

LESSON PLAN

Teacher’s Name: ___________________  Date: ______________________

Subject/Grade: ___9-12______  Topical Unit Heading: Lino-cut Printmaking

Unit Heading Number: ____________________________________________________________

For the topic addressed, please check the one that applies:  X Introduction  □ Continuation  □ Reteach/Review

I. Objective:

Demonstrate the relief printmaking by using a linoleum block print process. Understand the use of lines, colors, and textures to communicate ideas, moods, and feelings in your artwork.

II. Materials Needed:

ink, linoleum, gouges, wood block, brayer, bench hook, inking plate, paper, newspaper, gouge holder and rubber cement.

III. References to be used:

Artist Elizabeth Catlett,

https://umfa.utah.edu/sites/default/files/2017-05/9990_AfricanAmericanArtLessonssm.pdf
http://www.anyonecanflyfoundation.org/master-artist-lessonplans/elizabeth-catlett

IV. Preparation (of the learner):

Students will be shown the safety procedure of lino-cut carving. Students will sketch out their ideas on paper. Students will glue down their linoleum onto the wooden block using the rubber cement.
V. Presentation (of skills): Elizabeth Catlett

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations or Steps:</th>
<th>Key Points (things to remember to do or say)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Draw image onto linoleum</td>
<td>Decide which part gets carved out and which part stays solid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use No. 1 liner to cut line image</td>
<td>Select the number gouge you are comfortable with and the area you are carving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Select a gouge and carve out the area designated, use bench hook to secure block</td>
<td>Clean up carving on the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clean off linoleum for any lose chips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Put ink on inking plate and use brayer to spread it out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Put paper on lino-cut and burnish the image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Left of the paper to see the relief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. Application: (practice by learner under close supervision):

Students will carve out image on linoleum block. Students will ink the lino-cut color by color and wash each tine.

VII. Assessment and/or Formal Test: (performance of skill to acceptable standards):

Is the student using proper safety precautions?
Did the student plan and decide which part of the image will be carved to show texture?
Did the student use proper inking techniques?
Students will turn in one relief out of their series for grade.
VII. Reflection & Planning:

Elizabeth Catlett
(April 15, 1915 – April 2, 2012)
Birthplace: Washington, D.C.
• Both her mother and father were the children of freed slaves
• Catlett was the youngest of three children.
• Both of her parents worked in education; her mother was a truant officer and her father taught in Tuskegee University, the then D.C. public school system.

Education
Catlett attended Howard University under African American artist Lois Mailou Jones. She also attended University of Iowa and studied under landscape artist Grant Wood.

Personal Life
Catlett was married to artist Charles White
Catlett remarried to Mexican muralist Francisco Mora, the couple had three sons.

Artist’s Life
Catlett was advised to create the artwork she was familiar with and began sculpting images of women and children. Catlett is known for her sculpting and printmaking. She is known for her depictions of the African-American experience in the 20th century, which often focused on the female experience. Her print work consisted mainly of woodcuts and linocuts, but she also created sculptures from a variety of materials, such as clay, wood (cedar, mahogany, eucalyptus), marble, limestone, onyx, bronze, and Mexican stone.

Activism
Catlett worked in Mexico until 1966, because some of the people she knew were a part of the Communist Party and her own with her activism regarding a railroad strike in Mexico City, she was arrested in 1949. The United States declared an “undesirable alien” and was banned from returning. In 1962, she renounced her American citizenship and became a Mexican citizen. Eventually Catlett regained her citizenship back in 2002.

Printmaking
Catlett’s theme surrounded social injustice, feminism, and racism. She was heavily influenced by the human condition of African Americans and Mexicans fight for equity.
VITA
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Education
Ph.D., Art Education & Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies, The Pennsylvania State University, 2020
M.A., Educational Leadership & Supervision, Kean University, Union, NJ, 2004

Collegiate Teaching Experience
Graduate Teaching Instructor at Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
WMNST 106: Women and Gender in Literature, Art, and Popular Cultures, 2018-2019
AED 225: Diversity, Pedagogy, and Visual Culture, 2018
INART 062, West African and African American Arts: From the 1960’s to the Present 2017-2018
ART 20, Introduction to Drawing, 2020, 2016-2017
ART 122Y, Commentary on Art, 2015-2016

Selected Professional Teaching Experiences

Selected Scholarly Publications

Selected Honors/Distinctions/Grants
• American Association of University Women Dissertation Fellowship (2019-2020)
• Caucus of Social Theory in Art Education Art Teacher Social Theory-in-Practice Award, NA EA (2018)
• Africana Research Center, Research Grant, Penn State University, University Park, PA. (2018)
• National Council for Black Studies, Terry Kershaw Graduate Student Essay Award (2017)
• Clyde M. McGeary Scholarship, Pennsylvania Art Education Association (2016)

Selected Professional Presentations