How Can Teachers of English Achieve Equity in their English Classrooms? A case study on how teachers use intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy in the English classroom to address educational inequalities and facilitate their pupils' differing needs.

Sophia Kapcia, B.A. (English), MA (Education) May 2008

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University, UK

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

The word-length conforms to the permitted maximum.

December 2023

Abstract

An intersectional perspective refers to how different aspects of a person's social, racial, and political identities interact to create discrimination. There has been extensive research on the concept of intersectionality, in terms of how different forms of oppression interact and work together in complex ways to create different outcomes for individuals and groups; however, little is known about what intersectional interventions and strategies work to increase pupil attainment and aspirations in English classrooms. Additionally, there is a lack of empirical data which is necessary to substantiate intersectionality theory when it comes to English classrooms predominantly composed of working-class pupils. Therefore, the findings of this thesis are of interest not only to teachers and schools but also to education policymakers because they build on the small number of qualitative studies exploring the relationship between English and intersectionality and extend this literature by improving our understanding of this relationship.

In this thesis, I explore how teachers use intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy in the English classroom to address educational inequalities and facilitate pupils' differing needs, resulting in a sense of inclusivity and equity for all pupils. This thesis therefore uses intersectionality to irradiate the experiences of Teachers of English in predominantly working-class school contexts, and the impact intersectionality and intersectional pedagogies have on teaching quality for pupils from different genders, races, and social backgrounds. Qualitative interviews with 20 Teachers of English and two focus groups with six teachers each were conducted to investigate this issue, and thematic analysis was applied to analyse the data. Intersectionality theory was used to give voice to the voices of teachers as they navigate the curriculum and the classroom to provide a more equitable education for their pupils. Intersectionality theory also helps teachers to ensure that the invisible voices in their classrooms are heard by ensuring that race and ethnicity, gender, social class, disadvantage, disability and more of these many diverse voices are heard in the English curriculum which then will be reflected in their lesson planning.

As well as knowing their students, having a thorough understanding of their cultural background and being able to engage in sometimes sensitive and difficult conversations with students, the findings show that embedding intersectionality in the English curriculum and English classrooms requires deliberate practice and planning by teachers. This deliberate practice is necessary to create an inclusive learning space that challenges the traditional power structures within the English classroom. Through this practice, teachers can focus on the various identities and experiences of their students to ensure that all voices are heard and valued. In addition, the findings suggest that if intersectionality strategies and interventions they are adopted more widely they can assist teachers and schools in finding common ground and understanding across different educational settings. To address underachievement and educational inequality, classrooms should be more equitable in order to create an environment that fosters a sense of diversity and inclusion so that pupils of all racial, social, and economic backgrounds can succeed. This will directly benefit pupils from working-class backgrounds.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

God is first and foremost responsible for making this dream a reality. My supervisor, Dr Melis Cin, has been an invaluable support throughout this process. Dr Melis Cin has been an incredible mentor, providing me with helpful advice and guidance throughout this journey. I thank her for her patience. In addition, I would like to thank other staff members at Lancaster, particularly Dr Jo Warin and Dr Jan McArthur, for their understanding and support during the programme. The research participants also deserve special thanks for their contributions. Their willingness to participate in this research is appreciated. Furthermore, I am grateful for the patience of my husband, Stefan Kapcia, and my five daughters, Niya Kapcia, Aryanna Kapcia, Zyana Kapcia, Amara Kapcia, and Analise Kapcia, as I went through this arduous, but rewarding process. I am thankful for my family's support, which enabled me to dedicate my time and energy to this thesis. I would also like to thank my parents, Calvin and Victoria Parchment, who started this journey with me by instilling in me the mantra that education means change; as well as my friends and siblings, particularly Dr Linda Enow and my brother Peter Parchment, both of whom I relied on as critical friends. Their unwavering support and encouragement have been a source of motivation and strength for me, and I am truly grateful. I say a big thank you to all these people because, without their support, I would not have reached this pivotal milestone in my academic journey.

Publication derived from work on the Doctoral Programme

Kapcia, S. (2021). A reflection on the Key Stage 4 curriculum reforms in English secondary schools and its impact on students' experiences of education.

Abbreviations

A-level	Advanced Level: A subject-based qualification taken by students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland typically at age 16-18.
BAME	Black and Asian Minority Ethnic
CRT	Critical Race Theory
DfE	Department for Education
ECT	Early Career Teacher
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education: An academic qualification awarded to students generally aged 14-16 in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
Grades 1-9	In the context of grades 1-9, it generally refers to the grading scale used in certain education systems. Each grade represents a level of achievement or proficiency, with 1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest. This grading scale is commonly used in countries like England for subjects such as English, Mathematics, and Science.
ITE/T	Initial Teacher Education/Training
KS1/KS2/KS3/KS4	Divisions of the National Curriculum in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, indicating different stages of compulsory education. Key Stage 1 covers ages 5-7, Key Stage 2 covers ages 7-11, Key Stage 3 covers ages 11-14, and Key Stage 4 covers ages 14-16.
LAC	Looked After Children
NEU	National Education Union
Non-PP	The abbreviations "Non-PP" and "PP" typically refer to pupil premium status, which is a form of additional funding provided to schools in some countries based on the number of students who are eligible for free school meals or who have been looked after continuously for more than six months.
NPQLT framework	National Professional Qualification Leading Teaching framework
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education: A government agency responsible for

	inspecting and regulating schools in England.
PP	Pupil Premium
SAT	Standard Assessment Test: A set of standardized tests taken by students in England usually at the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11) and Key Stage 4 (age 16).
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability: Refers to educational provision and support for students with disabilities, learning difficulties, or other special needs.
TA	Teaching Assistant

Tables

Chapter 1 Introduction

 1.1 Aims, Objectives and Purpose of the Study

The most predominant inequity in the British educational system is the inequality that exists with class, race, and gender (Strand, 2015; Barone and Schizzerotto, 2011). This intersection of class, race, and gender has been studied in the context of educational attainment, and the results of these studies have shown that these social factors can have a significant effect on educational success which creates inequality within education. Subsequently, education continues to be one of the most crucial determining factors of social inequalities across groups. What must be therefore realised and investigated to better understand and tackle the problem of inequality and inequity (DfE, 2015) is an understanding of how social class and race alongside gender is crucial in helping to address the issue of educational inequity in UK schools (Strand, 2010).

This inequality has been addressed by teachers trying to meet the individual needs of each of these factors, without considering how they interconnect and how this impacts student learning (Strand, 2014). As a result, it has proven to be a slow and ineffective process to tackle the problem of inequality in education when achievement and underachievement are framed separately, and as discrete factors based on social class, race, or gender. It also has led to further problems because gender does not autonomously predict attainment, also for some groups, ethnicity appears to be more important when accessing attainment while for some groups it is social class. Accordingly, in education, it is not always possible to analyse the intersection of gender and class without also focussing on the impact of a student's race. Subsequently, educational researchers are challenged to develop a more distinctive account of educational

achievement or underachievement which encapsulates an intersectionality approach. This is important especially in the wake of COVID-19 because during the pandemic, disadvantaged pupils suffered more acute learning losses, which is consistent with other evidence (Donnelly and Patrinos, 2021). Ultimately, this has led to a widening of the disadvantage gap, which highlights the need to invest in education. Tuckett et al. (2022) report a widening GCSE disadvantage gap between disadvantaged pupils in England in 2021 by 0.10 grades (or 8 per cent), with disadvantaged students around 1.34 grades behind their peers on average across GCSE English and maths. In comparison with 2020, when the disadvantage gap remained relatively unchanged, 2021 marked the largest annual increase since 2011. Despite efforts to narrow the gap since 2015, progress has slowed since the pandemic.

This study therefore focusses both on the inequity (the socially unjust differences arising from personal or social circumstances, for example, family background, ethnic origin or gender which act to limit and restrict pupils from achieving their educational potential) and the inequality (unequal distribution and access to educational opportunities or resources due to genetic or other factors) that exists in British education (David, 2004; Faubert, 2012). It does this by examining how Teachers of English address inequalities in education and how they use their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race and class to respond to their pupils' achievement and success in education. Inequalities in education persist despite the efforts of teachers and policymakers to address them. Teachers of English have a crucial role to play in challenging these inequalities, as they are responsible for helping students develop critical reading, writing, and communication skills that are essential for success in school and beyond (DfE, 2023). Teachers of English and English classes are at the heart of this research because language and literacy skills are fundamental to educational achievement and success (DfE, 2023; Murray, 2020). Teachers of English are therefore uniquely positioned to address issues

of inequality and inequity in the classroom (Enow, 2016) because English is human capital (Murray, 2020). By teaching about diverse perspectives and encouraging critical thinking, Teachers of English can help students to explore different ways of understanding the world and to recognise the potential for bias in their own views. Additionally, Teachers of English can bring attention to the systemic issues that lead to inequality and inequity in educational contexts. Using literature and language, English teachers can provide an inclusive learning environment that empowers students to think critically and engage in meaningful conversations on topics of social justice and equity. However, to effectively address these inequalities, Teachers of English must be aware of the ways in which race, gender, and class intersect to create barriers to achievement for some students. Therefore, I am not simply adding up different kinds of inequality in this thesis, or combining oppressions such as gender, race, and disability, when I discuss intersectionality. The objective of intersectionality in this thesis is to illustrate how disparities are interrelated and create distinct outcomes and experiences.

The research problem being addressed in this study is the relationship between the explicit understanding and practical knowledge of the intersectionality of class, race and gender of Teachers of English and how this affects educational achievement and success (as taken in this study to be representative of GCSE results at the end of Year 11) of their pupils in English lessons. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to examine how Teachers of English address inequalities in education by using their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race, and class to respond to their pupils' achievement and success in education. Specifically, this thesis aims to answer and explore the following research questions:

1. How do Teachers of English understand the intersection of gender, race, and class and its impact on their students' achievement and success in education?

2. To what extent do Teachers of English use intersectional pedagogy to challenge gender, race and class structures in their classes to ensure their pupils' attainment?

3. How can Teachers of English use their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race, and class to implement intersectional strategies to respond to their pupils' achievement and success in English?

By answering these questions, this thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of how Teachers of English can effectively address inequalities in education and promote success for all students, regardless of their background. Following a qualitative research design, I conducted semi-structured interviews and focussed group discussions with Teachers of English, teaching in predominantly inner-city schools and working-class contexts, to address these questions. The collected data was then carefully analysed to draw conclusions that could contribute to improving English teaching in such contexts. The data was then analysed using thematic analysis.

Intersectionality theory constituted the theoretical tool used to inform data collection and interpret the findings. The analysis revealed several insights into how English teaching could be improved in different contexts. These insights were crucial for informing further research and teaching practices, as well as for better understanding the complexity of the issues at hand. This analysis highlighted how intersectionality theory can be used in the classroom to create more inclusive learning environments and increase student engagement. This allowed me to highlight how teachers must contend with a range of intersecting identities, values and contexts that significantly shape their practice. In this context, the theory of intersectionality can be a

useful investigative tool for thinking about and developing effective strategies to achieve equity (Collins and Bilge, 2016). This also allowed the study to concentrate on the issue of underachievement in terms of how Teachers of English use and apply their knowledge and skills of intersectionality in their classrooms to address the inequality and inequity that exists in British education and its impact on pupils' achievement in English classes. As a result of examining the way Teachers of English use and apply their knowledge and skills of intersectionality, this study aims to identify ways in which they can address the challenges of underachievement among students whose social identities serve to marginalise or disadvantage them. Moreover, the study may offer insights into how Teachers of English can make classrooms more inclusive and equitable, which can positively affect student achievement and well-being.

1.2 Background and context

Teachers are the foundation of the education system – there are no great schools without great teachers. At the heart of great teaching and great school leadership is a shared evidence-informed understanding of what works (DfE, 2020, pg 5).

As a starting point, this research topic is close to my heart. As a Teacher of English, I try daily to create a hallmark of a civilised society for my pupils. I am passionate about creating inclusive settings for all students despite their backgrounds and starting points. I have worked as a Teacher of English (specialising in both Language and Literature), for over 20 years, in diversity-rich settings. These settings have been predominantly working-class inner-city schools in areas of high deprivation and whose population consisted of a high proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds because I advocate that English has the potential to

marginalise those with limited resources (Mohanty, 2017), and to perpetuate unequal power relations and I have felt a growing sense of unease in recent years regarding the value of English for such students. This has led me to question whether the profession to which I have dedicated most of my adult life may be doing more harm than good to students who are disenfranchised by the education system because of their race, class or gender as a result, equity within the English classroom is an important concern.

My experience in education was the beginning of my interest in tackling educational inequality not just at the classroom level but also through research. As a Black female Teacher of English, during my teaching experience, I have noticed that many of the materials used in the classroom were heavily Eurocentric and male focussed and did not fully represent the experiences of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, female students or students from different cultures. Additionally, I have noticed that students from different backgrounds, genders and cultures often struggled to connect with the materials presented in the classroom and at times tended to feel like their perspectives were not being taken into account and their cultural experiences were not being respected or valued. This lack of connection with what was happening in their English lessons often led to these students showing signs of disengagement and lack of motivation which further extended to their decreased classroom motivation and engagement. This is the reason why I am passionate about advocating for intersectionality to be practised in the classroom to create a more inclusive and respectful learning environment to encourage all students to engage in the learning process.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that it has been my observation at schools where I have taught, and in the UK in general, that Black and White Working Class boys are the focus of much concern along with the inequity between Pupil Premium (PP), (the additional funding given to schools for those pupils who are known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority) and non-PP pupils (Strand, 2016). This was primarily because these groups of pupils were underperforming academically, compared to their peers, and were more likely to be permanently excluded from school than any other group. The lower attainment of these pupils was attributed to multiple factors, including poverty, socio-economic disadvantage and a lack of access to high-quality education. FSM is a marker of socio-economic status with pupils being measured as disadvantaged if they are acknowledged as being entitled to FSM in the past six years. This is also true if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care. However, the interrelationship between gender and social class means that a substantial number of pupils, both boys and girls, fail in school. As a result, it is imperative to consider not only socio-economic status when looking at pupil outcomes but also to look at the intersecting identity of gender to understand why pupils may be underperforming. The evidence suggests that a more holistic approach towards evaluating student achievement is needed, one that takes into account gender and social class as both key elements in determining success. To effectively address the equity gap, all schools, irrespective of the achievement of their pupils, must make the achievement of their PP and non-PP pupils a focal point (Strand, 2016).

As a Teacher of English, my primary concern lies in the profound impact of a quality education, which unlocks opportunities and paves the way for success among all children, irrespective of

their background, race, or gender because I have realised that English as a subject can be used as a tool for raising achievement (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). Due to this, I argue that it is critical to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education that unlocks opportunity and helps every child reach their potential, regardless of their background. This conviction led me to pursue research in educational inequality and inspired me to read Diane Reay's thought-provoking article, "What would a socially just education system look like? Saving the minnows from the pike" (2012). I then began to focus more critically on how my students' intersectional identities were catered for in the English curriculum and English lessons.   As such, I needed to teach my students the skills and knowledge they needed to reach their full potential. I advocate that all students should have the opportunity to gain access to the resources that will greatly increase their chances of success. This is especially true for students from marginalised communities, who often face systemic obstacles which can make it harder for them to access quality education. By teaching my students the skills and knowledge they need to succeed, I was helping to level the playing field and ensure that everyone had the same opportunity to succeed. This is why I was driven to advocate for my students to have access to the best possible learning environment. I wanted to make sure that my students were given the same opportunity to succeed as any other student, regardless of where they came from, their gender, their race or their socio-economic status.

It was clear that the underlying mechanisms of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy in the English classroom were not being fully employed as well as how Teachers of English developed intersectionality within their classrooms and teaching practice to achieve equity. In the next section, I will explore the various factors influencing this study, the study's importance

and its contribution to the literature, offering insights into a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

1.3 Importance of the Study

The current study is valuable for several reasons. It provides insights into the underlying mechanisms of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy in the English classroom. It also provides insights into the understanding of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy that Teachers of English have and how they utilise intersectionality within their classrooms and teaching practice to achieve equity. This can therefore inform future research and add to the literature on intersectionality in education that already exists. Both teachers and researchers can use this research as a resource to determine what approaches are effective and which are not. Therefore, having this knowledge can help them increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their future research. As a result, they will be able to focus their efforts on the most effective intersectionality strategies that can be used in the classroom to achieve more equitable results. Additionally, it can also be used to develop strategies that can help Teachers of English to better understand and respond to intersectionality within their classrooms.

Finally, the findings may help inform policy decisions regarding the content of the English curriculum that can improve the lives of children and young people from different genders, classes, races and backgrounds. This is important to develop more effective policies and interventions that can address these disparities. This means that in order to create an equitable learning environment, it is important to take into account the various identities of each student and create an education system that takes into account the different experiences and needs that

each student may have. It is important to recognise these differences to create a more equitable learning environment.

As it stands, intersectionality when applied to education and research into education currently appears more of an abstract idea or ambition than a practical inclusive framework which therefore has the potential to seem to be a fuzzy concept or a vague idea (Tefera et al., 2018). Intersectionality is an approach to understanding the complexity of how different social identities intersect and thus shape an individual's experiences. It is seen by many as an important tool for analysing and addressing social inequity and injustice, but in practice, it can be difficult to implement. For example, it is challenging to create an inclusive framework that takes into account the multiple social identities of students in the classroom, and there is a lack of research that investigates how intersectionality could be practically applied in educational settings. Consequently, the need for further research on effective strategies to bridge the divide between social inequity and educational outcomes is paramount. In addition, it is significant to recognise the unique needs of each student concerning their social identity. It is also important to develop a set of strategies that are tailored to students' individual experiences. Such strategies could include providing students with access to resources and support networks. They could also include creating safe and welcoming learning environments and providing students with the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about their experiences in the classroom. By looking at how different kinds of inequality intersect and intersect in complex ways, we can get a better understanding of how these inequalities shape the experiences of individuals and the outcomes they face.

This research into intersectionality was, therefore, necessary as a way to build on previous research while offering new insights into this area. Recognising differences in gender, race, and other identities helps to understand how students' experiences vary and how that shapes their learning. Intersectionality research explores the ways that different identities intersect with one another to gain a better understanding of how students experience the world. This information can then be used to create more equitable learning environments. This can be done by having teachers who are aware of the different backgrounds and cultural experiences of their students and by creating a curriculum that reflects the diversity of the student body. It is also important to create a learning environment that is free from discrimination and prejudice so that all students feel respected and able to learn. This is where intersectionality comes in; it is a framework for understanding how different aspects of identity can intersect and create specific experiences of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality is an invaluable tool for creating a learning environment that encourages inclusivity and acceptance, ultimately allowing students to thrive.

This thesis provides intersectional teaching strategies, highlights intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy within the English classroom, and highlights the intersectional experiences of Teachers of English in the classroom. As a result of this thesis, teachers and other stakeholders in the field of education can better serve a wide range of students, which ultimately leads to improved educational outcomes for all students. The strategies and insights outlined in this thesis should help teachers to better understand their students' needs and be better equipped to provide tailored and effective instruction. Additionally, the research should help to identify potential areas for improvement in educational systems and provide guidance to teachers on how to address them using intersectional strategies. Additionally, the strategies

and approaches that have worked in the past and areas of improvement will be identified. In doing so, this thesis will provide helpful strategies and useful insights to inform and guide teachers in their work with diverse student populations, thus contributing to the knowledge of intersectionality within secondary education. The forthcoming section provides an overview of the chapters into which this thesis is segmented. Each chapter delves into its respective topic, offering an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of the thesis.

1.4 Overview of Chapters

This thesis consists of eight main sections. The main literature surrounding intersectionality is identified in Chapter 2. Following this, Chapter 3 presents this paper's theoretical framework, which draws together the theory of intersectionality. Chapter 4 discusses the ontological and epistemological basis of this study as well as the methodology, ethics, and participants involved. In Chapter 5, Part 1 of the findings is revealed, and intersectionality is examined in the English classroom as well as how it impacts student achievement. Chapter 5 focusses on the role of intersectionality in the English classroom, exploring the extent to which it influences student achievement, and how Teachers of English use intersectional pedagogy and strategies to promote equity and inclusion in their classrooms. Next, in Chapter 6 Part 2 of the findings is discussed which examines how Teachers of English employ intersectional pedagogy and strategies to promote equity and achievement in their English classes and dives deeper, addressing the various intersectional pedagogies and strategies that Teachers of English use to promote equity and achievement. It also discusses how the use of intersectional pedagogy impacts student achievement and how teachers can continue to develop equitable practices. Chapter 7 concludes this study by highlighting major theoretical and empirical contributions and making recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. Also included are suggestions for future research and reflections on my own research experiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Using intersectionality theory, this research explores how multiple dimensions of social identities, such as race, gender, and class intersect and interact to shape both teachers' and students' experiences of oppression and privilege in the English classroom. The purpose of this literature review is therefore to explore intersectionality theory and its key concepts, along with other relevant literature that sheds light on how social identities intersect and contribute to inequalities and social injustice within the English classroom. As I examine this literature, I aim to enhance the understanding of the complex interplay between social identities and promote more inclusive, equitable and intersectional practices and policies in the classroom. In this chapter of my thesis, I will present a concise explanation and introduction of the concepts of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy. However, in Chapter 3 these elements will be thoroughly contextualised and discussed in greater detail. Chapter 2, therefore, acts as a prelude, establishing the foundation for the in-depth exploration and analysis that will unfold in the subsequent sections of the thesis.

Consequently, this chapter reviews research and theory relating to how teachers use intersectionality and intersectional pedagogies to address inequalities in education to respond to and facilitate their pupils' differing needs. Much of the literature on intersectionality focusses on the need to better understand multiple disparities and how various intersecting categories create social discriminations and imbalances of power (Werbner, 2013; Collins and Bilge, 2020). Furthermore, many of the studies presented in this chapter specifically focus on intersectionality and intersectional approaches in education, such as Bilge (2013); Collins and Bilge (2020); Davis (2008); Gillborn (2015), or on understanding inequalities shaped by

intersectionality (McCall, 2005), however less is focussed on how intersectionality can be applied in schools as a methodology, as a pedagogy, or as a strategy by teachers to better incorporate these into their teaching practice and make their classrooms and their teaching accessible to all. Consequently, this is the gap in the literature and understanding of the attention to intersectionality in the context of how Teachers of English respond to it in their practice and how it is utilised in classrooms in particular and schools, in general, are areas that have been largely neglected in research but need to be addressed. The UK faces the problem of having a high degree of social exclusion (Hills, 2010) and social class and race are strong indicators of educational attainment in British schools which ultimately influences a pupils' prospects in later life (Dyson et al., 2010; Hills, 2010; Sodha and Margo, 2010; Kerr and West, 2010; Demie and Lewis, 2010: DfE, 2018, Jerrim and Macmillan, 2015; Skelton and Francis, 2009).

It is essential to provide a context for this thesis as to how the attainment of pupils in England is assessed. In this thesis attainment refers to a measure of a pupil's achievement in school which compares every pupil to a standardised expectation for their age level, irrespective of their individual starting points. Assessments and exams, therefore, determine a student's academic attainment. Building on the discussion of intersectionality in the English classroom the next section will explore race, ethnicity, gender and attainment as it applies to education.

2.2 Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Attainment in Education

At the end of each Key stage in primary schooling, pupils are assessed on literacy and numeracy. National curriculum assessments are introduced at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 6-7 years), here teachers assess pupils in English (reading and writing), mathematics and science. At the end of Key Stage 2 (age 10-11 years), pupils once more complete national curriculum assessments whose core focus is on English (reading, grammar, punctuation, and spelling) and

mathematics (Roberts, 2017).

In the final year of compulsory secondary education (age 15-16 years), pupils sit their GCSE exams. This provides pupils with a standardised framework for assessing secondary attainment. GCSE attainment is measured using a numerical grading system, Grades 9-1. Grades 9-5 are regarded as a pass and Grade 1 indicates that the minimum standard to achieve a grade was not met. A commonly used measure of post-primary attainment is achieving 5 or more GCSEs 9-5, including English and mathematics. This reflects a dual arrangement, placing pupils into the categories of 'achieved' and 'did not achieve'. For the benefits of this thesis and clarity, I will be using GCSE results when referring to and determining educational attainment.

Deprivation linked to underachievement is an important variable when focussing on educational attainment (Vadivel et al., 2023) and teachers must have the relevant skills and strategies to tackle this social exclusion. Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) in their study of refugees to the UK argue that English language learning can be enhanced through multifaceted, multiagency approaches which can support the various needs and purposes of English language learners, contributing to better intercultural understanding and social integration. Therefore, teachers not only need the requisite skills but also the requisite knowledge in terms of the agencies to use to support them in their task of creating equitable education in their English classrooms. Since 2012 the gap between low-income pupils' attainment at the end of primary school and the end of secondary school has widened (DfE, 2017). The implications of low-income pupils' poorer progress are most visible as pupils finish secondary school (GCSE level) when they are often left without the qualifications that might create opportunities for them later in life. Among the factors contributing to educational inequality in Britain, Reay (2012) suggests social class is the most egregious. She argues that

educational inequalities are inextricably linked to social inequalities. Consequently, for an educational system to be more socially just, the broader social context needs to radically change, especially in terms of reducing the gap between the rich and the poor (Reay, 2012). This view is also supported by Tomlin et al. (2014) who argue that British Caribbean Black students' differentiated experiences and academic underachievement can be traced to a wider social, cultural, and political context. By promoting sports, entertainment, and ways of being associated with Black underclasses, the status quo discourages Black students from pursuing academic pursuits, by using media and other tools.

Givens (2021) argues that education plays a part in maintaining white supremacy, dehumanising and marginalising Black people in the diaspora. Modood (2003) takes it a step further by focussing on teacher/ student relationships and its importance to attainment. He argues that teacher relationships with pupils have a great impact on the attainment of male pupils (in particular) in the UK. Modood (2003) argues that there exists a combative relationship between teachers and male pupils, especially Black Caribbean male pupils. This combative relationship, therefore, perpetuates a culture of underachievement with these boys having no way of redeeming themselves. Modood (2003) suggests that this could be because of a staff-room culture which seeks to target these boys and mark them because of previous instances with other Black boys that teachers may have. Modood (2003) argues for positive teacher/student relationships which can be used as a tool in helping to close the educational gap. This view is similar to Enow (2016) who underlines the important role teachers have in raising the achievement of their students. Additionally, the literature explores the idea that teachers conveying low expectations can generate a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' where pupils end up behaving according to the expectations that have been hypothetically set, rather than what they are really capable of achieving (Tsiplakides and Keramida, 2010).

Therefore, the problem of Black boys' educational underachievement is even more worrying since according to Gilborn et al. (2012), in their study interviewing 62 Black Caribbean parents, teachers tended to have lower academic expectations for Black pupils, especially Black boys, which ultimately have very damaging effects for these Black boys in the English educational system. Additionally, high exclusion rates and racial bias in setting (ability grouping) practice were also factors responsible for pupils' low attainment (Francis, 2015). Jussim and Harber (2005) argue that teachers' expectations of their pupils' potential may influence outcomes for those pupils. For example, a teacher with low expectations might not share models that are at a high standard or provide sufficiently challenging tasks and these low expectations can particularly disadvantage 'at risk' groups. Campbell (2015) and Locke and Latham (2002) have a potential solution to counteract this. They postulate the idea that because we all have biases that can be impossible to change thus consistently setting high expectations for all pupils fromdifferent races and social backgrounds may lessen the impact of such biases which will improveoutcomes for pupils.

Due to the intersections of race, class, and historically disadvantaged communities, many Black pupils enter the education system already at a disadvantage (Rhamie, 2012). Moreover, this underscores the necessity of employing an intersectional approach in research. (Strand, 2010). Rosenshine (2012) concedes that to close the gap one of the most important things that teachers can do is create a learning environment where all pupils experience a high success rate because research suggests that teachers should aim for pupils to be successful around 80% of the time thus setting their pupils up for success and not failure. Even though Lazowski and Hulleman (2016) argue that extrinsic rewards like praise for pupils who are willing to try a difficult task can be useful to get pupils started, researchers like Coe et al. (2014) contradict this argument

when they explain that although extrinsic rewards can be used in the short-term to motivate pupils to achieve academically it is the intrinsic motivation that will have a more long-term effect. This is because when pupils are motivated 'intrinsically' by their own goals and they believe they can achieve these goals; pupils will be more persistent in the long term. Coe et al. (2014) solidify this argument and connect it to how teachers can create the right learning environment for all pupils by adding that teacher expectations influence whether pupils experience an effective classroom, where there is both the support and challenge to succeed at goals that stretch pupils.

Gender inequality in achievement has received significant attention for several years, and educational data reveals a concerning trend where boys are consistently falling behind in various performance indicators (Majzub and Rais, 2010). However, looking specifically at the situation in the UK, whilst the gap in attainment at the GCSE level between boys and girls is relatively stable across the social class groupings (that is to say that the effect of gender does not differ to any great degree across the social classes) however, it is important to note that the gender gap at GCSE does seem to vary by ethnic group. Some minority groups attain considerably below the national average and their under-achievement is much greater than the gap between boys and girls. For instance, Black Caribbean and Black other pupils experience broader gender gaps than other ethnic groups (Strand, 2021). In fact, Black pupils are reported as being most deprived with a quarter of Black pupils qualifying for FSM (Free School Meals). Not only are Black pupils considered as facing deprivation but there is also conscious and unconscious prejudice linked to their underachievement (Demie and McLean, 2017). This is highlighted in the data which reported that 21.7 per cent of Black Caribbean pupils are documented as pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This is a stark

contrast to the 15.2 per cent of all pupils who are identified as SEND (DfE, 2016). This concern with social equality experienced by Black pupils is further revealed because the probability of Black pupils receiving a fixed-term exclusion in 2017-18 was three times more likely, at 13 per cent than the average pupil. Additionally, in every year covered by the data in the report, pupils from Black and Mixed backgrounds had the highest rates of temporary and permanent exclusions out of all ethnic groups (DfE, 2020). Another ethnic group that has been highlighted for their poor educational attainment are White working- class boys (White working - class is taken in this study to be White British pupils who are eligible for FSM). Although in the past higher profile was given to African Caribbean boys' underachievement, the focus has now shifted to White-working class boys (Hudson-Sharp et al., 2015) with much of the research inclining to focus on how unsuccessful they have been in education because of their lack of aspiration (Ingram, 2011; DfE, 2014).

Throughout the literature, the reason given for the underachievement of Black boys is their behaviour and attitude to school whilst the reason given for the underachievement of White boys is their low aspirations. For example, Gillborn et al. (2012) contend that the overriding view of race, class and gender in contemporary English education, places White working-class boys in particular, as the ethnic group currently facing the most threat of academic underachievement due to their lack of aspiration which is linked to the family- and/or community-specific dispositions of the White working-class. Gillborn et al. (2012) argue that this focus on White underachievement functions to eradicate race inequity from the agenda, placing 'White people at the centre of policy debates, and provides the basis for an analysis that shifts the blame for educational failure onto the very pupils and communities that experience the injustice' (page 122). Likewise, Ingram (2018) asserts that there exists a conflict between 'being educationally successful and being working-class. Therefore, the implication

is that working-class identity is not easily reconciled with educational success (Ingram and Abrahams, 2016). Additionally, gender equality is impossible if the belief that boys and girls are essentially different continues to be upheld the 'equality of opportunity will never lead to equality of outcome' (Fine, 2017, page 17).

Another reason given by some researchers for the prevailing underachievement of White working-class pupils is that the dominant culture that exists in educational institutions is middle class (Ingram, 2018; Vincent, 2017; Reay, 2017). A study conducted by Ingram (2018) argues that this middle-class culture is favoured by education institutions and society and runs contrary to working-class cultures. She believes that this creates an educational challenge which makes the process of educational success harder than necessary for working-class pupils. Reay (2017) reported similar findings from the interviews she conducted between 2010 and 2016 where she found that working-class pupils' experience of education was very negative with pupils suffering a poor education because of where they lived. The pupils in her interviews focus on the drawbacks to their learning in academies rather than the things that improved their learning. Additionally, Hobbs (2016) explored social class being a strong indicator of educational attainment in British schools and found that pupils from higher social classes attended better, more effective schools than pupils in the lower social classes. These differences account for 7% of social class differences in educational achievement and in 2017, 27.2% of pupils after Key Stage 4 were disadvantaged (DfE, 2018).

Ultimately, the matter of educational underachievement should not be framed in terms of variations in academic performance linked to ethnicity, race, or gender because here the challenges faced by 'white working-class' boys are juxtaposed with those of ethnic minorities and girls. It is also crucial to persist in examining who invokes the narrative of disadvantaged

'white working-class' boys and their educational underperformance (Adjogatse and Miedema, 2022). By framing educational inequality in an intersectional manner, we can also consider differences among more advantaged students, demonstrating that White boys with low achievement should not be the only ones concerned. Classroom strategies that embrace intersectional and intersectional pedagogy, therefore, need to be implemented that address race, class and gender inequalities and focus closely on teaching and learning processes. Reports of school-based developments indicate doing this encourages the teaching and learning processes of pupils to be analysed effectively by educationalists (Montgomery, 2012). To enhance our comprehension of intersectionality and its application within this thesis, the next section will explore existing research on the subject.

2.3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality reminds us of the importance of coalitions and allyship; it reminds us to be humble and to look for who is missing in the room (Harris and Leonardo, 2018, p.20)

The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw. McCall (2005) believes that she is the 'most important contribution that women's studies have made so far' (p.1771). While the term 'intersectionality' originated in Black feminist theory, it is now often referred to as the interaction between the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act (2010), as well as wider characteristics that shape lived experiences of discrimination, inequality, and privilege. Intersectionality allows scholars to look at constructs in society, such as race, class and gender intersectionally rather than simply looking at them descriptively and comparatively (Collins, 2002). Intersectionality also addresses how oppressions are constructed socially and how they affect individuals inversely across manifold classifications with multidimensionality and contextuality being central issues since social inequality cannot be grasped using unidimensional models (Phoenix and Brah, 2004 p. 76; Chepp and Collins, 2013, p. 60).

Intersectionality is therefore useful in understanding how educational systems and structures work because thinking 'intersectionally' about inequality in education requires a fundamental shift to thinking about a pupil's whole set of characteristics and circumstances, and how this relates to systems of power and discrimination within and beyond education.

Intersectionality is defined as the interaction of multiple identities and varied experiences of exclusion and subordination (Davis, 2008). It is seen as the exploration of complexities of marginalisation (Collins and Bilge, 2020), and the conceptualisation that social classifications, primarily those that consist of inequality or power, such as gender, race, ethnicity, or social background, are almost always perpetrated by each other (Codiroli McMaster and Cook, 2019). Much of the literature on intersectionality is focussed on the need to better understand multiple disparities and how various intersecting categories create social discriminations and imbalances of power (Werbner, 2013; Collins and Bilge, 2020). These different uses have been engaged to better tackle the issue of educational inequality (Gross et al., 2016a). Carbado et al. (2013) argue that it is not so important to define intersectionality but what it is important to do is to assess what 'intersectionality does' (p 304). Correspondingly, this research uses an intersectional framework to analyse educational attainment in the English classroom and teachers' understanding and knowledge of this. It therefore focusses on what intersectionality 'does' or can do if intersectional practices are adopted and used in the English classroom.

Intersectionality and by extension intersectional pedagogy utilise a process of understanding, clarifying and interrogating which offers pupils and teachers new ways of understanding persistent patterns of inequality that both reflect and show respect for the complexity of diversity. Additionally, intersectional pedagogy for this reason not only addresses the issue of incorporating diversity within teaching and learning for pupils but also allows teachers the opportunity to hone their practice of teaching in diverse classrooms and is therefore an

important pedagogy for classroom practice. English teaching and attainment will be explored in more detail later in this chapter. Additionally, Crenshaw's contribution to intersectionality as a theoretical framework will be further explored in greater depth in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 will also focus on the theoretical research of this thesis. The theme of intersectionality remains central to my analysis therefore as I move into the next phase of this thesis I will now focus on intersectional pedagogy and its importance to classroom practice in English lessons.

2.4 Intersectional Pedagogy: Importance of Intersectional Pedagogy to Classroom Practice

This thesis looks at insights from existing literature on pedagogic practice in general but particularly intersectional pedagogy. In this, it aims to understand how Teachers of English use their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race and class and how they apply intersectional pedagogy in their classrooms to respond to the issue of the inequality and inequity currently existing in English classrooms. It is relevant for the purposes of this research to consider the reason why embedding intersectional pedagogy into teaching practice is pertinent and applicable today for teachers and schools. This is because a clear association between deprivation and underachievement is evident in English education where the educational achievement gap among the different classes in society is one of the most significant in the industrialised world (Perry and Francis, 2010). Intersectional pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to comprehend, elucidate, and scrutinise the disparities and marginalisation stemming from the convergence of multiple social identities. This will therefore allow both teachers and pupils to engage with a critical framework which validates subjugated knowledge, examines the complexity of identity, develops action strategies for empowerment and unveils power and privilege (Collins, 1990; Dill and Zambrana, 2009).

Moreover, it is vitally important for Teachers of English to have more than a passing awareness of how to use an intersectionality framework to understand how historical and contemporary manifestations of identity, difference, and disadvantage continue to shape life chances and outcomes for pupils in England. Intersectional pedagogy is important to education (Case, 2017; Wallin-Ruschman et al., 2020; Case and Lewis, 2017) but it must lead to critical social action for it to be effective (Case, 2017; Wallin-Ruschman et al., 2020). Therefore, just expressing feelings of understanding and empathy (or being empathetic) is not enough or sufficient in terms of the end goal of incorporating intersectional pedagogy in education policies and systems. Furthermore, Wallin-Ruschman et al. (2020) expound on this idea when they say that for students to develop empathy and a sense of intersectionality, situated knowledge, collaboration, and dialogue are all crucial.

Another important factor of utilising an intersectional lens is that it enables questions about race, class and gender to become comprehensible hence supplying teachers with a framework to answer and change the answer. Consequently, even though the pedagogical model that Case (2017) presents is geared towards college instructors the tools provided are practical and designed to engage students in the practice and praxis of intersectionality which by its design will seek to compel and challenge teachers primarily to scrutinise taken-for-granted ideas about race, class and gender and its role in pupil attainment.

 It is this key idea that I believe can also be applied and utilised by Teachers of English in secondary schools to improve their teaching by incorporating an intersectional analysis within their practice. Researchers like Grant and Zwier (2011) believe that it is important for teachers to have an "intersectionally-aware teacher identity" (p. 186). This idea of having an

intersectional awareness of their identity which will then develop relationships with their students. A sense of their own identity is also supported by Rathmann et al. (2018) when they postulate the view that teachers who include their students in their classrooms through varied activities will have students who are also more likely to feel satisfied in life and have better school outcomes. Ferber and Herrera (2013) also support the importance of intersectional pedagogy when they postulate that the absence of intersectional pedagogies has the potential to do more harm than good for pupils from marginalised backgrounds because they can further isolate and invalidate these pupils.

Additionally, Berger and Guidroz (2009) believe that intersectional pedagogies encourage pupils' social literacy which will allow pupils to increase their ability to recognise internalised oppression, the confines of singular viewpoints, and the costs of dominance (Weber, 2010). Thus, intersectional pedagogy proposes opportunities for engaging all pupils to contribute to the process (Banks e tal, 2013; Wise and Case, 2013). The Equality Act 2010 forms the basis upon which schools develop policies concerning gender, race and class with an insistence that all pupils should succeed in education regardless of their race, class and gender. Teachers must therefore be prepared to teach knowledge and skills about diversity, discrimination, conflict and social justice issues. Teachers should also be ready to teach pupils to negotiate the intricacy of social identities that they will come across in the world (Adams e tal, 2007; Rodenborg and Boisen, 2013). Ensign (2009) believes that this problem can be tackled by using teaching training programmes which can help in raising pupil attainment by creating teachers who are aware of diversity and its implications. Therefore, intersectional pedagogy can be utilised not only in the classroom but also in teacher education programmes. Ensign (2009) further argues that teacher training programmes with minimal diversity training are more likely to criticise or accuse pupils or their families for their educational underachievement. Thus, essentially

blaming them for the problem and implementing nothing in place to address or tackle it.

It has been noted in the literature that the great social injustices of the education system faced by pupils in English secondary schools are that pupils, both boys and girls, from low-income backgrounds are less likely to make good progress at secondary school compared to their more affluent counterparts. Therefore, pupils who face social deprivation are also deprived academically because they fail to progress or access the curriculum (Ingram and Abrahams, 2016; Reay, 2012; Fine, 2017; DfE, 2017).

The reading of the literature suggests that intersectional pedagogy is essential to making educational systems more equitable with Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011) exploring how the core tenets of intersectionality in education could help students better access the curriculum and progress in education. Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011) give some clarifications that they believe could help students better access the curriculum and progress. These core tenets can be summarised as centring the experiences of people of colour, identity, power and its interconnectedness to structures of inequality and promoting social justice and social change. Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011) argue that to apply an intersectional framework to teaching, the experiences of people of colour need to be first centred and integrated throughout the curriculum. The idea of this is that centring would focus on adopting different strategies to teaching by placing BAME pupils at the centre of teaching and not just on the periphery, or as a token gesture placed on one-course material. This will therefore allow for essential focus and attention on the kind of subject and curriculum content taught as well as the needs of all pupils.

Having examined intersectional pedagogy and its significance in shaping classroom practices, I am poised to embark on a deeper exploration of the expansive domain encompassing intersectional classroom strategies. Specifically, my focus will be on the strategies and

techniques employed by educators within the context of their English lessons. This endeavour aims to unravel the multifaceted and dynamic approaches educators adopt to address the diverse needs and perspectives of their students, with a particular emphasis on fostering inclusivity and equity within the realm of the English classroom.

2.5 Intersectional Pedagogy- Classroom strategies

Case and Cole (2013), Wise and Case (2013), Case and Lewis (2017) and Naples (2013) outline the following intersectional classroom strategies that they believe can be used in the classroom to aid teachers in raising the awareness of intersectionality: Teachers have to be deliberate in incorporating ideas of intersectionality into activities and discussions. This is because teachers must develop an understanding of the role of privilege and empathy in the curriculum which will ensure that teachers create opportunities for in-class discussions and activities around the topics of gender, race and class. Additionally, teachers will have to ensure that they permit sufficient opportunities in the classroom for dialogue and community building early and throughout the curriculum. Furthermore, teachers need to allow space and develop relationships in the classroom, particularly across differences.

The second core tenet of intersectionality focusses on the teacher. Teachers should never assume to know everything about their pupils' backgrounds and identities. Dill and Zambrana (2009) argue that if teachers believe they are knowledgeable about everything regarding their pupils' identity and background the drawback of this could be what they call 'everyday racism'. This can occur when situations that exist are so entrenched and widespread that they go unnoticed. These instances of 'everyday racism' must be challenged and discussions of power and privilege should be integrated into the curriculum. Building on this, researchers such as Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011), and Dill and Zambrana (2009) argue that pedagogic processes

are critical in bringing about genuine change and improving educational attainment for all pupils. Case (2017) further outlines that pedagogic processes are crucial when analysing educational attainment. Case believes that the relationship between school policy and everyday practice in the classroom is also important because teachers need a clear and accurate model for them to effectively embed intersectionality across the curriculum.

The core tenets of intersectionality all relate to belonging and identity, and the literature supports the view that a sense of belonging is important for a successful student experience (Sanders and Rose-Adams, 2014). The idea of belonging not only looks at who is included but also who is excluded and the inadequate opportunities for diversity or opportunities for inclusive socialisation which put some students at risk of experiencing a sense of 'unbelonging' (Walton and Carr, 2011). As a result, identity and belonging are linked to an intersectional perspective because gender and ethnicity as well as the impact of intersectional experiences all have the potential to affect confidence, efficacy, and belonging (Ireland et al., 2018).

British sociologist and gender researcher Nira Yuval-Davis, who has made several important contributions to the development of the notion of belonging by differentiating between "belonging" and the "politics of belonging", believes that "belonging" is about emotional attachment, feeling at home, and feeling safe. However, the "politics of belonging" concerns "specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectives that are, at the same time, themselves being constructed by these projects in very particular ways" (Yuval-Davis, 2006a: p. 197). She argues that belonging is always a dynamic process and that analysis of 'belonging' must be founded on an intersectionality perspective. This can be elucidated by the following example: there is no significance to the notion of "black", for instance, without this meaning and connotation being linked to gender and class.

Likewise, there is no meaning or significance to the word "women" that is not ethnicised and classed. In addition to the aspects mentioned earlier, this thesis also examines identity and belonging as it relates to intersectionality. Christensen (2009) also supports this connection between identity, belonging and intersectionality by arguing that the three essential elements in the notion of belonging are: the difference between "belonging" and "politics of belonging"; the viewpoint of intersecting social categories; and the relationship between belonging/unbelonging. This topic will be investigated in further detail in the ensuing section that focusses on identity and belonging as it relates to intersectionality.

2.6 Identity and Belonging connected to Intersectionality

The argument for intersectional analyses of gender and belonging is generally in line with recent developments in gender research, which increasingly focusses on gender intersecting with other categories. The concept of intersectionality emphasises the intersecting patterns of different social categories like gender, class, ethnicity, and race. Furthermore, a central argument among feminist researchers is that identity and belonging are created in the interrelationships of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and other social divisions (Yuval-Davis, 2007). Belonging is also linked to student achievement and attainment as seen in Thomas' (2012) synthesis which reflects a growing body of UK research that highlights the value that a sense of belonging brings to educational success and self-efficacy, with damaging and undesirable effects occurring for those students who are unable to fit into their academic environments, contexts, curriculums and settings. Pupils may seek to avoid a task if it seems threatening to their sense of self (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996).

Consequently, many researchers believe that belonging shapes identity formation because it

supports well-being. Therefore, engendering a sense of belonging is considered a useful indicator for understanding identity construction. Researchers found that students with a developed sense of belonging reflect a more positive self-construct and a greater leaning towards self-efficacious behaviours (Milton and Sims, 2016). Belonging is also a useful measure for opinions of social support (Choenarom e tal, 2005) and is a global indicator for perceptions of teacher-student relationships (Chiu e tal, 2016). As a result, belonging in an educational context is vital and therefore early advancement of a sense of belonging in students is linked to better retention and achievement (Thomas, 2012). It is the responsibility of policymakers to ensure that the English curriculum does not perpetuate marginalisation because of its content and that it is also indicative of the diversity within society, that is, the curriculum must be developed and delivered inclusively and reflectively.

This perspective concurs with Case (2017) who believes that it is essential that intersectional theory is interpreted to a teacher's pedagogy because it is their professional and ethical responsibility. In her book 'Intersectional Pedagogy', Case (2017) summarises the dilemma faced by many teachers of having course materials and readings that perpetuated marginalisation because they created feelings of marginalisation in students. This highlights the pervasive challenge of course materials and readings that inadvertently promote marginalisation within the classroom environment. This dilemma stems from the paradox where educational resources, intended to foster learning and inclusivity, paradoxically end up cultivating feelings of marginalisation among students. This quandary experienced by teachers reflects a broader concern in the educational landscape, wherein course materials, textbooks, and readings, while well-intentioned, inadvertently reinforce and perpetuate forms of marginalisation. The implications of this phenomenon ripple through the educational experience, affecting the self-esteem and engagement of students, as well as their ability to

fully participate in the learning process.

Accordingly, Clotfelter et al. (2004) argue that policy or practice that is imposed systemically on all pupils within an educational system may have a differential impact on particular ethnic groups. For example, in England, all students follow the National Curriculum and take the same tests at the end of Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4. The potential for racial bias in either the setting of the tests or the content of the curriculum on which they are based could have a differential impact on the achievement of minority ethnic students (Tomlinson, 2005; Wilson, 2011). Consequently, if the most successful and accomplished educational systems are the ones that combine both equity and quality (OECD, 2012) English education must proactively employ strategies to rectify the deeply entrenched disparities and injustices that persist within its educational framework. The imperative lies in a profound examination of both the pedagogical methods employed in English language instruction and the content encompassed by the curriculum. To this end, the ensuing section will delve into a comprehensive analysis of these critical facets, emphasising the urgency of reshaping the English education landscape to foster inclusivity and equal opportunities for all students.

2.7 Teaching English: The Content of the English Curriculum

'Teachers are professionally and ethically responsible for making sure pupils from a broad range of backgrounds feel represented in the course materials and get the message that their identities are worthy of academic study' (Case 2017, pg. 2).

For success in all subjects, fluency in the English language is essential (DfE, 2013). As the foundation of all other subjects, English gives pupils access to the remainder of the curriculum and is key to their academic success (Enow, 2016). Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects. English is needed to understand and interpret instructions, read and write effectively, and communicate effectively with others. It is also the

language in which most textbooks and instruction materials are written, so students need to be able to understand and access the other subjects. There are many reasons for educating young people, and these inform which curriculum content is selected (Williams, 2013) this should be selected based on a coherent vision for pupils' success. Selection is also guided by the National Curriculum.

The curriculum that is taught is established by schools however, every teacher must also think about curriculum use because teachers are the ones who are ultimately putting it into practice. In their research, Skerrett (2011), Thomas (2015), and Williamson (2017) examined how secondary literacy teachers' racial, gendered, socioeconomic, linguistic, and other identities impacted their engagement with critical pedagogies in the classroom. According to their findings, teachers who identified as members of marginalised social groups or were committed to educational justice negotiated with the curriculum more often to accommodate students' cultural and linguistic strengths, lived experiences of injustice, and authentic learning needs.

Consequently, measures such as the KS4 curriculum reforms in response to the rising concerns about the English curriculum's inability to compete worldwide have faced criticism mainly because of its content. For example, Adams (2013) sees the KS4 curriculum reforms as a 'new philistinism' suggesting that English education has become so socially unjust that reforms are geared towards one social class. Hodgson and Spours (2011) argue that educational initiatives like this one only serve to replicate and reinforce the social status quo which promotes alienation and subjugation of classes of pupils.

An area where whiteness is privileged and maintained is the curriculum in educational

institutions (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). The English curriculum has deep links to colonialism through its structure and content therefore, the colonial roots, and western prejudices of what we as teachers teach, how we teach it and what we consider as important in our pupils' work must be acknowledged and confronted. There must be a reversal and offsetting of all economic, social, cultural, and intellectual forms of exclusion and alienation in the English Curriculum that pupils may face because of their race, gender, class, or disabilities. The exclusion and alienation referred to pertain to the deprivations experienced mainly by BAME learners. According to Ajegbo et al. (2007), diverse curriculums operate differently in England because school leaders and teachers do not understand or have confidence in how to incorporate diversity; do not prioritise diversity as important and lack resources to effectively integrate diversity. Diversity in educational institutions has wide-ranging implications, including reducing the attainment gap for BAME students and providing them with a sense of belonging in institutions that have long been dominated by white power structures (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018).

In teaching, teachers are accountable to the teachers' standards (DfE, 2012), a set of benchmarks that clearly define the skills and characteristics of an effective teacher. The teachers' standards are the benchmark for outstanding teaching and form the framework in which teachers can reflect on their practice and identify any areas for further development. It is divided into three parts: A Preamble, Part One and Part Two. The Preamble summarises the values and behaviour that all teachers must demonstrate throughout their careers. Part One comprises the standards for teaching. It states that teachers must "set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge students; promote good progress and outcomes by students; demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge" (DfE, 2012, page 10). It, therefore, tells a teacher what is expected but not the most challenging part, that of how to accomplish it. Part Two comprises the standards for personal and professional conduct. In order to meet the

standards, a teacher will need to demonstrate that their practice is consistent with the definition set out in the Preamble. Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes currently offer a limited scope of content that directly equips aspiring educators with the essential confidence and expertise needed to effectively teach in culturally diverse classrooms. Moreover, there is a conspicuous gap in the preparation of trainee teachers to navigate and respond to incidents of racism and to challenge and rectify racial stereotypes (Lander, 2014).

This deficiency in ITT curricula is a cause for concern (Mintz et al., 2015). Future educators need to receive comprehensive training that not only hones their pedagogical skills but also empowers them with the cultural competence required to navigate the complexities of ethnically diverse learning environments. This training should encompass a holistic approach, fostering an inclusive and equitable educational setting that is responsive to the unique needs and experiences of students from various cultural backgrounds. Addressing issues related to racism, bias, and stereotypes should be a pivotal component of such preparation, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping classroom dynamics and ensuring a safe and nurturing atmosphere for all students. Adoniou and Gallagher (2017) see the teachers' standards as a measure to define teachers' work which is a direct response to the global interest which seeks to outline teachers' work, particularly in the UK, Europe, the USA, and Australia. Mulcahy (2011) argues that teaching standards clearly set out the characteristics of a 'good' or 'outstanding' teacher and are seen to have a key role in improving British schools.

 Additionally, the teaching standards seek to articulate what is valued about teaching and describe the critical features of what teachers know, believe and are able to do (Mulcahy, 2011). It was identified that it was vitally important from an educational standpoint to include a reference and guidance for Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITE/T) providers on anti-

racism which is currently absent from educational policy. The anti-racism frame for initial teacher education and training was developed through a research project commissioned by the National Education Union (NEU) and supported by internal funding from Newcastle University. For example, the most recent Department for Education (DfE) survey, which mirrors previous results in past years, revealed that only 53% of Early Career Teachers (ECT), six months into their first post, felt well prepared to teach pupils "from all ethnic backgrounds" and only 39% felt well prepared to teach pupils with English as an additional language (DfE, 2020).

Furthermore, there still remain continued differential patterns of education access and outcomes for BAME pupils as revealed in the government's Race Disparity Audit and associated statistics. It is the view that the anti-race framework that has been newly introduced to teacher training will help to educate both current and future teachers thus having a central role in enacting change in the classroom and in curriculum and policy development which will ultimately break this cycle. There is some acknowledgement that there is some progress however according to Bhopal and Rhamie (2014), despite trainee teachers' deeper understanding of race and diversity, they could benefit from more practical support when dealing with diversity in the classroom.

Overall, although disparities in the educational achievement of ethnic groupings have reduced significantly over the last 20 years and since the early 2000s (DfE, 2015), White British pupils are still reported as making the smallest progress throughout secondary school while Black pupils are considered to be the most deprived, which culminates in further underachievement at the end of Key Stage 4 (DfE, 2016). The literature, therefore, shows that ethnic minorities are seen to be disadvantaged in many ways when it comes to their educational attainment (DfE,

2020). This would suggest that inequalities in educational attainment occur when there are disparities between pupils created because of the social group that they belong to (gender, race, social class), and can have a great impact on their access to education, experiences, outcomes and returns to education (Jacobs, 1996; Gross et al., 2016b).

Subsequently, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds still have subordinate educational outcomes and low attainment at every Key Stage and English education continues to fail pupils because the system still educates the different social classes in fundamentally different ways (Reay, 2017).

Furthermore, another gap in the literature is that whilst there exists a lot of research on various strategies geared towards tackling the underachievement of ethnic groups,there is less research on the effectiveness of these strategies in education which has already resulted in social class dissimilarities being solidified through educational inequality (Ingram, 2018). One way that teachers try to diversify the curriculum in their practice as Teachers of English is by using an intersectional framework to incorporate the story of who they are and their identity in the lessons they teach. Therefore, diversifying the curriculum by including an intersectional framework will ensure an environment that is rooted in mutual respect with goals that are set to stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities, and dispositions.

Up to this point, our discourse has revolved around various aspects of English teaching, student achievement and attainment, and the English curriculum. Nevertheless, it is of equal significance to delve into a more profound exploration of the concepts of curriculum diversification and decolonisation. This next section will endeavour to elucidate the precise meanings and implications of these terms within the context of this thesis, elucidating their

importance in addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern English education.

2.8 Diversifying and Decolonising the Curriculum

For this research, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms "diversifying" and "decolonising" as it relates to the English curriculum. In English classrooms and curriculums, diversifying means increasing the representation of marginalised or underrepresented groups. As a result of ever-diversifying school populations in England, Lebbakhar et al. (2022) argue that teachers have been concerned about ensuring equality and diversity in education. In their analysis, they concluded that diversifying the English curriculum is a challenging task because of its prescriptive nature and in secondary schools at Key Stage 4, teachers find it difficult to equalise and diversify the English curriculum. As a consequence of the high status of English, they believe that the more prescriptive a curriculum is, the more challenging it is to make it equal, diverse, and inclusive for all students.

Alternatively, decolonisation refers to challenging and transforming Eurocentric and colonial assumptions and structures that underlie many aspects of education. To accomplish this, it is necessary to challenge Western perspectives and knowledge systems, affirm the contributions and knowledge of non-Western cultures, and promote more equitable and democratic educational practices. This is emphasised by Gopal (2021) who examines the tension between these two concepts. Diversifying can be accomplished incrementally while decolonising often requires more fundamental, transformative changes. Diversifying a syllabus or a curriculum may involve adding a few texts from non-Western authors while decolonising may require fundamentally rethinking how knowledge is produced and disseminated. This fundamental rethinking of the curriculum extends to university curriculums as well. This sentiment finds resonance in the work of Thondhlana et al. (2021), which posits that the pursuit of an

internationalisation agenda in education holds a twofold significance. Beyond its transformative potential, it also bears a profound impact on decolonisation, chiefly through the reconfiguration of curricula and the elevation of indigenous education.

Thondhlana et al. (2021) underscore the multifaceted nature of internationalisation in education, suggesting that its influence extends beyond broadening horizons and fostering global perspectives. Notably, they contend that internationalization initiatives wield a powerful decolonising influence, with a particular focus on curriculum reformation and the recognition and integration of indigenous knowledge systems. Consequently, to create more equitable and inclusive educational environments, it is important to recognise the distinctive but complementary goals of diversifying and decolonising the curriculum. Diversifying the curriculum for the goal of making it more inclusive for all pupils is not simply about adding different viewpoints to an already established and organised curriculum however, it is equally about the way the curriculum is structured and the pedagogical methods that teachers are encouraged to use inside the classroom.

 Therefore, bringing a wider variety of texts, voices, and perspectives into the classroom will ensure and emphasise pupils' awareness of how literature interacts with the social, cultural, and political world in a real sense (Jones and Wijeyesinghe, 2011). Case (2017) and Naples (2013) outline an intersectional classroom strategy that can be used in the classroom to aid teachers in raising the awareness of intersectionality by prioritising, ensuring, and establishing a safe and stimulating environment for all pupils; being deliberate about incorporating ideas of intersectionality into class activities and discussion; and also incorporating class discussions and activities will create opportunities for pupils to discuss their views on the topics of gender,

race, and class. Additionally, Dill and Zambrana (2009) believe that teachers can never assume to know everything about their pupils' backgrounds and identities because if teachers believe that they know everything about pupils' identities and backgrounds the drawback of this can be what they call 'everyday racism'. 'Everyday racism' can occur when situations that exist are so entrenched and widespread that they go unnoticed. These instances of 'everyday racism' must be challenged and discussions of power and privilege should be integrated into the curriculum.

Researchers such as Arday e tal. (2021) postulate that Whiteness is central in our curriculums, especially the English curriculum, and it is seen as an instrument of power and privilege. Additionally, the monopoly and proliferation of dominant White European canons have negative impacts on aspects of engagement, inclusivity, and belonging particularly for BAME learners.

This issue is highlighted in *A Fly Girl's Guide to University*:

> 'It is useless to pretend that Dickens 'spoke the language of humanity' or that while male authors can articulate other experiences unaffected by their positionality. The effect of the white curriculum is such that we have imbued white male writers with the power and authority to speak for everyone; marginalised pupils often find themselves grasping at texts that were not written for them in an attempt to find a shared humanity that is based on their exclusion' (Olufemi e tal, 2019, pp. 57–8).

Therefore, there is an unequivocal imperative for a comprehensive transformation of the English curriculum. This transformation is essential to foster inclusivity, student engagement, and a sense of belonging among all pupils. The curriculum must be enriched with a diversity of voices and perspectives, reflecting the multifaceted reality of the world and the rich tapestry

of human experiences. By utilising a range of resources pupils will be allowed to develop their research skills, personal response, individual voice, and cultural perspective through these examples which enable them to consider and discuss the nature and functions of literature and culture in society.

Additionally, Case's (2017) intersectional model explored in the literature is designed to be implemented at the tertiary level and not the secondary level. The gap in the literature in terms of the absence of intersectional pedagogy that exists within the English classroom challenges educational researchers to develop a more distinctive account of educational achievement or underachievement which encapsulates an intersectionality approach as it pertains to English lessons. This research, therefore, concentrates on this issue in terms of how Teachers of English use and apply their knowledge and skills of intersectionality in their classrooms to address the inequality and inequity that exists in English education. It also focusses on the impact of this on pupils' achievement in English classes at the secondary level. It is hoped that the findings of this research will elucidate the processes that teachers are currently employing to incorporate their understanding of intersectional practices within the classroom and how this can be adapted and adopted to create a more equitable English classroom.

The literature review, therefore, acknowledges that there is a debate on how to approach intersectionality as a theory but concludes that it is exactly this vagueness and flexibility in the conceptualisation of the term that makes it such a success because what this suggests is the fluid nature of intersectionality. In this research, the application of intersectionality as an approach serves a dual purpose, underscoring its multifaceted relevance and impact. This multifaceted utilisation of intersectionality can be delineated into two primary dimensions, each offering valuable insights and perspectives. Firstly, on an empirical basis for teachers to

better understand the nature of social inequalities in their classroom and the processes that create and sustain them, that is, to be able to analyse social problems in the classroom more fully. Secondly, intersectionality is seen as a tool that can be used to generate coalitions between different groups to resist and change the status quo. Having explored intersectionality in education in this chapter, Chapter 3 will focus on the research methodology and data analysis used in this thesis.

Chapter 3: Intersectionality as a theoretical lens to explore experiences in the English classroom

3.1 Introduction

Through intersectionality, feminism has provided a valuable lens to further understand the complexities of social dynamics and inequalities (Rice e tal, 2019). Going forward, this thesis will provide an in-depth exploration of how its theoretical framework can be applied to this study of social issues. The incorporation of intersectionality as a foundational theoretical framework is imperative to the underpinning of my argument. This framework serves as a vital lens through which to effectively examine and comprehend the intricate dynamics inherent in the English classroom. Intersectionality offers a nuanced and holistic perspective, enabling the ability to dissect the multifaceted interplay of factors such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and social background within the context of the English classroom.

I use intersectionality as a theory to investigate how teachers use intersectionality and intersectional practices in their English lessons and classrooms. In addition, through adopting this theoretical approach I seek to distinguish that to tackle inequality it is not satisfactory to focus only on one identity marker or category (such as race, gender, class, ethnicity or social background) because a combination of different attributes and types of (dis)advantages do not stand alone or are the same for every pupil who experiences them; as an alternative, there must be a focus on the multiple identities that combine to produce 'complex inequality' (McCall, 2001). It also encourages the recognition and acknowledgement that individuals are not defined by singular attributes but rather by the convergence of multiple identities and experiences. This acknowledgement, in turn, shapes a more comprehensive and equitable

approach to English education, one that is attuned to the diverse needs and backgrounds of learners (Ferree and Hall, 1996).

Additionally, the theory of intersectionality helps this thesis to address the point that intersectionality does not construct a hierarchy of inequality, where some oppressions (such as racism, sexism, and ableism) are viewed as more important than others. To explicate this point, take for instance, social norms around gender and education, which may inform gender differences in subject choice, these can be linked both to gender ideology and to patriarchal control of economic and political resources, which is inherently linked to class inequality (Browne and Misra, 2003) and the exclusionary practices of powerful, privileged groups (Weber, 2001; Collins, 2002). Additionally, I use qualitative research in this thesis to apply intersectionality since qualitative analysis allows for a more multifaceted analysis of social reality (Davis, 2014; Hunting, 2014; Shields, 2008; Smiet, 2017). These considerations provide the rationale for this study's theoretical framework, which is presented below.

3.2 Intersectional Theory

As a theoretical concept, intersectionality refers to:

'...interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion and subordination the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power (Davis 2008, p. 67- 68).

Theory can be defined as a 'set of analytical principles designed to structure our observations and explanations of the world' (Cairney 2012, p.5) because the more we can understand the world, the greater the understanding we can achieve from it (Atewologun, 2011). A theory explains why the world works the way it does, although this definition can be seen by some as

a simplification of reality, what this definition does is that it aims to clarify and explain at least some aspect of reality (Strauss, 1995). Else-Quest and Hyde (2016) extend this idea of intersectionality theory further when they postulate that intersectionality theory can best be understood as a critical theory, that is, power relations play a fundamental role in the construction of knowledge, thought, and experience. Intersectionality theory is also viewed as being concerned with 'social categories, principally those that involve inequality or power, such as gender, race or ethnicity, and social background, are almost always permeated by one another' (Codiroli Mcmaster and Cook, 2019, p 3). Intersectionality was recognised as a reaction to the doctrines and structures from law and public policy to emancipatory movements, which it was felt were unsuccessful in making Black women visible and giving a voice to Black women's diverse experiences especially their place at the intersection of oppressed subject positions (Collins and Bilge, 2020; Khambhaita, 2014).

Consequently, intersectionality has become an integral part of any discussion relating to women's studies (Cho e tal, 2013; Davis, 2008; McCall, 2003) and has become somewhat of a buzzword (Nash, 2008), but May (2015) believes that it is commonly presented superficially without addressing social justice and disrupting dominant logic. May (2015) argues further that while intersectionality is widely known, acclaimed, and applied, it is often construed in ways that depoliticise, undercut, or even contradict it. Using a number of existing works of literature on intersectionality, she explores intersectional ideas, histories, and practices. Her view of intersectionality is that it must be understood in three ways: it is rooted in a particular intellectual or political history, a set of commitments that are not bound by specific groups but strive for justice on multiple fronts and is flexible and open to criticism. In the absence of such a commitment, we risk reducing it to a description of intricacies, to a demographic factor, or a depoliticised matrix device without a dedication to eradicating injustice or transforming ways of being and knowing. Additionally, Collins (2015) believes that the approach we take when

analysing and defining intersectionality cannot be limited to a fixed body of knowledge since intersectionality refers to a diverse range of practices, interpretations, methodologies, and political orientations.

An intersectional perspective regards race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age as mutually construing phenomena instead of unitary, mutually exclusive entities. While there is some consensus in the literature on what intersects with intersectionality, it is not always clear what counts as intersectionality (May, 2015). As I explain in this thesis, intersectionality is concerned with power relations and social injustices. My study explores three interdependent concerns: (a) intersectionality as a study situated within the power relations it explores, (b) intersectionality as a critical praxis that informs social justice initiatives; and (c) intersectionality as a new analytical strategy that presents a new perspective on social phenomena. In addition to the aspects mentioned above in the following section, I will also examine the origins of intersectional theory.

3.3 Origins of Intersectional Theory

Intersectionality as a theoretical framework was adopted in this research which originated through the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African-American law professor, in the early 1990s and is rooted in Black feminist thought which is located at the core of Black women's experiences (Rice et al., 2019). It was Crenshaw's (1989) frustration at the lack of discourse surrounding the experiences of black women that led to the development of intersectionality theory (Cho e tal, 2013; Davis, 2008; Crenshaw, 1989). Though intersectionality as a conceptexisted before Crenshaw, she was the first person to give a name to the oppression experienced by Black women by naming it intersectionality. Crenshaw (1989) in her study of an occupational discrimination suit by five Black women, explores the complexity and multidimensionality of Black women's experiences not only because of the

intersection of their gender, race, and poverty but also because they were primarily in a patriarchal, white, and capitalist society (Howard and Navarro, 2016). In her study, Crenshaw presents how this suit was ruled against by the court because it was established by the employer that the hiring practices that existed in their organisation regarding women (that is, *White* women) and Black people (that is, Black *men*) were 'fair'. At the time of the suit, the court had no means of accepting a discrimination case based on the multidimensionality of the Black women's experiences. Crenshaw, therefore, coined the term 'intersectionality' to explain the further marginalisation of Black women within an academic framework (Crenshaw, 1989). For Crenshaw intersectionality was a perspective that 'insists that gender cannot and should not be studied in isolation from race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion or other structures of power because they do not exist in isolation from one another, but instead always intersect' (Smiet, 2017, p.59).

Crenshaw postulates the idea that focussing on the most privileged group members will ultimately marginalise those who are not as privileged and who are essentially under-represented in society. Crenshaw, therefore, uses intersectionality to illustrate how the multiple experiences of Black women, of encountering and facing instances of prejudice, were misrepresented by a one-sided focus on a single category of social inequality (Crenshaw e tal., 2015). Crenshaw's (1989) investigation of the intersection of race, class, and gender, therefore, highlights and supports the issue that for the subjugated classes in society, traditional approaches to investigating equity and prejudice might not efficiently capture the full scale of their experiences. Furthermore, this information sheds more light on the importance of intersectionality to this research. In the next section, I will focus on the role of intersectionality in this thesis by answering the question: Why intersectionality?

3.4 Why Intersectionality? The Role of Intersectionality in this research

There is a wide range of views on intersectionality among scholars as a result, intersectionality has been used in numerous ways (Davis, 2008), for example, in social science to decipher social categories such as gender, ethnicity, and class; to examine differences and similarities within social categories, or to focus on multiple, intersecting inequalities between social categories (McCall, 2005). Acker (2012) and Yuval-Davis (2006) view intersectionality as a process, while McCall (2005) views it as a means of analysing differences. Intersectionality, as posited by various scholars, assumes multifaceted roles within the discourse – it can serve as a paradigm, a simultaneous process, a matrix of dominance, or even a tool in the toolkit of understanding social complexities (Anthias, 2012; Hancock, 2007; Holvino, 2010). It is crucial to recognise that these diverse perspectives on intersectionality converge on a central premise: they all illuminate how intersecting identities exert a profound influence on individuals as they traverse intricate hierarchies and societal structures.

This shared foundation underscores the significance of intersectionality as a lens through which we can unravel the intricate web of privilege and discrimination that people face. Whether regarded as a paradigm for comprehensive social analysis, a dynamic interplay of multiple identities, a complex system of power relations, or a practical framework for unpacking lived experiences, the ultimate goal remains consistent – shedding light on the intersectional nature of identity and the implications it carries within the broader sociocultural landscape. Intersectionality is one of the foundational pillars of Critical Race Theory (CRT) (López and Hogan, 2021) and within CRT intersectional analysis is essential (Gillborn, 2010). However, contrary to Critical Race Theory (CRT), which views discrimination primarily as a matter of individual identity, intersectionality theory asserts that all aspects of identity interact with each other and affect how people perceive themselves in society. Therefore, intersectionality theory

asserts that it is impossible to observe each of these features of identity separately (Cooper et al., 2016). A key component of CRT is the understanding and opposition to racial inequality in education (Ansell, 2013). As part of CRT, ethnicity is also considered in determining school inequalities and forms of discrimination and therefore is an appropriate model for introducing the subjectivity and meaning of racial inequality issues as it focusses on the personal, subjective experiences of individuals (Delgado and Stefancic, 2023). However, this thesis using intersectionality theory has allowed me to consider not only racial inequality issues as it focusses on the personal, subjective experiences of individuals but also how other social constructs and multiple identities such as sexism, and other social issues are inextricably linked to and compounded by the pluralism of social identities in society (McBride et al., 2015).

Theorists who apply CRT to education argue that racism is a natural feature of society, rather than an anomaly (Taylor, 2016). Intersectionality attempts in this research rather than focussing on any single dimension or system of inequality, to show how multiple dimensions work together and create distinct outcomes. Intersectionality not only highlights the impact of race and racism on marginalised groups and the quest for social justice (Bilge, 2013; Collins, 2015) but also seeks to examine how the different identity markers such as race, gender, class, ethnicity or social background interact and become separate disadvantaging factors that may intersect at different points to create different power relationships (Delgado and Stefancic, 2023; Bronner and Paulus, 2017). Additionally, it is important to note that Carastathis (2016) indicates that a decolonial perspective cannot be explained by adding axes of difference to an intersectional analysis; rather, decolonisation requires a fundamental change in ideology, institutions, and relationships to resources. Intersectionality, therefore, works on two strategic levels in this research. Firstly, the framework identifies that individuals are comprised of

numerous identity markers and that these characteristics take a multiplicative relationship, and secondly, that structural systems of power exist within society to reinforce hierarchical privileges and oppressions that are predicated on identity (Atewologun, 2018).

Intersectionality, therefore, gives us "a prism, for seeing how various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other" (Steinmetz, 2020, p. 1). Learning and growth are rooted in the relationship between students and teachers, which involves the teachers' understanding of who their students are and their ability to respond to them in their entirety. According to Cochran-Smith (2009), a social justice teacher education framework has three components: a theory of justice, a theory of teaching social justice, and a theory of teacher preparation. While current theories may more specifically centre race, Cochran-Smith (2009) emphasises the importance of teachers understanding and respecting the identity and racial/cultural diversity of their students (p. 454). In support of her framework, Cochran-Smith argues that "all individuals have multiple identities" (Cochran-Smith, 2009, p. 456), indicating that we should not just consider students' identities, but also teachers' identities. This is another reason why I have chosen intersectionality theory in this thesis; intersectionality offers a way for teachers to examine the relationship between respecting social groups and accepting the universality of multiple identities through the lens of education (Cochran-Smith, 2009; Hippisley, 2019). Even though there is no simple way to capture how identities and social experiences interact, intersectionality offers a method for addressing multiple social identity markers in English classes. Intersectionality also represents a robust theoretical framework for analysing the complex nature of the different aspects of an individual's identity which is another key element to consider in this thesis which I will focus on in more detail in the section that follows.

3.5 Intersectionality as a Framework

Intersectionality is a conceptual framework that facilitates the assessment of contextual factors that have a bearing on a student's success (Ortiz et al., 2021), by applying an intersectional approach, this research examines intersectionality as a valuable research paradigm, which examines groups with intersecting marginalised characteristics, such as Blacks, Whites, men, women, working-class teachers, and middle-class teachers, which can provide a platform to voice those whose voices are often unheard (Dhamoon, 2011). Furthermore, it allows for a more in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of the English curriculum and how it is designed to aid the achievement of all students from varied backgrounds, races, classes, and genders.

According to McBride et al. (2015), the concept of intersectionality has been re-interpreted since Crenshaw used it first in 1989, to refer to a wider range of inequalities that arise from discrimination based on gender, class, or social groups, as well as age, sexuality, and disabilities, which intersect. Also, Tatli and Zbilgin (2012) reported that intersectionality offers new ways for researchers to investigate diversity and shows how different categories interact. Hence, by anchoring this thesis within an intersectional framework and applying an intersectional lens to the examination of inequality, it underscores the inadequacy of addressing disparities in educational systems solely within the confines of individual categories like ethnicity, gender, or social background. This recognition stems from the understanding that structures of power and inequality are inherently interconnected across various dimensions, including but not limited to race, class, and gender, as emphasised by scholars such as Collins and Bilge (2020). Consequently, these multiple facets of identity can intertwine and overlap, giving rise to what has been aptly termed 'complex inequality,' a concept elucidated by McCall (2001).

This approach acknowledges that the experiences of individuals are not isolated according to single identity markers but are shaped by the intricate interplay of various social, economic, and cultural factors. It underscores the need for a more holistic and nuanced perspective in addressing inequality within educational systems, one that recognises the complex interrelationships among these identities and the systemic forces that drive disparities in education. This understanding is pivotal in formulating comprehensive solutions that can effectively dismantle the pervasive web of inequality in educational settings.

Crenshaw's intersectionality theory seemed relevant to this research because it explores both teachers' and students' experiences in English classrooms and recognises the fluid relationship of 'categories of difference' and the influence of individual and institutional variables in shaping systems of oppression and privilege in educational contexts. She argues that in discrimination cases involving race, discrimination is evaluated based on the 'class privilege of blacks', whereas discrimination based on sex is evaluated based on the 'race and class privileges of women' (1989, p. 140). It, therefore, seeks to address multidimensional inequalities by combining historical background, social location, and experience (Crenshaw, 2015). I wanted to explore not only racial inequities but multiple forms of inequality and how these can shape processes that are also reflected and influenced by other dimensions of identity and social structure such as gender, social class, ethnicity and disability and the need for teachers to have an understanding and awareness of this in their practice.

Furthermore, a substantial amount of the theoretical research on intersectionality has focussed on exploring intersectionality as a framework that is both analytical and practical. This allows scholars to comprehend how oppressive societal constructs intersect and is a useful tool when considering multiple positioning (Khambhaita, 2014) which as research suggests may contribute to more effective strategies for reducing inequalities in multiple dimensions of social

inequality (Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003). By using intersectionality theory, a key element of this research is understanding intersectionality in the English classroom as it pertains to English teaching and attainment of pupils. This includes addressing issues affecting the intersection of race, class, gender, social background, and disability, which "foregrounds a richer and more complex ontology than approaches that attempt to reduce people to one category at a time. It also points to the need for multiplex epistemologies" (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006, p.187). An intersectional framing of educational inequality consequently focusses on intersectionality as being critical to tackling all social problems (Rice et al., 2019). Therefore, it should be an essential aspect of teaching in English classrooms and its relation to the attainment of pupils. This is because the educational experiences of pupils are inequitably shaped by the systemic injustices in society, which can be used as a tool to tackle educational inequality (Gillborn, 2018). Having explored the theoretical framework, the upcoming section will delve into the concept of intersectionality in the context of English education and achievement.

3.6 Intersectionality: English Teaching and Attainment

Intersectionality theory extends beyond law, race, and gender and has been applied to a wide variety of disciplines to study and examine how power structures interact to create disparate social inequality that impacts individuals and groups differently (Cho, 2013, p. 385). There has been a growing interest in intersectionality within education in the UK (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). However, intersectionality has never been used to study how English is taught in schools and a limited amount of research and literature exists that examines intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy with a focus on how Teachers of English teach in English classrooms and how schools and teachers can develop strategies to improve their teaching to create more equitable results.

Based on Gillborn and Mirza's (2000) study of 118 local authorities, social class, race, and

gender significantly affect educational attainment. They acknowledge that the interplay (or intersection) of gender, race, and class could have a significant impact on the performance of BAME pupils. Ortiz et al. (2012) believe that an increasingly diverse student population will nonetheless pose a challenge to teachers because few teachers possess the depth of knowledge and skills from an intersectional lens. By incorporating intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy into their daily practice, teachers can make their teaching and classrooms more accessible.

It has also been suggested by Bishop (1990) that texts can function as intersectional windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors. This is an intriguing perspective which asserts that texts possess the remarkable capacity to serve as multifaceted tools – functioning as intersectional windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors. This concept not only underscores the inherent dynamism of literature and written communication but also highlights their pivotal role in shaping our understanding of the world, ourselves, and the perspectives of others. First and foremost, Bishop's notion of texts as "intersectional windows" implies that written materials can provide us with a unique vantage point into various dimensions of human experience. They serve as portals that allow us to glimpse into the lives, cultures, and circumstances of individuals whose experiences may differ significantly from our own. Through this window, we gain access to new worlds and fresh perspectives, fostering empathy, compassion, and a broader worldview. Moreover, texts can function as "mirrors" by reflecting our own identities, emotions, and experiences back to us. When we read, we often encounter characters and situations that resonate with our personal lives, helping us to make sense of our own thoughts and feelings. This mirroring effect creates a sense of connection and validation, offering us a deeper understanding of our own identities and experiences. Therefore, it is possible in the English classroom for teachers and students to learn how oppression operates in the world and

schools by reading about it. This can help to dismantle the oppressive systems that hold our students and families captive and can be accomplished by teachers by thinking and writing about ways to disrupt them (Jiménez, 2021).

Jiménez (2021) argues that voices and stories from marginalised communities must be centred in English lessons to introduce intersectionality and improve student achievement. To demonstrate marginalised individuals as whole people living complex lives that do not conform to dominant White narratives, it must push back against the biased narratives of the community, it must be relevant to the students, and it must engage them deeply. While Jiménez's (2021) argument is specific to English, it is similar to Case's (2017) argument about centring the students in the curriculum using texts and other content material. In Section 3.7, we will delve into the exploration of understanding intersectionality in this research, drawing parallels between Jiménez's (2021) focus on English and Case's (2017) argument regarding centring students in the curriculum through the utilisation of texts and other content materials. In Section 3.7, we will delve into the understanding of intersectionality in this research, building upon the common elements that have emerged from the works of Jiménez (2021) and Case (2017) and how they lay the foundation for a more inclusive and insightful approach to education.

3.7 Understanding Intersectionality in this research

Through intersectionality theory, marginalisation is contextualised more effectively, and socio-historical forces are illuminated. Because of its values and guiding principles, intersectionality theory can be an important complement to qualitative educational research to capture the lived and multifaceted experiences of oppressed individuals and people in a variety of social positions. It is well-documented that intersectional approaches are useful in empirical research (Bauer, 2014; Berger and Guidroz, 2009; Cole, 2008; Else-Quest and Hyde, 2016a; Few-Demo,

2014; Hancock, 2007; McCall, 2005; Warner and Shields, 2013).

In addition to providing researchers with a robust analytical approach to understanding and examining the interconnectedness of numerous socially constructed identities (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc.), intersectionality offers researchers a robust analytical approach to understanding and analysing how these identities shape people's lives. Else-Quest and Hyde (2016a) postulate that as intersectionality theory has evolved and become more differentiated across various disciplines three common elements have emerged: 1) the assumption that each individual has a multitude of identities that converge; 2) each identity has a dimension of power or oppression; and 3) identities are created by socio-cultural contexts and as such are mutable by individuals. Using these three elements, the thesis suggests that teachers should become aware of them, understand them, and use them to develop a better understanding of their students and how achievement occurs in the classroom. To foster learning and growth, teachers must understand who their students are and how they view and respond to them - in all their complexity. A key idea in Cochran-Smith's three-part theoretical framework for social justice teacher education is respect for "all social, racial, and cultural groups" (p. 454).

Using intersectionality as my theoretical perspective for this thesis is important because intersectionality provides teachers with a means of assessing how education addresses the relationship between respecting social groups and recognising the universality of multiple identities, as Cochran-Smith (2009) argues in her theory of social justice in teacher education. An individual's identity is characterised by a multitude of distinct facets, and intersectionality offers a robust framework for analysing that complexity. While there is no singular way to

capture the varied and unique interactions of people's identities and social experiences, intersectionality helps to unveil how multiple social identity markers can be addressed in English classrooms.

Crenshaw (1989; 1994) developed the term intersectionality in the context of legal issues, to expose the multiple layers of oppression people may suffer as a result of racial discrimination and gender discrimination. Researchers and policymakers have historically relied on understanding singular group identities for reducing injustice and approaching social policy change (Hancock, 2007), ignoring other pertinent identity markers and assigning the same characterisation and experience to all group members. As a result of using intersectionality, this research acknowledges that not every student within one identity group shares the same identity or faces the same issues in the classroom when their multiple group memberships are taken into account. Black students, for example, are typically considered to belong to the "race" category, even though their identities can also include the categories of "girl", "PP" or "LAC" (Looked After Child), "bilingual" or "multilingual". As a result, minority status can occur within multiple subordinate group identities, rendering them essentially "invisible" to their own group (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008, p. 384).

Researchers such as Dhamoon (2011) and Hancock (2007) recognise intersectionality not just as a result of the intersection of people's identity categories, but also as a result of the intersection of their personal and institutional circumstances. Through this approach to intersectionality, it becomes possible to examine the complex interactions of identities within broader societal as well as institutional structures. With an intersectionality lens, teachers can conceptualise students as having a network of multiple social categories which form a unit of

identity for each student. This will thus reveal how their students' positionalities emerge as a result of the perceptions, experiences, and power-negotiated relationships that they experience.

Greene (2014) and Ross (2017) argue that when a marginalised group's experience is captured and told from an insider perspective, researchers can operate with pre-existing knowledge that can be used to better facilitate interaction with them and access to them. As an insider, I designed the study so that marginalised groups have a voice (McLemore and Choo, 2019) and to foster empathy and rapport (Ross, 2017). By providing participants with potential emotional benefits, narratives rendered will be more "authentic" and reflective of those under study. Therefore, when conceptualising the study, it was important to consider my differing identities as the one designing the study; I am a Black Jamaican British woman, from working-class beginnings, a mother, teacher, wife, student and Christian. Additionally, I recruited participants who taught in working-class school settings, and collected, analysed, and disseminated data. I also was able to take into account sociohistorical forces of marginalisation and understand teachers' identities as multidimensional and interdependent at each stage of the research process. Thus, I was able to select approaches, methods, and data collection and analysis strategies that were more sensitive to participants' lived realities, leading to more robust and nuanced results. While a growing body of research and scholarly discourse supports the integration of intersectionality into educational practices, it is essential to acknowledge that this approach is not without its share of critiques. In the following section, I will explore the various criticisms against the concept of intersectionality, offering a comprehensive exploration of these concerns.

3.8 Criticisms of intersectionality

Intersectionality, as a theoretical framework, has not been without its share of critiques.

However, it is essential to recognise that these criticisms do not negate the profound impact of intersectionality in contemporary discussions on social inequality. A common misconception or criticism about intersectionality is that it involves pitting different groups against each other to determine who is most marginalised or disadvantaged. In contrast, intersectionality explores how multiple forms of oppression and disadvantage interact to shape people's experiences. By applying intersectionality in this thesis, it becomes possible to analyse the interaction between, among other things, gender, disability, background, race, and class of each student, and to examine the interactions between these characteristics and how educational contexts respond (Grant and Zwier, 2011). A second criticism of intersectionality as a theory is that for it to work the policies that exist must recognise and understand the multiple forms of discrimination that exist (Collins, 2015). Therefore, if policies do not recognise that multiple forms of discrimination exist, they cannot effectively combat them. Additionally, it has been argued that even though intersectionality has been used within educational inequality research it is limited in identifying social differences and an intersectional lens is mainly used by feminist scholars (Tefera e tal, 2018).

A third critique of intersectionality is that it is narrowly focussed on issues of identity. It is important to note, though, that intersectionality is more than just arguing that individuals have intersecting identities and is more about explaining how some identification groups are excluded from society by virtue of their differences (Minda, 1995), while others are included through inherent privileges (Nash, 2008). In addition, researchers of intersectionality believe that this critique misinterprets the role of identity because intersectionality enables the analysis of power and inequitable relationships within social settings and groups looking at how this shapes individual and group identities (Patton et al., 2016; Carbado et al., 2013; McCall, 2005). It should be noted however that analytically, intersectionality enables theory to conceptually explore experience and discourse as the product of intersecting identities and

multiple systems of domination, facilitating the deconstruction of single categories to reveal diverse aspects of women's location. While the concerns about complexity and potential divisions within the movement are valid, they should not overshadow the invaluable contributions that intersectionality has made to our understanding of social inequality. Addressing these concerns can lead to a more refined and inclusive application of the framework because they highlight the need for ongoing dialogue, research, and thoughtful consideration to ensure that intersectionality is applied in a way that maximises its potential benefits while addressing these legitimate concerns. This will ensure that intersectionality remains a powerful tool for promoting justice and equality. Thus, considering the enduring significance of intersectionality in shaping contemporary discussions on inequality is not only important but necessary for advancing the cause of social justice and inclusivity.

3.9 Summary/Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has explored the huge amount of literature on intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy that exists that focusses on extending understandings of gender and ethnicity. However, this has underlined the limited evidence that exists to afford conclusions to be drawn regarding the knowledge, skills and strategies of intersectionality available to teachers. This knowledge of intersectionality is essential in allowing teachers to incorporate or introduce specific strategies and activities of intersectional pedagogy into the English classroom which will further impact students' achievement and attainment. Research that claims to be intersectional must centre on social justice and social transformation (Rice et al., 2019). It was therefore not my intention in this research to use additive approaches, whereby two or more social markers were considered without considering or acknowledging the complexities that emerged at these junctures or the broader social context in which identities and differences are conceived and constructed.

Additionally, throughout the literature, there was limited research on the relationship between teachers' explicit understanding and practical knowledge of the intersectionality of class, race, gender and social background and the impact of intersectionality on the educational achievement and success of their pupils in English lessons. Case (2017) notes that despite the benefits of intersectional pedagogy to pupils' outcomes, the availability of techniques and strategies for teaching and learning remains drastically sparse (pg. 7) while, Baumert et al. (2010) provide evidence for the importance of teachers' knowledge of good explanations, models, analogies, representations and examples in relation to the content of whatever subject they teach. Teaching needs to be 'culturally relevant' because great teachers are aware of, respectful towards and responsive to the cultural identities of their students. This is particularly important when the students' culture differs from, and has the potential to conflict with, that of the teacher or school (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Brown-Jeffy and Cooper, 2011). There is a gap in the literature on how intersectionality could extend the understanding of cultural diversity in the classroom. It is hoped that as a result of this research teachers' classroom practice will be transformed to include intersectional awareness and strategies to make classrooms intersectional places of learning.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The research methodology adopted was qualitative using an interpretative paradigm; the research strategy was that of an exploratory case study (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013), which allowed depth and a greater sense of veracity to the study because it dealt with real teachers and issues that schools face. The methods used to collect data included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Additionally, the study is grounded on an ontological relativist and epistemologically interprevist framework (Grix, 2010) suggesting that this study is not impartial since there exists no sole objective or accurate interpretation but that the researcher has the responsibility of constructing meaning jointly with the key stakeholders (the teachers) when interpreting data.

Within the scope of my investigation into intersectionality within the English classroom, it is imperative to recognise and scrutinise my positionality as a Black woman and an English teacher. This dual role significantly molded the process of data collection and subsequent analysis. As a researcher, my lived experiences, cultural background, and identity as a Black woman inevitably influenced my interactions within the research setting (Sikes, 2004; Wellington et al., 2005). These factors played a pivotal role in shaping relationships with participants, impacting the depth and authenticity of the collected data, and consequently influencing the research process and outcomes (Rowe, 2014). My unique vantage point, shaped by my positionality, allowed me to interpret and understand the nuanced experiences of individuals within the English classroom, particularly concerning the multifaceted dimensions of intersectionality.

Throughout the data collection phase, my awareness of my own identity facilitated a nuanced exploration of participants' narratives. This awareness enabled me to recognise and appreciate diverse perspectives, taking into account the intersections of race, gender, and other social categories. Moreover, my positionality fostered a more empathetic and culturally sensitive approach, building trust and openness among participants and enriching the depth and quality of the gathered data (Devotta et al., 2016).

Moreover, while analysing the research findings, my viewpoint as a Black woman who was also a Teacher of English, served as a vital lens through which I interpreted and contextualised the data. This perspective enabled a more sophisticated understanding of the intricate complexities inherent in the experiences of individuals within the English classroom. It prompted a critical examination of power dynamics, privilege, and systemic inequalities intersecting within the educational context. Essentially, my positionality as a Black female English teacher guided the entire research process, influencing the questions posed, shaping the methods employed, and informing the interpretation of collected data. Embracing and acknowledging the impact of my identity added depth, authenticity, and a more comprehensive understanding of the varied experiences of the Teachers of English and their experiences within their educational settings.

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Teachers of English understand the intersection of gender, race, and class and its impact on their students' achievement and success in education?

2. To what extent do Teachers of English use intersectional pedagogy to challenge gender, race and class structures in their classes to ensure their pupils' attainment?

3. How can Teachers of English use their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race, and

class to implement intersectional strategies to respond to their pupils' achievement and success in English?

To answer the research questions, I am using a qualitative research design. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The themes were analysed using thematic analysis (See Appendix 4 for a copy of the themes and sub-themes). The study participants were all Teachers of English working in inner-city working-class settings. The ensuing segment discusses my ontological and epistemological standpoint and how it has shaped my methodological decisions. Subsequent passages will elucidate the sampling approach utilised, the rationale behind its selection, and an introduction to the study's participants. Following an account of my interview methodology, I will expound upon the reasoning behind this data collection method. This section will additionally address potential threats to interview validity and the measures taken to mitigate them. Subsequently, I will delineate the steps in my thematic analysis procedure and the justification for its selection. Within this discourse, I will also tackle the issues of trustworthiness in the data analysis process and the steps taken to ensure it. I will conclude with an examination of pertinent methodological constraints and ethical considerations.

4.2 Epistemology

Epistemology focusses on understanding the nature, scope, and limits of knowledge. A number of questions are explored such as what knowledge is, how it is acquired, and what makes us sure that what we think we know is true (Kline, 2008). As well as the relationship between knowledge and belief, epistemology examines the methods and criteria for distinguishing justified beliefs from mere opinions. Lipman (2021) believes that a relativist view may seem to explain how the same portion of reality can be both one thing and many things based on the

assumption that the portion of reality is these ways relative to different 'concepts' or 'counts.' Therefore, a relativist view explains how some portion of reality can be both one thing and many things 'thus linking to the complexity of identity and how people may have multiple identities in society.

I use epistemological relativism in my research to examine how Teachers of English acquire and justify knowledge. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to explore twenty teachers' overall worldview or 'culture' (Crotty, 1998) as it related to intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy and their experiences of teaching in the English classroom. This was done to understand how Teachers of English from diverse backgrounds and social locations construct knowledge. One goal of this research was to challenge and deconstruct dominant and mainstream knowledge systems that perpetuate bias, discrimination, and inequity. Epistemological relativism emphasises the importance of challenging dominant knowledge systems and incorporating diverse voices and perspectives to create more inclusive and equitable forms of knowledge. It fits the current study as the experiences within the classroom are appropriately located within a socio-political, cultural and historical context of race, ethnicity, ability and discrimination. In summary, epistemology plays a foundational role in intersectionality research by shaping how researchers approach knowledge, critically engage with existing paradigms, and strive to produce more inclusive and equitable forms of knowledge. It encourages a reflective and critical stance towards how knowledge is constructed, and it guides researchers in their efforts to better understand and address complex social issues (Sieciel, 2011).

4.3 Ontology

My ontological position is interpretivist. Interpretivism is an ontological stance that asserts that reality is subjective and socially constructed (Chen, 2011). In other words, interpretivists

believe that individuals and groups create their own meanings and interpretations of the world around them. It also 'takes human interpretation as the starting point for developing knowledge about the social world' (Prasad, 2005, p.13). They argue that there is no single, objective reality that exists independently of human interpretation and therefore emphasises the importance of individual and group subjectivity in shaping perceptions and understanding.

 I use this ontological position in this research because the interpretivists believe people interpret their experiences based on their unique perspectives and cultural backgrounds. This is important to my research because concepts like "truth" and "reality" are not absolute but are instead products of human interaction and communication. As a result, in this research I employed qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus group discussions to explore and understand the subjective meanings and interpretations of the teachers and how they felt, experienced and perceived intersectionality in their classrooms. The research data explored the existence of multiple realities, as different teachers had different interpretations of the same phenomenon. In summary, an ontological stance of interpretivism posits that reality is not an objective, fixed entity but rather a subjective and socially constructed concept. This perspective has significant implications for research methodology and the way researchers approach the study of human behaviour and society, emphasising the importance of understanding the meanings and interpretations people attach to their experiences.

4.4 Qualitative Research

 Qualitative researchers seek to understand human beings through an exploration of the meanings given to events and experiences by the participants. Kincheloe (2012) defines qualitative research as being concerned with experiences as it is lived, felt, or undergone. Similarly, Ely (1991) speaks of the researcher being immersed in the context to see and understand events more effectively. Kincheloe (2012) considers there to be three stages in the

qualitative research process. The researcher investigates the key aspects of an event, then interprets meanings and patterns and finally analyses the significance of these events, or phenomena. An appreciation of the context of the phenomena, therefore, is an essential part of this research. Hopkins (1993) argues that qualitative research is less of a methodology and more of a way of life; it is an approach that is applicable across a range of settings. It describes and analyses phenomena on their own terms and helps us to think constructively and generate meaning out of complex and problematic situations. Being mindful of the limitations of qualitative research and case study it was still considered to be the best approach for this research since it enabled an investigation of a subject of interest and prior knowledge (Atkins and Wallace, 2016).

4.5 Case study

Case studies enable researchers to incorporate a human dimension to their study, to give depth and a greater sense of reality to a set of facts and figures (Hamilton, 2011). Indeed, the strength of a case study lies in the fact that it deals with real people and issues and not hypothetical situations. This enables the reader to identify more readily with issues which are more accessible to a wider range of people than solely academic circles. Ernest (1994) believes that case studies enable the reader 'to understand the case through... a sense of entry into the lived reality of the case' (p.25).

It is Bassey's (2001) view that case study research and educational research, in general, is selected because it is of interest, and it is not chosen as a typical example in the sense that typicality is empirically demonstrated. Ernest (1994) believes that case studies may be able to serve as a paradigm or exemplar illustrative of something much more general. To achieve this, however, the researcher needs to be vigilant concerning the limitations of the case study approach. Employing a case study methodology, proved to be an apt choice for my research

due to its ability to encompass a diverse array of perspectives. My study involved in-depth interviews with twenty teachers, thus, the exploratory case study method emerged as a valuable tool for addressing the 'how?' and 'what?' questions central to my research. By delving into the experiences and knowledge of these educators regarding intersectionality within the English classroom, I gained insights that were instrumental in developing a comprehensive understanding of how these teachers harnessed intersectionality to promote equity and enhance academic achievement within the English classroom.

Furthermore, the employment of an exploratory case study design granted me a unique vantage point to observe how teachers' experiences of intersectionality translated into effective pedagogical strategies. This, in turn, allowed me to gain a nuanced and personalised perspective on the skills and knowledge these educators possessed in the realm of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy. In essence, the case study approach enabled me to conduct a multifaceted investigation that went beyond a surface-level examination, offering valuable insights into the practical application of intersectionality within the educational context. With the groundwork laid for the research, the following section outlines the strategies and methods employed in collecting and processing the data, offering insight into the thought process behind their selection.

4.5 Data Collection Methods and Rationale

4.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Data in the study were generated employing interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes and allowed me 'to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena' (Kvale 1983, p.174) because they help us make sense of participants' unique ways of viewing reality, and "may contribute to the empowerment of the oppressed" (Kvale, 2006, p. 497). The

importance of interviews to research as a method of data collection is further underlined by Nunkoosing (2005) for enabling individuals to think and talk about their predicaments, needs, expectations, experiences and understanding. While the interviews were very useful in gaining information on the perceptions and beliefs of the participants, I was aware of the strong bias that existed, since interviewers can change the nature of the data, adding bias to the results with verbal and nonverbal reactions and with their choice of probes. In the research, respondent validation was sought to ensure responses were interpreted accurately. For the study, semi-structured interviews were considered most appropriate because it was considered to be more personal and open-ended than a more structured approach (Denscombe, 2007; Kvale, 2006). The semi-structured interview was useful since it allowed modifying the sequencing or the wording of the interview questions to enable the conversation to flow more naturally and avoid any misunderstandings if necessary, during the interviews.

All potential participants were given information about the project and what it would involve by email (see Appendix 3). From the total of 20 teachers interviewed, only two were known to me personally because we worked together in the past. Online interview research is an emergent method (Salmon, 2012). I chose to use online semi-structured interviews and focus groups using Zoom video conferencing. By using online semi-structured interviews, I was able to gather information from a cross-section of the population who were teachers and who it would have been difficult to contact to conduct the interviews otherwise. Additionally, the interviewing process was convenient for participants who did not have to leave their homes and schools for interviews which also made it easy to comply with government COVID-19 advice and restrictions. Zoom video conferencing endorsed the full range of visual and verbal exchange which allowed the interviews to closely resemble the natural back-and-forth similar to that employed in face-to-face communication, including verbal and nonverbal signals. They

were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Next, a categorical analysis was conducted, initially sorting the data into general categories aligned with the research objectives and literature review. Subsequently, the data was further grouped into overarching categories based on the teachers' responses.

Interviews are one of the most common and powerful methods that qualitative researchers use to understand other people (Bryman, 2008) and afford the opportunity to 'investigate elements of the social by asking people to talk and to gather or construct knowledge by listening to and interpreting what they say and to how they say it (Mason, 2002, p. 225). This is primarily attributed to the fact that these interviews take place in a more private and intimate setting. In such a setting, individuals often feel more at ease, less inhibited by group dynamics, and more inclined to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions openly. Furthermore, individual interviews provide a unique opportunity for participants to share personal anecdotes, experiences, and insights that they may not feel comfortable discussing in a group setting. This personalised interaction allows researchers to explore nuanced details and delve into the intricacies of each participant's perspective, which may not be as readily achievable in a group discussion format. As a result, researchers can gain deeper insights into the participants' perspectives and experiences, which can be invaluable for a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Brown and Danaher, 2019).

Consequently, after the transcription of the video recordings I re-watched the recordings to ensure accuracy. Panter-Brick et al., (2021) believe that participants reveal more personal information in computer-mediated communication than in traditional face-to-face discussions due to visual anonymity and higher levels of private self-awareness. Hanna (2012) agrees with this view when they found that participants were more likely to express their deeper feelings

in an online environment than during traditional interviews. This is similar to what I experienced since interviews enabled a richness of responses, for example, during the interviews I found that the teachers opened up and went into much detail, thus allowing more detailed responses which picked up issues emerging from the literature review. Most questions had probes and follow-up questions that brought out more information. Even when there were no formal probes, I asked participants to elaborate further to get detailed, in-depth responses. Interviews also allowed me to establish rapport with the participants and to explore specific topics, permitting more complex questions to be asked. I also made sure that teachers were finished answering questions about a topic before moving to another. The purpose of the interview was to elicit more pertinent and comprehensive responses from the teachers. However, in practice, some of the teachers being interviewed demonstrated considerable confidence in expanding upon their answers without the necessity of probing questions. Consequently, the advantage lay in the ability to rephrase questions when responses lacked depth, prompting teachers to provide even more detailed and elaborate explanations.

Some teachers also interpreted questions in different ways than other teachers in the study. However, this in itself gave an insight into the way the teachers thought processes functioned and also their varied experiences of teaching and backgrounds. The interviews conducted in this study proved to be invaluable in elucidating the perceptions, knowledge, and skills of the participants. However, it was imperative to acknowledge and address the inherent potential for bias in the interview process. Interviewers can inadvertently introduce bias through their verbal and non-verbal reactions as well as their choice of probes, which can influence the responses obtained. Consequently, a deliberate practice of reflexivity was implemented to mitigate this potential source of bias. The practice of reflexivity mandates that researchers demonstrate sensitivity to their cultural, political, and social context (Bryman, 2016). Reflexivity, in this

context, was a methodological approach used to critically examine my roleas a researcher and its potential impact on the study. By employing reflexivity, I was able to scrutinise their own biases, assumptions, and reactions throughout the interview process. This self-awareness allowed for a more nuanced and balanced interpretation of the data, ensuring that the results obtained were as free from external influences as possible.

This commitment to reflexivity not only added rigour to the research but also enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings. It underscored my dedication to presenting a comprehensive and unbiased account of the participants' perspectives, knowledge, and skills. Moreover, by acknowledging and actively managing potential sources of bias, the study adhered to the principles of methodological transparency and objectivity, thereby strengthening its overall quality and trustworthiness. Additionally, the timeline and interviewing of participants took longer than anticipated because of the disruption of the pandemic. Participants were however able to schedule their interview for both the focus group discussions and the individual interviews using the online software booking platform Doodle. Whilst this proved more convenient for teachers because the time and date were specifically chosen the drawback was that there were many missed and changed appointments and I also had to work around timetables because of the length of interviews. To effectively gather and analyse data for our research, it is essential to carefully consider the sampling strategy. The next session will consider this is more detail.

4. 6 Sampling strategy

Participants for the study were selected through a snowball sampling method (Rudestam and Newton, 2015). Initially, I leveraged my social network and personal contacts who facilitated connections with qualified participants (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2005). Along with teachers

from my local area, I also used the BAMed network to construct my sample frame of teachers who worked in inner-city working-class settings (the BAMed network is a grassroots organisation that ensures diverse communities are represented in the teaching and leadership workforce. By supporting Black, Asian, and minority ethnic colleagues in the teaching profession, the network seeks to address recruitment inequity in the teaching profession.) I posted my letter in the BAMed's newsletter outlining the research questions and purpose of my research along with my contact details for interested Teachers of English to contact me. By utilising the services of the BAMed network I identified and developed networks of diverse teachers and leaders that were not in my locality. For this reason, all interviews were conducted virtually. This research is committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive intersectional environment for teachers and students, regardless of their background. Therefore, by connecting teachers from diverse backgrounds, I wanted to offer rich research that focussed on ideas and resources that will foster the creation of a more diverse and inclusive learning environment. This afforded my research the benefit of having a range of Teachers of English with distinct and varied experiences.

Recognising the influence of self-selection among participants who willingly took part in the focus group discussions and interviews is vital for contextualising the study. After receiving a comprehensive briefing on the research's purpose and objectives, teachers opted to participate, motivated by a sincere interest in cultivating more inclusive and diverse classrooms. Their drive emanated from a shared commitment to actively contribute to the progress of educational environments that prioritise diversity and inclusivity. Furthermore, participants articulated a keen desire to serve as advocates for the principles of intersectionality within educational settings. This study employed a self-selection approach, specifically targeting English teachers with a keen interest in exploring intersectionality within the English classroom. The rationale behind this method is rooted in the belief that, for

certain topics, active and enthusiastic participation is essential to effectively achieve the research objectives (Nabatchi et al., 2012). As a result of self-selection, the composition of the focus group discussions in my research was exclusively comprised of females. This occurred because none of the male English teachers chose to participate in the focus group discussions.

I decided to draw my sample of 20 Teachers of English. Of the 20 teachers, 10 were White and 10 were BAME (see Table 1 below for a breakdown of the sample). Also, of the 20 teachers in the sample, there were 2 male and 18 female teachers. Participants were Teachers of English from across England: London, Birmingham, Essex, Liverpool and Manchester. As a result, this particular sample type was the most appropriate choice for fulfilling the research requirements, selected in response to the challenges encountered during participant recruitment for the study. I am aware that snowball sampling is not typical of the wider population, this means that the research is not generalisable, however, the value of qualitative research lies more in the rich and complex insights it provides into particular contextualised instances and less in its potential to lead to generalisable conclusions (Cohen et al., 2005; Miles et al., 2014). This sampling method, therefore, provided me with a heterogeneous sample which would not have been possible without the internet.

Table 1 intersectional characteristics of the sample chosen.

Table 1 intersectional characteristics of the sample chosen.

Pseudonym	Years Teaching	Gender	Race	One- to -one Interviews	Focus Group & one to one interview Participant
Olivia	4	Female	Black	✓	✓
Lily	22	Female	Asian	✓	✓
Amelia	19	Female	Black	✓	✓
Freya	17	Female	White	✓	
Isla	2	Female	White	✓	
Isabelle	2	Female	White	✓	
Ella	3	Female	White	✓	
Mia	6	Female	Mixed Race	✓	✓
Poppy	9	Female	White	✓	✓
Evie	7	Female	White	✓	
Charlotte	18	Female	Black	✓	✓
Henry	4	Male	Black	✓	
Chloe	4	Female	Black	✓	✓
Grace	11	Female	Black	✓	✓
Scarlett	5	Female	Black	✓	✓
Alice	9	Female	White	✓	✓
Ava	11	Female	Black	✓	✓
Jessica	6	Female	White	✓	✓
Phoebe	1	Female	White	✓	
Oliver	30	Male	White	✓	

4.6.1 Focus Groups

It is possible to broadly define a focus group as 'a type of group discussion about a topic under the guidance group moderator' (Stewart, 2018, p. 687). Focus groups provide researchers with information regarding consensus, or any discrepancy that may exist, regarding phenomena of interest (Cyr, 2016). The focus group discussions lasted for 60 minutes and allowed me to have a peripheral role in the discussion (Hohenthal et al., 2015) which was useful in getting trustworthy information from the participants without any threat of researcher bias. Implementing focus groups in this research allowed me to ask the following questions:

- Do the participants in the focus group interpret a question in similar ways?

- Does the group understand a phenomenon in similar terms?

These questions helped with the pilot and refining my prompt questions in the focus group discussions. Liamputtong (2011) describes one advantage of using focus groups in qualitative research as the ability of focus groups to observe interaction on a subject because group discussions offer direct evidence about comparisons in the participants' opinions and experiences. This research held great significance because one of its primary goals was to evaluate the effects of integrating intersectional pedagogy into the English curriculum. It aimed to gauge the extent to which teachers integrated an intersectional approach and related activities into their classrooms and to measure the resulting impact on students' academic performance. As a result, the involvement of teachers' perspectives in this undertaking was crucial.

Two focus groups were held on separate days with six participants in each focus group (Krueger and Casey, 2015). The 12 teachers who actively engaged in the focus group discussions also took part in a series of 20 semi-structured interviews. Employing a research methodology that combines one-on-one interviews and focus groups with the same set of participants offers several notable benefits. One of the key advantages of conducting individual interviews along with focus groups for the same set of participants enhances the research process by facilitating both candid, detailed responses and a more in-depth exploration of individual experiences and perspectives. This dual approach can lead to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the research subject.

Due to the sensitive or personal topics of this research, the teachers needed to be able to discuss them freely. Focus group discussions also provided a chance to examine the dynamics of group interactions and how views and experiences intersected. Focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews offer different dynamics. During focus groups, participants actively

participated in group discussions, allowing them to exchange ideas and inspire new thoughts and concepts (Morgan, 1996). In one-on-one interviews, participants felt more comfortable sharing personal insights. Combining both methods allowed this research to capture both individual and group perspectives, which led to a richer dataset. In particular, this was useful for exploring how teachers from different social groups' intersectionality experiences varied based on broader social and cultural factors. I gained a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the issues being studied by conducting both one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions with the same participants. By comparing the results of one-to-one interviews and focus groupdiscussions, I was able to identify patterns and themes that would not have emerged if I had only carried out interviews or focus group discussions alone.

This also contributed to data saturation in the study (Guest et al., 2006). When conducting research using both focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews with the same participants, achieving data saturation can be a positive outcome. The research achieved data saturation where no new information or themes were emerging from the data. This indicated that a sufficient amount of information to answer the research questions and to explore the topic adequately was gathered.

Focus groups generate rich experiential information (Liamputtong, 2011) and allow researchers to collect multiple types of data at once. For example, with the conversation that develops in a focus group, the researcher can gather additional information regarding their research question (Krippendorf, 2013). Furthermore, participants were able to speak freely and in their own words during the focus group discussions. This provided a personal perception of lived experiences and personal perspectives that complemented the semi-structured interviews. Focus group discussions also allowed me to explore complex situations and experiences that

teachers faced in the classroom while providing participants with additional information during the conversations. This allowed me to ask follow-up questions, and pursue new lines of inquiry, depending on the issues raised.

To effectively gather qualitative data for this thesis, the development and implementation of an interview guide played a crucial role. The next section will discuss the interview guide that was used to guide the conversations with participants and ensure consistency in the data collection.

4.6.2 Interview guide

 The first set of questions in the guide was used to set the scene of the research and focussed on teachers' understanding of the term intersectionality and how intersectionality applies to an educational context. Also included in the guide were several versions of the same question to corroborate participants' prior responses and account for the potential impact of differently worded questions (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Throughout, I ensured that the questions were phrased so that there were no potential misunderstandings, wordiness, or biases (Cohen et al., 2005). In addition, open-ended questions were used, when possible, to elicit more detail about participants' experiences (Mann, 2011). Piloting helped to determine how long the interviews would take and what kind of responses to expect (Cohen et al., 2005). This study examined issues around intersectionality and teachers' use of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogies to address inequalities in education. The secondary data comes from an extensive review of the literature relevant in tackling significant issues around the research questions, particularly issues surrounding intersectionality in English, as a core curriculum subject, and the place of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy within English classrooms.

The rest of this section discusses the primary data and the collection instrument. Only primary (qualitative) data was collected. The semi-structured interview guide that was piloted was used to collect data through in-depth interviews. The instrument was reviewed and then it was piloted and then reviewed once again, after this process it was used to collect data. The interview schedule (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the interview questions) consisted of 17 questions that were grouped into four sections: background and experiences and understanding of intersectionality in education, intersectionality, and intersectional practices and strategies used in the English classroom. The interview schedule broke down the research questions into simple sub-questions. Interviews asked teachers questions on intersectionality and intersectional pedagogies to get a picture of their lived experiences, observations and opinions of teaching English. The questions sought to clarify how teachers have personally experienced intersectionality within the English curriculum and teachers' interpretations of these experiences.

Before commencing the primary interviews, I undertook a pilot study. The following section will provide a more comprehensive examination of the pilot study's implementation.

4.6.3 Pilot

Pilot studies serve as the cornerstone of the research methodology, playing a vital role in upholding the integrity and efficacy of the research protocol and instruments. They areconducted on a smaller scale with the primary purpose of uncovering potential issues or shortcomings in the research protocol and instruments, as elucidated by Polit et al. (2001).

Consequently, a pilot study is an important process before a researcher conducts the full study (Janghorban et al., 2014; Majid et al., 2017). The pilot was conducted in February 2020 as

part of the general preparation for the main study. The pilot study was conducted with two male teachers and two female teachers and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Janghorban et al. (2014) summarise the four areas of pilot study application as finding the problems and barriers related to the recruitment of participants, practical engagement and learning processes as a qualitative researcher, assessing and evaluating the usefulness of the interview protocol and, determination of the epistemology and methodology of the research. With this in mind, the pilot for this study revealed various weaknesses in the draft interview schedule and some of these questions were revised and rephrased in light of this. For example, teachers not understanding the concept of intersectionality as it applied to education or a classroom setting in the research was revealed. This led to a simplified definition of intersectionality being included in the interview schedule which was used to further explain the concept to teachers and gave them the opportunity of having an understanding and conceptualisation of what was meant by intersectionality in the specific context of this research. Also, providing teachers with this definition of intersectionality as it pertained to the English classroom in this research served to pre-empt any ambiguity or misunderstanding of how intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy were used in the research. This was done before asking the questions related to the teachers' understanding of intersectionality and its relevance to their practice.

Additionally, the answers to some questions in the pilot appeared to be repetitive. Therefore, one of the questions was deleted to create a more cohesive interview process. I updated the instrument and used it to interview the last teacher who was able to answer the questions the previous three participants struggled with. This participant in the pilot was able to provide detailed and extended responses without any need for probe or follow-up questions which suggests that the questions had been made clearer and allowed for more detail. At this point, the pilot was concluded. Furthermore, despite the letter that was given to participants outlining

and explaining the purpose of the study and guaranteeing anonymity, some of the potential pilot participants still did not want to be interviewed. As a result of this observation, when recruiting participants for the primary interview I refrained from requesting participants' complete personal information, such as their full names (only first names were collected) and ages, during the primary interview. Additionally, participants were warmly greeted before the recording, fostering a relaxed atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. This approach effectively eliminated any reservations experienced by the participants (Brown and Danaher, 2019). It is acknowledged that while the pilot is very crucial, there is no guarantee that the main study would be a success although there is a potential that the pilot could contribute to the identification of possible problems in the main study (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Moving on, the next section will focus on the interview procedure of this research.

4.6.4 Interview procedure

All interviews were conducted between April and October 2020 and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions in advance of the interview, which helped build a foundation for the interview (Serrat, 2021). The day of the interview, before I began recording, I assured informants that their data would remain secure and confidential; I ensured they understood the informed consent form and had signed it (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the participation letter and consent form); explained they could withdraw without giving a reason two weeks after the interview; answered any questions about the research project; briefly discussed my aims and motivations for the research; and also engaged participants in conversation (Denscombe, 2017).

Additionally, I ensured that throughout the interview I was interested in the participants and what they had to say. This interest was madeobvious by echoing their replies to the questions asked and also using non-verbal cues for instance nodding and smiling where suitable (Berg,

2001). When the recording had stopped and the interview was concluded I continued to chat with the participants, which gave me the chance "to thank them for their participation [and] answer their questions" (Cohen et al., 2005, p. 59). Recordings were recorded from Zoom on my encrypted laptop. Following this, I labelled each audio with a reference code indicating the first initial of each participant's name and gender, the format, and the date (e.g. L-F-Online-March2020) (Denscombe, 2007).

Now, let's delve into the critical aspect of ethics within the framework of this research.

4.7 Ethics

Bassey (1999) believes that it is important to respect democracy, the truth, and the person. The researcher must remain constantly aware of his/her ethical obligations not only towards those who are participating in the research but also, as Bassey (1999) says towards the truth. Subsequently, the motives for the research and how it was carried out were clearly explained to the sample (BERA, 2018). Respect for the privacy and rights of the participants was also assured with an explanation as to how confidentiality and anonymity would be achieved since should the trustworthiness of the researcher come into question then the research itself becomes unreliable and invalid. All teachers involved were briefed about the purpose of the research, giving details of the research project, and requesting their participation through informed consent (Christians, 2011). Teachers were guaranteed confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy at all times during the research. Additionally, voluntary participation was used which allowed the participants to withdraw from the research at any time. The next section will explore the data analysis methods and rationale of the research.

The ethical underpinning of this research holds utmost significance, especially given the sensitive nature of some of the issues explored in the research. The study therefore placed a

primary focus on ensuring the well-being and comfort of participants. In addressing these ethical considerations, substantial efforts were made to establish a secure, safe and inclusive environment for participants (Halej, 2017). Prior to engaging in focus group discussions and interviews, rigorous informed consent processes were followed, clearly outlining the purpose, and benefits of participation (Crow et al., 2006). Participants were also assured that during the focus group discussions and interviews there would be a safe place in which to have these discussions about intersectionality and the English classroom.

A deliberate emphasis was placed on fostering an atmosphere conducive to open dialogue, valuing the diverse perspectives and experiences of each participant. As a Black female teacher conducting this research, I consistently maintained ongoing reflexivity and sensitivity to power dynamics throughout the research process. These ethical considerations underscore the commitment to uphold the dignity and well-being of the participants, reinforcing the research's ethical foundation in addressing issues of equity and equality in English classes.

4.8 Data Analysis Methods and Rationale

Presently, there are a variety of qualitative data analysis methods available however for this study, thematic analysis was selected being both compatible with deductive and inductive approaches and being able to analyse qualitative data comprehensively but also selectively to uncover either explicit or implicit themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). By using thematic analysis, I felt I was allowed not only to describe the data in my study but also to interpret them (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Cresswell, 2013). This flexibility meant that rather than doing comprehensive coding of every response made by participants in the study as are the requirements if I was using a grounded theory approach, I only needed to code the relevant sections of the interview transcripts (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). This was an important factor to consider when choosing a thematic analysis approach given that I

had a lot of data to analyse. Another advantage of using thematic analysis is that as a result of its structure, qualitative data, which is trustworthy, vivid, and penetrating are produced. Thematic analysis is also comparative to other methods which can be more arduous in the time they take to complete or those which are more sophisticated (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

Transitioning to the subsequent phase of this process, I will now embark on a detailed examination of the research procedure, beginning with an exploration of how I conducted the transcription and verification within this thesis.

4.9 Procedure

4.9.1 Transcription and checking

I decided to start analysing the data while still in the process of conducting interviews and focus group discussions. In the first part of the analysis, I focussed on familiarising and sensitising myself to the data through immersion (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). This was done by listening to the recordings of the interviews and reading each transcript that was made from the recordings repeatedly to get a clear sense of the emerging themes. This approach allowed me to develop a good sense of the contexts and episodes described by teachers and supports intersubjective analysis, which is an "extensive sinking-in time and digestion time as well as contemplation distributed over days and weeks" (Witz and Bae, 2011, p. 436 – 437) which is utilised to understand data overall and in their natural context in the conversation. Transcription also allowed me to condense the information (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Cohen et al., 2005) this was important because the transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions were manually transcribed. This was done because I wanted to stay true to the participants' experiences and for their voices to be heard.

Throughout this process, I found the abundance of the data to some extent overwhelming and therefore by using thematic analysis I was able to systematically organise and interpret the data. Thematic analysis allowed me to identify recurring themes and patterns within the data, which provided structure and clarity to my analysis. It also enabled me to extract meaningful insights and draw conclusions from the diverse range of information I had collected.

In the following section, I will delve into the process through which I discovered the coding and themes within my research.

4.9.2 Coding and Themes

Excel document and Word were used to collate data. Column data included such information as respondent gender, ethnicity, and length of teaching. This allowed me to understand how teachers' experiences, knowledge and skills in using intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy within the classroom were similar or dissimilar. Additionally, I engaged in descriptive coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994) which generally involved answering such questions as: What is happening in the episode? Who was there? Who said what? This enabled me to fully acquaint myself with the data set thus allowing me to approach the initial coding with some preliminary impressions regarding what might be significant or meaningful (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Denscombe, 2007). This initial coding stage involved analytically conveying categories to participants' utterances (typically phrases, sentences or paragraphs) where these were of relevance to the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Tuckett, 2005). The use of this preliminary coding was beneficial for breaking the transcripts down into possible interesting units of meaning and also taking a more reflexive position before starting to look for themes (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014). When coding, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendations to retain some of the contexts around the code; to code anything that might be relevant; and to code utterances into as many different categories as I felt was appropriate. This helped ensure that all potentially significant data would still be available for

subsequent stages of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The final stage was defining the themes and analysing the data (See Appendix 4 for a list of themes and sub-themes).

While this study provides valuable insights into its research area, it is essential to acknowledge its inherent limitations. This will be done in the section below.

4.10 Limitations of the Research

There are limitations with this research project. The teachers were all from inner-city schools with a majority working-class student population. Furthermore, most teachers are racialised as white, despite an increase in racial diversity among school pupils in England. I, therefore, wanted a balance of races in the study, and I thought this was important given that the school student population continues to diversify in England. I also wanted to get the views of all races in my study. Consequently, from the 20 participants interviewed 10 of these participants were White and 10 were BAME.

In addition, I utilised several studies, as can be seen in the literature review, indirectly using relevant pieces of literature to test the relevance of my findings. The research did not set out to investigate gender stereotypes, but this emerged as a strong theme, nevertheless. Additionally, the research also set out to understand how teachers utilised the concept of intersectionality in their English lessons to support their students and revealed that teachers' understanding of the dimensions of intersectionality was in three aspects: structural intersectionality, which is concerned with identity politics and issues of difference; political intersectionality to highlight the importance and relevance for the experiences of students in marginalised groups and who occupy multiple subordinate identities to be explored and seen in the curriculum and educational policies; and representational intersectionality which focusses on media images of Black women and their effect of shaping and controlling identity. The practical application of

intersectionality within educational settings holds significant importance, as the primary aim of this research is to uncover concrete insights that can be effectively incorporated into educational practices. Detailed examination of these insights and their implications will be undertaken in chapters 5 and 6, where the findings and conclusions of this thesis will be thoroughly explored.

Chapter 5 Intersectionality in the English Classroom

5.1 Introduction

The central aims of this study were to identify and explore how Teachers of English use intersectionality and intersectional pedagogies to address inequalities in education and how they respond to and facilitate their pupils' differing needs by using intersectional strategies. The implementation of these intersectional strategies in a practical way is imperative for teachers who wish to make classrooms and teaching more accessible to their students. When intersectionality along with intersectional pedagogies, and intersectional strategies are used in schools and incorporated into teaching practice, they can have a significant impact on education and research of this kind can contribute significantly to the literature on intersectionality in education and creating inclusive school systems.

As explained in chapter 4, the qualitative interviews and focus group discussions were analysed using thematic analysis. This chapter contains the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings from the teacher interviews and focus group discussions together with a reflection on their place within the body of knowledge in this field, some of which have been explored in the literature review. A summary of the findings is provided based on the emerging themes and categories from the interviews and focus group discussions and is accompanied by examples and illustrative quotes. The categories that emerged from this analysis, were then grouped into five overarching themes (see Appendix 4 for a list of the themes, sub-themes and codes).

Once the data had been gathered, my next step involved transcribing and meticulously organising it. This encompassed the task of categorising quotations, highlighting pertinent segments, and establishing a comprehensive database of responses. As I delved into the

analytical phase, my primary objective was to discern recurring patterns and codes within the data. These codes, often in the form of keywords or succinct phrases, served as vehicles for encapsulating the essence of specific ideas or concepts within the dataset. These codes were drawn directly from the responses provided by teachers.

As I continued my meticulous analysis of the data, it became evident that certain codes or ideas exhibited a consistent recurrence. These recurrent codes began to crystallize into potential themes. For instance, a prevalent theme emerged as teachers consistently voiced concerns about the inadequacies of the English curriculum in meeting the needs of all students, leading to the establishment of the "English curriculum" as a prominent theme.

At this juncture, I arrived at my initial set of themes, organically derived from the data. Subsequently, I revisited my research questions with a keen eye for connections between these emergent themes and the overarching research inquiries. Through a process of refinement and alignment, these themes coalesced into a total of five central concepts or ideas. These themes constitute the very core of what emerged from my data analysis and hold a direct and significant relevance to the research questions at hand. There was a direct connection between the five themes explored in the research and the research questions:

- Theme 1. The dimensions of intersectionality in the classroom

- Theme 2. The English Curriculum

- Theme 3. Importance of intersectionality within the English classroom

- Theme 4. Intersectional practices and strategies in the English classroom

- Theme 5. The importance of identity and belonging to intersectionality.

Themes 1, 2 and 3, addressed the research question: How do Teachers of English understand the intersection of gender, race and class and its impact on their students' achievement and success in education? Theme 4, addresses the research question: How can Teachers of English use their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race and class to implement intersectional strategies to respond to their pupils' achievement in English? and Theme 5 addresses the final research question: To what extent do Teachers of English use intersectional pedagogy to challenge the structures of gender, race and class in their classrooms to ensure their pupils' attainment?

Accordingly, this chapter addresses themes 1, 2 and 3 by focussing on the teachers' understanding of the dimensions of intersectionality as seen in the English classroom which has influenced the participants' experiences and ability to implement intersectional practices within their classes and lessons. Thereafter, I discuss the English curriculum and its content and how this impacts the teaching of English. I end this chapter by then considering the importance of intersectionality in the English classroom. So having established the importance of intersectionality in education in my introduction, I will now delve into the specific dimensions of intersectionality that are relevant to the English classroom (See Table 2 below for a summary of the themes discussed, focus and key points explored).

Table 2: Summary table of discussed themes, focus, and key points.

Theme	Focus	Key Points
Theme 1: Dimensions of Intersectionality in the Classroom	Teachers' Understanding of Intersectionality	Exploration of teachers' comprehension of intersectionality concepts in the context of the English classroom.
	Influence on Participants' Experiences	Examination of how teachers' understanding of intersectionality impacts the experiences of their students in the English classroom.
	Implementation of Intersectional Practices	Analysis of the influence of teachers' awareness on their ability to implement intersectional practices in classes and lessons.
Theme 2: The English Curriculum	Content and Impact on Teaching English	Discussion of the English curriculum and its content, highlighting how it shapes the teaching of English in terms of diverse perspectives.
		Examination of how the curriculum may support or hinder the integration of intersectional perspectives in English lessons.
Theme 3: Importance of Intersectionality within the English Classroom	Significance of Intersectionality in Education	Reiteration of the established importance of intersectionality in education, particularly within the context of the English classroom.
		Connection between the understanding and implementation of intersectionality and its broader impact on fostering an inclusive learning environment.

5.2 The Dimensions of Intersectionality in the English Classroom

As a starting point for exploring students' attitudes and achievements relating to class, race, and gender, this section examines the teachers' understanding of intersectionality, based on Crenshaw's (1991) identification of three dimensions of intersectionality: structural, political, and representational. The research questions were focussed on unravelling the issue of intersectionality in the English classroom and how teachers use an intersectional lens to explore and tackle issues surrounding diversity, discrimination, conflict, and social justice in their lessons. The teachers' responses summarise their experiences of intersectionality in education and how this was seen in their classrooms through their experiences and also those of their students and can be seen below using the following three identifications of the dimensions of intersectionality. As this thesis delves deeper into the dimensions of intersectionality within the English classroom, it is essential to start by examining structural intersectionality and how

structural intersectionality is seen and experienced in the English classroom.

5.2.1 Structural Intersectionality

Identity politics and issues of difference are central to structural intersectionality (Cole, 2008). According to Isabelle's (all names are pseudonyms) response below, structural intersectionality refers to the interplay between a variety of phenomena, including race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and disability:

> Intersectionality is the idea that there are different aspects of what makes you. So, you're not just a woman. You're not just the race that you are. You're not just the class that you come from, but all these factors obviously intersect and crossover, and as a result, people might treat you differently because of the combination of those factors, and it might not just be kind of sexism or racism, but those things can be combined to lead to oppression and discrimination. [Isabelle]

It is crucial to recognise that the concept of intersectionality holds profound implications for classrooms and education. Isabelle's insight underscores that intersectionality goes beyond simply acknowledging the separate effects of sexism or discrimination; instead, it recognises that these effects can multiply within the intersections of different identities. This aligns with McBride et al.'s (2015) discussion of intersectionality as encompassing a broader spectrum of racial, ethnic, and social inequalities that result from discrimination cutting across gender, class, and social groups. Additionally, Isabelle suggests that the combination of these intersecting factors can lead to people being treated differently. In other words, society's attitudes and behaviours towards individuals are influenced by the complex interplay of their identity factors. This is a key insight of intersectionality because like Crenshaw (1989) it recognises that experiences of discrimination or privilege are often linked to the specific combinations of an individual's characteristics. Isabelle highlights that intersectionality goes

beyond identifying isolated instances of sexism or racism. Her response acknowledges that the convergence of these factors can lead to systemic and pervasive issues such as oppression and discrimination. This insight is crucial for understanding the structural inequalities that many individuals face. In summary, Isabelle's response provides a clear and concise explanation of the concept of intersectionality and how it influences people's experiences and societal treatment. It emphasises the importance of considering multiple identity factors and their intersections in the analysis of discrimination and oppression.

Therefore, adopting an intersectional framework in teaching offers teachers a powerful tool to foster critical discussions in the classroom about race, class, and gender. This framework equips teachers not only to provide answers to these questions but also empowers them to challenge and transform those answers. By initiating this transformative process, teachers can develop intersectional teaching strategies that can be integrated into both their instructional practices and the curriculum itself. This transformative approach ensures that English classrooms become more inclusive and intersectional spaces where students and teachers alike can work, learn, and thrive. Ultimately, this paradigm shift has the potential to contribute significantly to a more equitable and diverse educational landscape. Additionally, teachers discussed structural intersectionality through their experiences of intersecting identities and Isabelle's response outlines the ability an intersectional lens has in allowing teachers to view their own identities through a lens that reflects how these identities interact with the world around them. The ability to explore one's own identities allows teachers to further extend this by focussing on the identities and experiences of students from marginalised backgrounds within their classes using political intersectionality. Building upon the understanding of structural intersectionality in this thesis I will now explore the nuanced aspects of political intersectionality within the English classroom.

5.2.2 Political Intersectionality

Political intersectionality highlights the importance and relevance of the experiences of students from marginalised groups who occupy multiple subordinate identities (Settles and Buchanan, 2014). In considering political intersectionality, we can consider how intersectionality plays an important role in the policies and political strategies of disadvantaged groups (Cassese, 2019). Throughout their responses, the teachers used the concept of political intersectionality to illustrate how importantit was for students who belong to marginalised groups and who occupy multiple subordinate identities to be explored and seen in the curriculum and other educational policies. Scholars like Apple (1999), Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), and Rollock (2007) have noted the limited attention given to understanding the specific challenges and opportunities faced by Black students in educational research. This underlines the importance of further exploring the intersectionality of race, gender, and other identity factors in educational contexts.

Additionally, the teachers' responses further indicate that they acknowledge that political intersectionality allowed them and policymakers to move away from the individual level of analysis and to theorise about identity categories as 'axes of multiple inequalities' (Cole, 2008, p. 450) that mutually explain, outline, and underpin one another:

> Inter is within groups, isn't it? So, it's the different groups that make up the population in a sense. In this case the classroom population or the school. So, the different stages, whether it is class, gender, race, the way they all mixed together for a particular outcome. [Amelia]

> I make sure to have a variety of different races and abilities like pictures of people in

a wheelchair not for any specific disability reference but because people in wheelchairs can be authors or teachers or whatever it is they want to be. I try and look at a variety of texts by authors who aren't well known by the pupils or has a background that has been marginalised. [Isla]

The teachers' insights are shared and supported by research that aligns closely with the perspectives of prominent scholars such as Codiroli Mcmaster and Cook (2019), McCall (2001), Davis (2008), and Collins and Bilge (2020) who have extensively examined the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality, as described by these scholars, revolves around the recognition that social categories, including gender, race or ethnicity, and social background, interact in complex ways, giving rise to multifaceted experiences of exclusion and subordination. These overlapping identities can create barriers, leading to what is often referred to as 'complex inequality' in education and broader society.

Importantly, the teachers' responses underscore the inherent intersectional nature of the classroom. Their recognition that not all approaches will universally work for every student reinforces the idea that diverse identities and experiences coexist within the educational setting. This highlights the pressing need for teachers to cultivate an 'intersectional awareness,' acknowledging the multifaceted identities and needs of their students. Consequently, teachers must actively seek out and employ a range of intersectional practices and strategies to address inequality effectively.

However, the introduction of the concept of political intersectionality reveals a critical aspect of intersectionality, which is the preservation of privileges. This dimension underscores how different forms of inequality intersect, sometimes serving to preserve existing power structures

and privileges. Acknowledging this aspect is crucial for teachers and policymakers in their efforts to dismantle systemic inequalities within education.

In summary, these insights emphasise that intersectionality is not just a theoretical concept but a practical framework with profound implications for classrooms and education. It calls for a nuanced understanding of the complexities of identity and inequality, the recognition of political dimensions, and the necessity of addressing gaps in research and representation to create more inclusive and equitable educational environments.

A similar phenomenon occurs in the media, where representations play a pivotal role in shaping individual and collective identity. This influence extends to the classroom, where media portrayals can impact how students perceive themselves and others. This intersectional lens offers a valuable perspective on how media, identity, and education intersect and emphasises the need for critical examination in this area. Moving on from political intersections, I will now shift my focus towards the realm of representational intersectionality, shedding light on how it influences the classroom environment and highlighting how identities are constructed and portrayed within the educational context.

5.2.3 Representational Intersectionality

Representational intersectionality focusses on media images of Black women and their effect on shaping and controlling identity (Crenshaw, 1991). A representational intersectionality framework can provide a method for understanding how media representation, misrepresentation, and non- representation of intersectional interests influence the beliefs about black women (Bullock, 2018). Chloe discusses how using media in lessons to explore 'black women in history' and 'just a wide variety of people, a wider race, or people whose

experiences have not been taught' can provide students with a method for understanding and exploring race and gender positively:

> Intersectionality is about looking at the ways in which all our identities inform our experiences in the world. So… all the oppressions that, women, for example, Black women face. You know their Blackness and their 'womanness'… How has our experience been presented in a positive way because of being a Black woman? There is a lot of different framing that has happened in society, but I think essentially how do all my different identities coincide, mesh, and intersect, and how has it improved my life? [Chloe]

Chloe's application of representational intersectionality provides a powerful tool for interrogating existing structures through an intersectional lens. By posing critical questions, teachers and students can engage in a deeper exploration of their identities and how society and media represent them. These questions encourage reflection on how identity shapes perceptions and experiences, enabling individuals to reach a greater acceptance of themselves and a profound understanding of the significance of their unique stories (Crenshaw, 1991). Chloe raises a critical question about how the intersection of her identities as a Black woman has led to positive experiences in her life. Her response reveals her interest in exploring instances where her identity as a Black woman may have been presented in a positive light. This indicates her curiosity and willingness to engage in self-reflection and deeper analysis. Chloe acknowledges that society plays a significant role in framing the experiences of individuals with intersecting identities. She recognises that different societal perspectives and narratives may influence how her identities are perceived and experienced. This acknowledgement demonstrates an awareness of the external factors that contribute to the intersectionality of her identity. Chloe's response is personal and introspective. She is not only interested in the broader concept of intersectionality but also in how it has personally affected her life. This

suggests a strong connection between her academic understanding of the topic and her lived experiences. Overall, Chloe's response is a well-thought-out exploration of the concept of intersectionality and its impact on her life as a Black woman. Her willingness to question and reflect on the positive aspects of her experience as a Black woman demonstrates a critical and engaged approach to the subject. This type of perspective added depth and authenticity to the discussion surrounding intersectionality in this thesis.

Furthermore, representational intersectionality serves as a catalyst for challenging inequalities in the classroom within single-category diversity settings or contexts (Bullock, 2018). It unveils the dynamics of subordination and uncovers privileges that were previously silenced or overlooked. This critical examination is essential for creating more inclusive and equitable environments, particularly within educational settings where diversity and representation play a pivotal role in shaping students' self-perception and sense of belonging. Importantly, representational intersectionality offers a valuable framework for evaluating the English curriculum and teachers' classroom experiences through an intersectional lens. By applying this perspective, teachers can assess whether the materials and teaching methods adequately reflect the diverse identities and experiences of their students. It helps to identify and address gaps in the curriculum, ensuring that it aligns more closely with the principles of equity and inclusion. In essence, representational intersectionality serves as a powerful tool for introspection, critical analysis, and transformation within educational contexts as can be seen by Chloe's response. It empowers individuals to recognise the significance of their stories, challenges inequalities and offers a pathway toward more inclusive and equitable classrooms and curricula.

With an understanding of representational intersectionality, it is important to examine how these representations intersect with the English curriculum itself. Therefore, having dissected

the dimensions of intersectionality, I will now focus on the English curriculum itself, beginning with an examination of how the English curriculum affects the content of teachers' lessons.

5.3 The English Curriculum

Another aspect of the research was to evaluate the teachers' classroom experiences of intersectionality. This section will explore the classroom experience of teachers of intersectionality based on the English curriculum and the content of their lessons and as a result the value that they see and place in creating intersectional English classrooms. It will also explore the perceived difficulties the teachers felt they faced in employing intersectional strategies in the English classrooms. This was because of the content and demands of the English curriculum. In addition, the teachers' responses considered the pertinence and applicability of intersectionality in today's classrooms and the English curriculum.

The teachers emphasised that it was essential that the English curriculum did not perpetuate the marginalisation of intersectionally marginalised communities because of its content. However, the teachers' responses are in line with the literature when they describe the English curriculum as exclusionary, inaccessible, and privileged (Weber, 2001; Collins, 2002), which they consider useful in understanding the history and contemporary manifestations of identity, difference, and disadvantage:

> It is only representative of White upper class and not really representative of the ethnic minority experience. When it comes down to it, the exam they do is all the same, so in terms of diversifying materials etc when it comes to the exam, they do … like you know one size fits all. So, in a sense you know for some children it puts them out. [Grace]

Grace's response expresses a viewpoint regarding the lack of representation of the ethnic

minority experience in the context of exams, particularly highlighting the prevalence of a "one size fits all" approach. She begins by asserting that the system under discussion, likely the examination system, predominantly represents the White upper class. This implies that there is an absence of diversity and inclusivity in the way exams are structured and evaluated. The response suggests that the experiences and needs of ethnic minorities are not adequately represented. The participant points out that the exams are perceived as being the same for all students, regardless of their backgrounds, experiences, or abilities. This "one size fits all" approach may not account for differences in learning styles, cultural contexts, and educational challenges that ethnic minority students may face. Grace's response emphasises that she believes that this uniform exam approach can negatively affect certain students. The phrase "puts them out" implies that the standardised exam system may disadvantage or hinder some students. This can be due to a lack of cultural relevance, accommodations for different learning styles, or other factors that may affect the performance of ethnic minority students. Again, this idea is replicated in Grace's response when she says that:

> The material in the GCSE is really dry…when students go for an interview… it's a one size fits all. It's not differentiated, it's not based on backgrounds, social factors, nothing like that …that's where I think it's very difficult for a teacher to kind of bridge that gap … but then you're also aware that they're gonna be assessed against a system that maybe they don't exactly belong to. [Grace]

Overall, Grace's responses highlight concern about the equity and inclusivity of the examination system, particularly in its representation of the ethnic minority experience. This perspective suggests that there is room for improvement in making exams more culturally sensitive and adaptable to the diverse needs of all students.

Additionally, the teachers discussed the absence as well as the depiction of BAME people in

the curriculum. They stressed that even though they tried to include BAME literature and resources within the curriculum that reflected their students this was difficult and to a point not effective because of the negative depiction of BAME in the texts that they had to teach which were on the English curriculum:

I was always explicitly aware that much of the content in the National Curriculum is tailored towards a more cultural elite of people who have yearly holidays etc. Have been abroad. There are students who've never been outside of the town they live in. I'll give you an example. In one of the GCSE questions years ago students were asked to write a letter about a ski holiday that they had just been on. That experience couldn't be further removed from many of the students. [Charlotte]

Both Grace and Charlotte discuss the lack of intersectionality in the English curriculum which in their examples can also extend to external GCSE English exams. They believe that the exclusionary nature of the curriculum makes the narratives interpreted inaccessible to many students, especially to BAME students, whilst appealing to a traditionally and historically favoured demographic, White students. Furthermore, they address why teachers need to be cognizant of how to use an intersectional framework in the English curriculum to shape the life chances and outcomes of all their pupils. The view of privilege within the curriculum is also explored in the above extracts with Charlotte believing there is a monopoly of a particular group of people being perpetuated, 'a cultural elite', in both an academic and a broader social context.

Moreover, another example of the lack of intersectionality within the English curriculum was the problem of the lack of diversification because of the under-representation of diverse voices in the curriculum:

The curriculum is very White and very male and that's one of the things that does kind of frustrate me a little bit. [Chloe]

According to Grace and Chloe, two Black teachers in the study, the English curriculum does not meet intersectional needs, which can lead to exclusion. This is because it excludes certain crucial narratives such as the BAME and female narratives. Chloe's response indicates that she perceives the curriculum to be heavily biased towards the perspectives and contributions of White individuals and males, this implies that the educational materials, content, and perhaps even the historical narratives being taught are predominantly centred around these groups and this frustration is evident in her sentiment. This emotion can have a significant impact on her engagement with the educational process. Frustration can lead to disengagement, disinterest, or even a negative attitude towards the curriculum. Such feelings of exclusion can impact one's sense of belonging and motivation within the educational setting. The comment highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity within the educational system. It suggests that there may be a need for broader representation in the curriculum to ensure a more well-rounded and equitable education that recognises the contributions and perspectives of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The teachers stipulated that this would therefore lead to the disadvantage of a diverse range of marginalised voices such as BAME, working-class students, and female students. This is elucidated in the following anecdote recounted by Chloe:

The only time it has been a thing, ironically, has been when the whole conversation is about working-class White boys underachieving…when there was a whole epidemic about Black Caribbean boys there was never hyper-moral panic…There was a trip and I overheard in the staff room quite clearly, there a quite bright Asian girl, and a working-class White boy and, I think the girl put her form in first …but I mean there's one space left and one of the two said "I'm more inclined to give it to the… boy than the… girl"… I assume the reason was that there has been a lot of talk about working-class White

boys underachieving, and I find that very problematic because the idea of working-classness has been seen in White terms. [Chloe]

Chloe's response discusses several important issues related to racial and socio-economic disparities in education and the perceptions surrounding them. These responses concur with Lebbakhar et al. (2022) who argue that teachers have been concerned about ensuring equality and diversity in education. However, diversifying the English curriculum is a challenging task because of its prescriptive nature. Especially in Key Stage 4, where teachers find it difficult to equalise and diversify the English curriculum. Chloe's response also highlights the unequal treatment and selective focus on different racial and ethnic groups when it comes to educational issues and suggests that there is a bias in the way these issues are addressed. Chloe expresses concern about the problematic nature of linking underachievement with working-classness primarily in White terms. This statement highlights the dangers of oversimplifying complex issues by attributing them to a single factor, in this case, working-class status and race. The participant suggests that such an approach ignores the nuances and intersectionality of these factors. In summary, Chloe's response raises critical questions about the unequal attention given to different racial and socio-economic groups in the context of educational underachievement and also highlights the potential biases and stereotypes that can influence decision-making and policy discussions.

Additionally, Chloe believes that the lack of visibility of BAME students and representation in the curriculum is because 'Whiteness has become so normalised in education' therefore it is now a norm for the White race to be seen as representative of all races. Furthermore, this view that presently Whiteness is central to the English curriculum (Joseph-Salisbury, 2018) was one that was expressed by many of the teachers in the study with Chloe summing it up when she says, 'Whiteness has become so normalised.'

Also, teachers acknowledge that pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds do not currently appear in the English curriculum, and even if they were included, they were still significantly under-represented. These responses concur with Ajegbo et al. (2007) who argue that diverse curriculums operate differently in England because school leaders and teachers lack understanding or confidence in how to incorporate diversity. This is because the teachers believe that school leaders do not prioritise diversity as important but also lack the resources to do so effectively. Therefore, even though educational systems and structures should 'understand the whole child', that is not currently the case:

> The GCSE curriculum is not fit for purpose because students don't care about Shakespeare. They don't care about poetry. [Mia]

> Looking at the curriculum and what makes an effective curriculum for students… I've worked heavily in disadvantaged areas with students from poor backgrounds and the curriculum works to disadvantage them further. What things can be done to try and sort of address that and build their cultural events and life experience to help them to engage? Who decides what a good curriculum is or is the right curriculum? Who has decided in this core body of cultural elite knowledge? [Charlotte]

The above responses indicate that because of the White middle-class culture dominantly taught in schools the marginalisation of BAME students is propagated. These responses are similar to those reported by Thondhlan (2021) which highlight the need for inclusivity and diversity which is directly linked to the curriculum content. This is because if students cannot see themselves in the curriculum, they are taught then their realities and experiences cease to exist or be seen as important. This idea is elucidated by Chloe's response below:

> In terms of race, it's the fundamental issue of Black students not seeing themselves

represented in school. Becoming apathetic to the idea of schooling in general because they don't see themselves. How can they envision a future where they are successful? They don't see examples of themselves being successful, so I think when it comes to race, that's one of the biggest issues 'cause a lot of them view success in very white terms. All writing is very White, pro-middle class [Chloe]

This idea is summarised by Chloe when she says 'all writing is very White, pro middle class'. This viewpoint concurs with researchers such as Arday e tal. (2021) who postulate that at present Whiteness is central in the content taught in English classrooms, and it is seen as an instrument of power and privilege. This point also corresponds with Gopal (2021) because the tension between decolonisation and diversification is highlighted here. Where teachers' responses suggest that there is a need to fundamentally rethink the English curriculum and how knowledge is produced and disseminated while also introducing incremental systematic changes to create more equitable and inclusive educational environments.

A further point from this was that one drawback of this privilege that is highlighted and to an extent supported by the content taught in English lessons is that it can cause underachievement of students who are not White (Mohanty, 2017), as is shown in the extracts below:

They will tell you straight up, it's not relevant to me, what am I going to do with that? [Oliver]

They don't care because there's no connection, there's no link, there's no ties to what they are going through each and every single day. [Mia]

The disaffection experienced in English by many students because of the offerings of its curriculum is evident in Oliver and Mia's responses. The responses focus on creating a more

intersectional, diversified, and inclusive curriculum which then can represent all students to better address all the needs of its students. Teachers were also very aware of the realities of life for the pupils they taught, and they maintained that one of the reasons why the English curriculum was not intersectional was because it failed to connect with the identities of its pupils:

> If you think about what they're going to do, their career paths. Many of them are going to skills-based work, like plumbing, carpentry, that kind of thing. So, if you think about Shakespeare, and how relevant he's going to be, none of them want to engage, you get the odd couple of students, you know, who will want to sit that exam. [Lily]

> Okay, like, with the girls, they like their hair and the beauty and the makeup, and I try and find a similar path in like, you know, trying to address it like that. So, it's all very individual, you just got to find that, that link. [Freya]

Through their choices of content, teachers explained that they could meet the needs of their students where the English curriculum failed. This is similar to the findings of Skerrett (2011), Thomas (2015), and Williamson (2017) who in their research examined how secondary literacy teachers' racial, gendered, socioeconomic, linguistic, and other identities impact their engagement with critical pedagogies in the classroom. According to their findings, teachers who identify as members of marginalised social groups or are committed to educational justice negotiate with the official curriculum more often to accommodate students' cultural and linguistic strengths, lived experiences of injustice, and authentic learning needs.

Even though the English curriculum may exclude BAME pupils it is important to note that "while whiteness generally carries privilege the extent of such privilege depends greatly on the

principles of intersectionality or mattering. That is, white women and men of different classes, disabilities and sexual orientations are not equally privileged in equivalent circumstances," (Dottolo and Kaschack, 2015, p. 179). This is why intersectionality theory matters in this thesis because it is not just focussing on one race, class or gender but the whole individual with their range of identities to create a more equitable education system. Within the English curriculum, this thesis scrutinises both the content taught, and the outcomes achieved, including a particular focus on gender disparities. The next section will explore the content taught in English classes.

5.3.1 The content taught in English classes

Every student's education consists of many elements, including the national curriculum. Therefore, it is possible to go beyond the national curriculum specifications to enable teachers to develop stimulating lessons as part of the wider curriculum (based on the national curriculum) to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This is demonstrated by Grace's observation that teachers can try to meet the needs of their students in the classroom where the curriculum fails, however, schools are a microcosm of society and as a result, replicate the ideologies and inequity in society and the GCSE examinations are one of the ways this inequity is replicated:

> Making that part of the exam system more accessible for all, then everyone or many people would be successful. One of the ways in which you keep the levels down and you make sure everyone doesn't get the high grades is to make sure that it's not accessible. [Grace]
>
> They don't care about learning Shakespeare's language. They will tell you straight up, it's not relevant to me, what am I going to do with that? [Oliver]

Tackling the issues related to the content of the English classroom means that there must be a reversal and offsetting of all economic, social, cultural, and intellectual forms of exclusion and alienation that pupils may face because of their race, gender, class, or disabilities. The exclusion and alienation referred to by the teachers pertain to the deprivations experienced mainly by BAME learners. Therefore, by eliminating the inherent exclusionary and alienating practices of the content taught in English classes, the colonial roots, and western prejudices of what teachers teach, how teachers teach it, and what teachers consider as important in their pupils' work will be acknowledged and confronted.

The experience of Amelia recounted in the extract below of her teaching in a school where all the texts she taught and narratives surrounding Black people depicted them in a negative light makes it apparent that there are limited texts available and that the negative portrayal of BAME characters in English content remains a concern:

> If I want to use more Black materials, they tend to be focussed on a certain thing, so slavery or…tend to be very negative. So unfortunately, if I want to draw some of those materials into my lesson, it's always very negative. It's rarely positive, and sometimes that's the issue we have. We want to use these materials to showcase that these are what Black poets or Black writers have done but oftentimes...the subject is all the same and the subject is always negative. [Amelia]

Amelia's response suggests that the representation of BAME characters in texts on the English curriculum syllabus is problematic because of the negative portrayal of these characters. However, the problem does not stop there because there is also limited representation as well. This example not only encompasses the many expressions of prejudice based on group identities and the microaggressions that students face and are exposed to, but it also provides a

clarifying frame that reveals a set of common processes and conditions that propagate group-based inequality and marginality. The teachers' discussion on the predominantly negative depiction of BAME personas and characters in the English curriculum also supports the argument for intersectionality within the English curriculum.

In addition, presenting BAME characters negatively impacts not only the students but also the BAME teachers who teach them (Hippisley, 2019). Amelia conveys the discomfort she feels as a Black teacher having to teach these materials and her response suggests that she feels complicit in helping to perpetuate these ideas by using these texts and resources within her classroom:

> I find it very uncomfortable as a Jamaican Black teacher, I find it very… difficult to teach certain materials. We do Of Mice and Men. How do my Black students feel with the 'N-word' being in it? How is teaching that really helping? I find that for some they go into their shells, and they feel lesser … because of the negative connotations of the word… we move from one Black book which is negative to another Black book, and I don't know what this is doing to our students. I'm a Black teacher and I can feel that sense of discomfort…we do Noughts and Crosses and that … helps the students to see from different perspectives but you have students saying, "Oh, this is not real. This will not happen" … it's a discussion that you can have rather than it's just Blacks being portrayed just so negatively and the ones who are the victims all the time. [Amelia]

In her interview, Amelia, a Black teacher, discusses her perception regarding the English content she teaches. She views it as oppressive, discomfiting and insensitive because of how certain topics are handled and approached. For example, novels, such as Of Mice and Men, prompted uncomfortable questions about race and gender for her when she had to teach them. According to Elliott (2020), texts such as Of Mice and Men and To Kill a Mockingbird may

lead English schools to frame racism as an 'American problem,' which will influence how society views structural racism. It is also clear that neither of these books shows the Black character in question through anything other than a White gaze (Elliott, 2020). Interestingly, there was a difference in viewpoints between the Black and White teachers in the study with the White teachers embracing books like Of Mice and Men while the Black teachers showing concern (as in Amelia's response above) about the use of the racial slur (the 'N-word') in the book and how it might affect their Black students. Amelia questioned whether teaching such material helped or if it could be potentially harmful, as it may make some students feel lesser and uncomfortable due to the negative connotations of the word. This concern reflects a desire to create a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Amelia also expresses concerns about the broader issue of how Black individuals are portrayed in literature. She mentions a pattern where it seems that Black literature often portrays Black characters negatively or as victims. This pattern raises questions about the impact on students' perceptions of their own identities and how they are seen in society. She however suggests that teaching literature like Noughts and Crosses allows for a more nuanced discussion and helps students see different perspectives, moving beyond one-dimensional portrayals of Black individuals. This highlights the importance of diversifying the curriculum to include a range of voices and experiences. Amelia also brings up the issue of students' scepticism about the realism of certain materials. She mentions that students may view some content as unreal or unlikely to happen, which could impact their engagement with the material:

> We've dealt with offensive language and the offensive actions head on and talked about
> the words and the connotations of those words and why they would be harmful and why
> it's wrong to treat people in that way, especially with some of my low ability years, I

really did have to go into why it's not ok to do that. [Isabelle]

Within Key Stage 3, there is an increased variety of texts … that have been written by people of an ethnic origin… <u>Noughts and Crosses</u>… <u>Of Mice and Men</u> has been recently reintroduced to help engage children with these challenging subjects of race, gender and learning disabilities…to let [students] know that there is literature out there that comes from all walks of life, and to get them really engaged with something that's perhaps a little bit closer to them…to really get them out of their shell and make them feel a part of our society even more so. So, they're not feeling segregated [Ella].

It is evident from the teachers' responses that Black and White teachers have differing viewpoints. Amelia, a Black teacher, is contrasted with Isabelle and Ella, two White teachers, who in their responses did not express any feelings of uneasiness but discussed the importance of addressing difficult topics like racism and offensive language in texts head-on and explaining to students why using these terms is not acceptable. Isabelle addresses the issue of offensive language and actions, emphasising the importance of addressing these problems head-on. She acknowledges the significance of discussing the words and their connotations, and why using such language can be harmful. Additionally, she mentions the specific challenge of dealing with students with low ability and the necessity of explaining why such behaviour is unacceptable. Ella adds further:

I do identify every now and again, to these children. I like to highlight to my students, the background of these writers, as well, and maybe talk about their beliefs and their political beliefs, and why they've written these texts. Again, that really interests our children it makes everything seem a little bit more real for them. [Ella]

Here Ella tries to develop intersectional practices by highlighting the backgrounds of the authors as a means of connecting similar student backgrounds in her classes. This can be helpful

and make those students see themselves in the course material that is being taught and therefore raise their visibility.

Following my analysis of curriculum content, I will explore in the next section the disparities in achievement between male and female students in English classes and examine how the teachers addressed the perceived differences in the English classroom.

5.4 Difference between boys' and girls' Achievement in English

Another factor indicated by the teachers was the gender inequity that exists in English education with the issue of underachievement only becoming an issue apparently when it is the boys who are underachieving. This links researchers like Griffin (2000) and Smith (2003) who explore the focus on boys' underachievement and more specifically on working-class males (Epstein et al., 1998) which resulted in girls' underachievement not being taken as seriously because boys' underachievement was viewed as a global crisis:

> When it comes to systems of trying to tackle it in terms of race, there aren't any, and when it comes to being tackled in terms of gender, I don't think they are. Again, the only times where I think it's been tackled is when boys are underachieving not when it comes to girls and girls being silenced in classrooms. [Chloe]

> When it comes to working-class students' gender is a big issue as well because I feel like year after year, girls are seen as overachieving. Girls achieve more than boys. But when it comes to seeing that in a classroom setting then there is an issue with girls not being able to kind of talk and boys talking over girls. Girls not having the confidence to speak up. [Chloe]

There's been lots of work done on boys' Literacy … boys do better through talk. In terms of discussion, I feel that the boys are always the first ones and in general, the girls are often more reluctant to share, to discuss. However, I do find that once a lot of the girls know it's a safe environment, they feel that everyone wanna listen then they do join in and participate. I think there's a lot of the idea that girls will sort of get down to it and write and the boys are the ones who want to talk. But actually, I found in my class discussion started by the boys, it's not a gender thing anymore, it's just more like maybe self-esteem and a confidence thing rather than gender. Girls tend to be better at extended writing and boys tend to find it more difficult to have that extended piece of writing…so teachers need to allow opportunities for those shorter writing tasks to build. [Grace]

Grace's analytic and reflective response about how the girls and boys in her classes responded to writing tasks and what she has done by linking her assumptions about boys and girls and their preferences in English, and her factual observations about her students' capabilities and likes to further their attainment. The teachers' responses suggest that teachers being aware of the gender gap and differences in achievement in English between boys and girls can utilise this knowledge to plan opportunities within the curriculum where both boys and girls can be visible and have opportunities to talk and voice their ideas and concerns. The teachers identified that this can be achieved by providing a safe environment in the classroom for boys and girls to take part thus supporting students' well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2008). The teachers also reflected on how the English curriculum appears to favour girls because of its content:

We think that boys tend to have a bit of a struggle with verbal oracy skills and possibly reading, whereas girls tend to be stronger in these particular skills. Along with analytical and written expression, the boys seem to struggle with that. But obviously,

in my training here, they've always said that there's obviously a gender gap. [Ella]

Researchers such as Younger and Warrington et al. (2005) and Moss (2007) believe that unequal English performance among students and schools can be attributed to a variety of factors. Generally, schools with high English achievement, with little or no gender gap, have high expectations for both boys and girls, encourage children to read widely, offer lots of choices, and develop plans to engage their interests and broaden their reading ranges. Ella's observation about the differences between boys' and girls' achievement and preferences of the tasks in her English lessons highlight the fact that teachers and schools must provide a comprehensive English curriculum that is both high quality and inclusive, as well as extensive opportunities for students to apply their skills in rewarding ways. This will ensure the achievement and attainment of their students in English.

> When it comes to working-class students' gender is a big issue as well because I feel like year after year, girls are seen as achieving more than boys but when it comes to seeing that in a classroom setting then there is an issue with girls not being able to talk and boys talking over girls. Girls not having the confidence to speak up. [Chloe]

Here Chloe makes an interesting point that while the data may show that girls are achieving more than boys in the exam in the classroom there are issues around the subordination of girls within the classroom. The concept of intersectionality emphasises how social identities are frequently marginalised or invisible because they are conceptualised as subsets of wider, more prominent, or more "significant" groups. Intersectionality also illustrates that power is a complex phenomenon, undermining simplistic theories of oppression. Chloe begins by noting the existence of gender disparities in the academic performance of working-class students which is similar to Ingram's (2018) observation. Specifically, Chloe's response expresses a perception that girls are often seen as achieving more than boys which is a similar perception

expressed by Majzub and Rais (2010). This observation aligns with the broader discourse on gender differences in education, where girls have been shown to outperform boys in some academic areas, particularly in terms of grades and completion rates (Majzub and Rais, 2010). However, Chloe's response goes on to highlight an issue within the classroom setting. It mentions that despite the perception that girls achieve more, there's a problem with girls not being able to talk or lacking the confidence to speak up. This highlights an important aspect of classroom dynamics, where gender differences in behaviour can manifest. This is a nuanced point to consider as it suggests that achievement disparities may not necessarily reflect an even distribution of opportunities to participate and succeed.

This behaviour can be seen as a form of gender-based dominance or microaggression, where boys' voices are prioritised over those of girls. This can have a negative impact on girls' self-esteem, participation, and their overall educational experience. In conclusion, this response sheds light on the complex interplay of gender, class, and educational experiences. It suggests that gender disparities in achievement may not necessarily indicate equality in the classroom. Instead, the classroom dynamics, with boys talking over girls and girls lacking the confidence to speak up, can play a significant role in shaping the educational experiences of working-class students, especially in terms of gender equity. This analysis underscores the need for a more inclusive and supportive educational environment that empowers all students to participate and succeed, regardless of their gender or socioeconomic background. Furthermore, the teachers' comments regarding the subjugation and invisibility of girls in the classroom highlight a significant research gap concerning the unique educational experiences of girls.

One significant challenge in applying intersectionality is addressing disparities in achievement and deprivation. Having reviewed the disparities in English achievement, the next section,

Section 5.3.3 will explore achievement and deprivation in education, scrutinising the intersectional dimensions of educational achievement and deprivation and shedding light on these critical issues.

5.4.1 Achievement and deprivation in Education

Additionally, the teachers' observations of the lack of confidence and motivation of working-class students and especially their lack of resilience in the face of perceived challenges are in line with the literature which explores the gap in the educational attainment of working-class students when compared to their more affluent counterparts. This lack of achievement and aspiration poses challenges in the English classroom because some students have a fear of academic failure and self-efficacy which is apparent in the teachers' responses and discussion of the problem. The following teacher extract highlights the issue faced by many students who tend to avoid mistakes because of the fear that they may be regarded in negative ways if they fail to secure success the first time:

> Treating children the same means that we have an assumption about what they already know and think… We were looking at a text and it mentioned a politician and it was about politicians… [the pupils] had no concept of what that was… they had no understanding of government and what that means. So …if you just treat everyone the same then you have to assume a certain amount of understanding or the same starting points, but children don't have the same starting points they have lots of different starting points. Lots of disadvantage from their life outside of school. [Isla]

In the above extract, Isla's response is similar to the studies that have shown that low socioeconomic status is closely correlated with low achievement (Willow and Metzler, 2002). Isla begins by suggesting that treating all children the same assumes a certain level of prior knowledge and understanding. This implies that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective because students have varying levels of knowledge when entering a classroom. Isla

provides an example of a classroom discussion about politicians, highlighting that some students had no concept of what a politician is. This illustrates the point that not all children come to the classroom with the same background knowledge. The response further emphasises the lack of foundational knowledge can be a significant barrier to effective learning when a uniform teaching approach is adopted. Isla stresses that children have diverse starting points, indicating that they come from different backgrounds and experiences. This can include various socio-economic statuses and life experiences outside of school, which can impact their readiness for certain topics. The response points out that many children face disadvantages in their lives outside of school. These disadvantages could range from socioeconomic challenges to limited exposure to certain concepts, which can further highlight the need for intersectional teaching approaches.

The teachers also raise important questions related to the stereotyping of Black boys and their attainment and achievement in schools:

> It's very difficult for Black students, especially Black boys…they're already at a disadvantage … there's an unwritten expectation of how they're gonna be…a lot of them play and buy into those stereotypes. This is why I have an issue with something called positive discrimination…it almost says that you got it only because of these factors, not because you're intelligent enough. Not because you're amazing…My brother was told to come and be a police officer because we need Black police officers. But he's amazing and he would have been an excellent police officer…even though you earned your place, the people around you think it's because [you're) Black. We have…brilliant Black people, but they're not given the same respect 'cause they're not coming to the table with that equality or that equity. [Grace]

Grace's response provides a valuable perspective on the challenges and issues faced by Black students, particularly Black boys, in educational and professional settings. Grace begins by acknowledging the existing disadvantages that Black students, particularly Black boys, face in society. This recognition of systemic inequalities is essential to understanding the context of her argument. She discusses the existence of unwritten expectations and stereotypes that are imposed on Black individuals. They highlight that some Black students may conform to these stereotypes, which can be limiting and harmful. She also expresses her reservations about positive discrimination, a policy designed to address historical disadvantages faced by marginalised groups. She argues that it can lead to the perception that individuals are only achieving success due to their race, rather than their skills or abilities. She emphasises the importance of recognising individual excellence, irrespective of one's race. Even if a Black person earns their place through merit, there may be a perception that they got there solely because of their race. Grace concludes by emphasising the importance of achieving equality and equity, particularly in recognising and respecting the accomplishments of brilliant Black people. She suggests that true equality requires more than just positive discrimination.

Overall, Grace's response is thought-provoking and offers a critical perspective on the issues surrounding the advancement of Black students and professionals. Her argument emphasises the need for a more comprehensive approach to addressing racial inequalities, one that goes beyond affirmative action policies to ensure that Black individuals receive the recognition and respect they deserve based on their skills and accomplishments.

Following on from this view, the teachers explored the extent to which the English curriculum perpetuates this inequality with the depiction of BAME being negatively viewed thus giving its students nothing positive to explore and celebrate. This is exemplified not only in Grace's

response but also in Lily's response below where she explores what she sees as the plight faced by Black boys today in the education system:

> Differences in people's backgrounds present a problem. So, for example, if I can give you like the idea of racism, you know, people will probably be like racist, but there'll be a subtle sort of racism in a mainstream school, in terms of say, for example, your skin colour, or because of the fact that maybe you have an Indian accent or whatever the case may be. [Lily]

Lily provides an example of how these differences play out, specifically focussing on racism. She mentions that while people might overtly reject racism, there can still be subtle forms of it present in mainstream schools. This is highlighted by the existence of subtle racism, which is often less overt and more difficult to detect. Lily provides examples of how this racism might manifest, such as based on skin colour or having an Indian accent. This acknowledgement is significant because it suggests an understanding of the complexity of racism and its potential manifestations. The reference to an Indian accent indicates an understanding of cultural diversity and how even factors like accents can be used as a basis for discrimination. This suggests an awareness of the need for inclusivity and respect for cultural differences.

Additionally, Lily's following anecdote outlines an example of the struggles BAME teachers face in schools daily and is interesting because it underlines that these feelings of othering affect not only BAME students but also the BAME teachers:

> …I have this child, and he was inadvertently openly racist towards anybody who was a different skin colour… his parents were BNP…he didn't even want to sit in the same classroom he would say "Oh, it smells like curry" … I used to speak to him and try and help him understand and tell him that… it's not me you are fighting… it's you…this is

about your education…try and build that relationship every day, sit down and talk to him …and eventually, there was some success with the student in terms of him achieving. I'm not saying that he's now fixed his problem of being an open racist. That's not gonna happen, I don't think, especially if you are groomed, you know, as a child in your household, that's not going to change. [Lily]

The above response by Lily recognises the powerful influence of the family environment on racist attitudes. Lily suggests that a student's upbringing can significantly shape their beliefs and behaviour, making it challenging to completely change these attitudes. Lily's response also highlights the complexities of addressing racism in an educational setting, particularly when it is deeply ingrained due to familial influences. It demonstrates a commendable commitment to trying to make a difference in the child's life, emphasising education as a potential pathway for change. However, it also underscores the formidable challenges associated with altering deeply rooted prejudiced beliefs, especially in cases where the child is heavily influenced by their household environment.

Furthermore, the teachers' responses showed a clear association between deprivation and underachievement in English education and concur with Perry and Francis (2010) that the educational achievement gap among the different classes in society is one of the most significant in the industrialised world:

I think in terms of class. Definitely, we see the material deprivation. We see how you know obviously students don't have access to certain things. They can't then you know buy resources and obviously that kind of funnels into underachievement. [Chloe]

Chloe begins by acknowledging the existence of material deprivation in the context of education. This demonstrates an understanding of the thesis's core premise, which revolves

around including intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy to aid academic performance. Here Chloe's response underlines the gap between rich and poor in society and how this potentially affects and impacts students negatively.

Additionally, the teachers expressed the view that difference was a problem in society and the educational system. This concurs with researchers such as Dyson et al. (2010), Sodha and Margo (2010) and Kerr and West (2010) that the UK faces the problem of having a high degree of social exclusion and social class is a strong indicator of educational attainment in British schools. Subsequently, ethnic minorities are seen to be disadvantaged in many ways when it comes to their educational attainment. The teachers propose that the educational experiences that students have can cause them to underachieve because of disillusionment with the educational system:

> Sometimes the child's experience of school in the school system kind of disillusions them over time. I think the older they are, the less likely they are to be able to self-motivate. [Isla]

In the above extract, Isla underlines an important point about the negative effects that school can have on students and can be a factor for the disaffection that students face while at school because sometimes the school system does not cater to the needs of all its students.

This section focussed on the challenges that Teachers of English faced in adopting intersectionality within the classroom because teachers maintained it was difficult to implement intersectional practices in the classroom, especially without the support from school leaders and educational policies available to make it successful. Among these challenges were ensuring the classroom is inclusive of all identities, developing positive relationships with all students so that intersectional practices can be supported, and fearing that one's own biases would

impact teaching and learning as a teacher. Teachers' concerns about creating intersectional spaces and improving their students' achievement and attainment deserve attention to facilitate intersectional practice and classrooms that foster intersectionality. The teachers' responses further explore how race and gender combined can be used not only for the empowerment of students in the classroom but also to create a sense of belonging. I will tackle that topic in the following section. As we navigate the complexities of intersectionality within education, it is crucial to emphasise the interconnectedness of identity and belonging. Section 5.3.4 delves into the profound influence of intersectionality on students' sense of identity and belonging in the English classroom.

5.4.2 Intersectionality, Identity, and Belonging

'I couldn't find myself in any of the stories; as a student of literature, I was desperate to feel like I had a place' (Kara, 2017).

The purpose of this section is to explain the teacher's understanding of the interconnectedness of intersectionality, belonging and identity. The teachers' responses indicate agreement with Yuval-Davis (2007) who argues that identity and belonging are created in the interrelationships of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and other social divisions and Bhopal and Preston (2011) who argue that intersectionality has become a model upon which to understand, analyse and engage with difference:

> That's why it's important to teach it to our pupils as well and to understand why it's wrong to treat people differently because of the harm it can cause. [Isabelle]

Also, the teachers emphasised the importance of establishing a connection between their teaching practice and the background of their students, which is integral to embedding belonging in English classrooms:

It is important to understand the background of the students in terms of where they are from, what they are exposed to and… their gender to be able to tailor your teaching styles to meet these needs for the students' success and achievement educationally. [Amelia]

The fact that I'm from South Africa, I use that a lot in terms of helping, especially on that particular topic of racism. I use the fact of my background, where I'm from and how I've addressed it and how our country has addressed it in South Africa to try and get [students] to understand. I use my personal experiences, and my identity (being a Black woman) and emphasise the fact that I'm proud of my identity to develop a sense of identity within the classroom. [Lily]

In the above extracts, the link between intersectionality, belonging and identity is conveyed by describing the difference in the classroom as an essential feature of 'otherness' and how students create their identity and belonging through different social constructs within the classroom. Identity itself can be viewed as fragmented, fragile and constantly evolving through multiple engagements and relationships in society. Through this complexity, intersectionality can help teachers to engage with the understanding of what it means as a student to be considered an outsider, different, and not 'fitting in' in educational contexts. Furthermore, the responses support Thomas (2012), who contends that student achievement and attainment are related. As a result, it highlights the importance of belonging to educational success and self-efficacy, with damaging and undesirable effects for students who are unable to fit into their academic environments, contexts, curriculums, and settings:

Someone might see me as a Black British child when I was at school but then dig deep. I'm a Black British child to two Jamaicans and the first generation of two Jamaicans. I

was slightly different to my friends, who are second generation. So, the upbringing is slightly different, even though we were technically both Black British children. So, I think if you want to tap into what's going to help the child learn the best, and what's the best route, you have to know them, so you can relate to them, and they can relate to you. A White Romanian girl isn't going to relate to me in any way, shape, and form unless I find something that there's a common ground or an understanding between us. [Olivia]

As Olivia discusses in her extract, intersectionality plays an important role in education. It is her personal experience and identity as a Black British woman with Jamaican parents that convinces her that teachers should strive to build a positive relationship with their students to foster a sense of shared understanding and a positive learning environment. This should be a fundamental part of teaching and learning that will help students better engage with the curriculum in their classes. Her comment that 'a White Romanian girl isn't going to relate to me in any way, shape, and form unless I find something that's common ground or an understanding between us' indicates that teachers must find 'common ground' or shared interests in their lessons as a way to ensure that relationships are built with students even though they have different races or ethnicities. The concepts of identity and belonging have a centrality to the responses. Additionally, these concepts are central to the methodology of intersectionality and are a focal point in the extracts because they place the individual in a place of autonomy and acceptance. The responses also delineate how the teachers taught their pupils to negotiate the intricacies of social identities using their understanding of intersectionality.

There was some confusion when teachers discussed identity and belonging. In many responses, teachers used identity and belonging to express intersectionality. The teachers either used the terms interchangeably to describe intersectionality or understood identity and belonging to be

critical and crucial to intersectionality, therefore intersectionality, identity and belonging became the same concept to them and this was seen in their discussion and exploration of the term intersectionality. A sense of belonging among students has been linked to better retention and achievement, so it is evident that teachers felt these concepts were connected. This apparent confusion in the teachers' responses indicates the link that teachers felt between these concepts and shows that they recommend that developing an understanding of their students' backgrounds was the first step in cultivating a curriculum that celebrated and valued a sense of belonging in their students since a sense of belonging in students is linked to better retention and achievement (Thomas, 2012):

> It's the ones who are engaged that do well and if they're disenfranchised and not engaged in what's going on or they feel not included then those are the ones that don't tend to do well…Students who do well are the ones who take an active interest in their own learning and obviously, that can come from a number of different places. I think fundamentally they [teachers] need to know their students. [Poppy]

Poppy discusses the importance of engagement as a way to raise student achievement in English classes because it allows teachers to connect and integrate with students more personally, thereby raising their achievement. According to the teachers, understanding their students' backgrounds was the first step in creating a curriculum that celebrates and values belonging. Furthermore, the teachers felt that cultivating a sense of belonging would enhance student engagement and achievement by fostering an environment of identity and belonging. The teachers' responses, therefore, underline the importance placed on the concept of identity and belonging in classroom practice and concur with Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007) and Rodenborg and Boisen (2013). Additionally, the duality of identity and belonging is reflected in the teachers' responses about how they use their identity as a narrative for engendering

belonging and self-worth within their students during lessons. This is used to emphasise the way an atmosphere of inclusivity can be fostered within classrooms using narratives linked to identity and experience:

> I mean I try to live out the values that I want my students to follow, and so I'm always very honest with them. With regards to my own lifestyle, I'm honest with them about my own attitudes to mental health and things like that. So, you know if I've had a bad day, or I've struggled with my mental health. [Poppy]

As seen in the above extracts a sense of belonging and value can be cultivated in two ways. For example, Amelia's exploration of how to embed a sense of identity and belonging in school systems is in accordance with Davis (2006, p. 201) who sees an individual's sense of self as "always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong". Poppy explored this concept by sharing her authentic experiences with her students to indicate to them that they mattered and that she was an accessible adult who was willing to share and understand the experiences they were going through. The teachers' responses were also in agreement with researchers such as Grant and Zwier (2011, p. 186) who postulate that it is important for teachers to have an "intersectionally-aware teacher identity". As a result, throughout the analysis of the data, one overarching and recurring theme that was explored by the teachers was that of identity and belonging and their importance to curriculum development and planning. The teachers' responses indicated the essentiality of embedding identity and belonging in curriculum development and the policies employed by educational systems:

> Stories that are real are more relatable. I think the working-class students really do gravitate towards that. [Chloe]

I'm very…enthusiastic with the background of our writers, the background of our stories that we're looking at. And I want to, obviously, include my students, and let them know that this is, something that we can all achieve. Offering students plenty of structure, explaining what it is that we're learning, why we are learning it, that's a very big part of it as well, just explaining to them why we're actually learning it. That's how I'm influencing them to obviously have that attainment. [Ella]

Additionally, the teachers' responses concur with Andrews et al. (2008). Their narratives tended to focus on their lives, what they were, and how that linked to who they were in the classroom. Teachers discussed how using narratives about identity through telling and retelling, listening and re-listening to stories based on the background and contexts of a wide range of texts used in the curriculum. This approach helps both teachers and students learn about one another. It can engender trust and respect for different cultures, genders, races, and backgrounds.

Remarkably, within the study, Black teachers consistently expressed a profound connection to their sense of identity and belonging. They frequently emphasised their practice of drawing upon their personal experiences to serve as role models for their students. This underscores the concept that, for these teachers, identity and belonging were intertwined and could be fostered in their students by sharing a common identity. This shared identity could be considered a pivotal tool in forging connections and nurturing a strong sense of belonging among their students as highlighted by the following extract by Amelia:

Being a Black teacher and as a role model - I've got students giving me cards to say how they like me, they admire me and they hope to carry themselves, that's exactly the words they use, they'd like to carry themselves like me one day. So uh, in that sense I'm already the role model. [Amelia]

Ella and Isabelle, both White teachers, suggest that they identify occasionally with their students when discussing identity and belonging in the classroom. As a result, it was not primarily a matter of sharing experiences or identities with their students for these teachers, but rather bringing together popular and famous BAME figures as well as using their experiences in the workplace and careers to inspire students and create a sense of belonging:

> Obviously, I'm following the curriculum. But I do identify every now and again, to these children, I say, right, so you know, obviously, this is this person or this particular origin, or this person is a particular famous woman. I like to highlight … the background of these writers, as well, and maybe talk about them about their beliefs and their political beliefs, and why they've written these texts. And again, that really interests our children here at this particular school and it makes everything seem a little bit more real for them. [Ella]

> As …an English teacher I think you can be somebody that stands out as kind of a role model …I also make reference to careers and try to be quite open in that this isn't my first career and talk about different kind of options later on and in a way to kind of help people to have aspirations and to see the importance in them working hard. Not just giving them the kind of tools to do so but giving them the 'why' aspect to help motivate them and to know that they need to set themselves up for the future. [Isabelle]

The topic of engendering belonging and value within students can take many forms as shown by the above extracts from the teachers' responses. The teachers' responses convey the idea of how belonging will also lead to more positive teacher-student relationships. Therefore, the discussion surrounding identity and belonging within the curriculum was also linked to the teacher-student relationships in the classroom and as a result to the attainment and achievement of students. The teachers felt that creating an environment of belonging and value would foster

a sense of security which would allow students to open up and engage in lessons more actively. This engagement would in turn lead to a greater understanding of the subject matter, which would, in turn, lead to increased attainment and achievement:

> Teachers need to give students that sense of self-belief and confidence, so like I've seen where students said that they were told by previous teachers that they were not good at English and so you see where they're in Year 10 now and they don't care because they've been told that they're not that good. What I've seen in particular, one student, and he's dyslexic, and now he's so positive. I've had him since Year 10 and he was like "Ma'am. Thank you so much, I didn't think I was good at English. I didn't think I could do it with my barrier." The fact that this is a Black boy, Caribbean and he said that. He never thought he was good at English, but now he realises that apart from the spelling issues he's very good in terms of the analytical aspect, the interpretation of the text. So now he has become much more confident. [Amelia]

> They need to know where they're coming from and realise where the differences lie to ensure that you know the disadvantaged student in the class is not gonna be understanding everything that's being taught so that you can check in with them and make sure that everything is going ok with their learning. [Poppy]

The extracts above correspond with Ehrenberg et al. (1995) and Modood (2003) who highlight that teacher relationships with pupils have a great impact on, students' attainment, self- confidence, and self-belief, especially BAME students. Ehrenberg et al. (1995) found that "a teacher's approachability "was a significant factor in student performance, while Modood (2003) similarly found that students with a positive relationship with their teacher were more likely to feel like they belonged in the classroom and were more likely to succeed. This is reflected in Amelia's and Poppy's extracts in which they reveal how teachers can

improve students' confidence as well as inspire and motivate them to succeed. Additionally, it is suggested that to build important relationships with students within the classroom, it is important to understand different genders, races, and social contexts.

Additionally, the teachers' responses suggest how teachers can use the interests of their students to cultivate an atmosphere of belonging which indicates that by knowing their students and making a record of this on their seating plans teachers can help to support and manage difficulties in behaviours that students may exhibit in the classroom. Praise was also seen to support students while at the same time developing positive relationships:

> There's a boy who has lots of behaviour issues around school, but actually tends to be really quite good in my lessons and I've noted on my seating plan that I need to at the start of the lesson have a good interaction with him and then after break as well I need to have a calm and positive interaction. So, I guess this is quite gendered. I'll kind of speak to him about The Villa to start the lesson and then he'll tend to then follow my instructions where I know he kind of fails to do that around school, so I guess that's evidence that that is something that works, and he responds really well to praise as well.
> [Isabelle]

In the above extract, Isabelle notes that her student responds more positively to her when she speaks to him about The Villa, a topic he is interested in. She also observes that he responds well to praise. These observations suggest that her student is more likely to engage with topics he is interested in and is motivated by positive reinforcement. However, teachers argued that the reality in schools was that race and gender were not used in education in a way that could cultivate the ethos of the school and benefit teachers and students. They argued that teachers needed to be empowered to use race and gender as an asset in the classroom and not simply

ignore them. For the school to benefit from the diverse backgrounds of its students, teachers needed to be trained in how to use those differences positively:

> One of the things that is not really explored or acknowledged enough, is the idea of gender and race. They still identify students who are working-class or Pupil Premium but when it comes to identifying students of colour…Black students … working on ways in which gender can be introduced, it's never really a thing [Chloe].

> People are always talking and highlighting in data about you know, how boys tend to underperform in English, particularly, because they perhaps can't get engaged. And there's also conversations with people who are post holders always talk about obviously, looking at texts to engage boys rather than engaging girls. So, there's an awful lot of focus on trying to engage boys in lessons. [Ella]

Ella's account highlights the one-sided nature of English classrooms where in trying to engage boys through texts there is an obvious emphasis on the boys only. Intersectionality promotes respecting all students as individuals and acknowledging the individuality that they bring to the classroom as a result teachers should not adapt resources or teaching methods to meet stereotyped needs. The above extracts serve to further explicate Case's (2017) point that teachers must respond to the issues of inequality and inequity when it comes to the educational attainment of their pupils and should not be addressed as a single-axis analysis because as Audre Lorde's (1984, p.138) axiom goes, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives".

 Below Grace addresses an important issue of how to engender a sense of belonging for students while at school. Grace explores this idea in her response which reveals that she did not feel a sense that she belonged at the school where she taught because of her race, gender, and disability and indicates that creating a sense of belonging is not only essential for students but

also for the teachers who teach these students:

> Our school systems are predominantly White in terms of the teachers; English Departments are predominantly White. I've been at schools where I was the only Black face. But then, being female and Black and an English teacher I've gone to schools where you know I was a permanent teacher, but of course, it was like my first day and people just assumed that I was a TA (Teaching Assistant) or a supply teacher…when you come to the table with a lot of qualifications more than maybe the Head Teacher. I just had that in my own experience in this school I'm at now. I got the job there and they had a chat at the beginning. You know that informal chat that's really making sure they like you and then I had the lesson observation and then I had the actual formal interview…When I got the job and … one of the women said, "Oh well, they've ticked the boxes with you!" and I said, "Oh, what do you mean?" And she said, "Well, you're black, you're female and you're disabled. The only thing you need to be now is gay."
> [Grace]

In the above extract, Grace suggests that any discussion of intersectionality within society will lead to the social injustices that are in society, in this case, the inherent discrimination that women and people with disabilities are subjected to. Rice et al. (2019) believe that intersectionality is primarily involved with social justice and seeking change. Consequently, the teachers discussed what they felt were the inherent prejudices and racism that were in society, and which were reflected in schools because schools were a microcosm of their societies. One such inherent prejudice that teachers thought was reflected in educational systems was where the sense of belonging and acceptance felt by BAME students is compromised:

> There are so many already, you know, prejudices in place that, unfortunately, we have

to go through even before we get anywhere. But to be honest, it is the truth, and you know Black boys are gonna have to work a little bit harder. [Rosie]

I think in terms of race it's the fundamental issue of Black students not seeing themselves represented in school. Becoming apathetic to the idea of schooling in general because they don't see themselves then how can they envision a future where they are successful? They don't see examples of themselves being successful, so I think when it comes to race, that's one of the biggest issues 'cause a lot of them view success in very white terms. [Chloe]

The above observations indicate an agreement with Gilborn et al. (2012) who contend that there tended to be lower academic expectations for Black pupils, especially Black boys, leading to very damaging effects for these Black boys. This lack of representation leads to a feeling of exclusion and isolation among Black students. They don't feel like they belong in the environment and may not be able to relate to the success stories portrayed in textbooks or the classroom. Without being able to see successful Black role models in the school system, they may feel like success is unattainable for them. This causes an issue from a social justice viewpoint for teachers in their role as inspirators and motivators in making education accessible for all and giving all students hope about their ability to succeed despite their race and social backgrounds.

Teachers also used examples of how examinations and qualifications even though by their design should be structured in an unbiased, impartial way to better address and tackle inequalities in society, in reality, act to further perpetuate these inequalities:

And it's the sense of that even if we get the same and we got an A* and someone else got an A*, it's almost like our A* isn't looked at. You know, like lesser. It's sad because,

on the one hand, I think you know we can't always say that people need to have awareness of this. [Freya]

Freya believes that this perpetuation occurs because of the disparity between qualifications achieved by BAME and White students. It is her opinion that the White student's qualification would be valued the most because of the society we live in which where race and social class will always be the deciding factor. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, as if the effort that a student puts in isn't being recognised it becomes a disincentive to continue to strive and work hard because the reward isn't proportional to the effort.

The teachers also explored the potential to create a classroom environment and culture linked to low expectations and aspirations for students from working-class backgrounds. The teachers argue that this will work to counteract belonging which will occur if there is a failure to embed intersectional practices within classrooms. Teachers assert failure to embed intersectional practices which supported students' belonging would create and extend the underachievement and disaffection that many students experienced in education in general and English lessons in particular:

> You know you can understand why the students are disaffected because you know theydon't see that what they're doing is being valued or a priority as well. Having an interested adult in what they're doing makes a big difference for our students and especially the Years 7s and 8s when they have their reading mentors you can see them,they're so excited to be going off with their sixth formers to read a book and stuff like that. They're really pleased that somebody is taking a bit of an interest in them. [Poppy]

> I also think it's sometimes expectations of the children themselves. Obviously, our

jobis to make sure they can do it, they can be successful, but sometimes, especially for me with my working-class students, there is a sort of like they don't need to do this. [Grace]

So if you had a child from a very low background you'll have low aspiration, (that's a horrible thing to say), but you do tend to have that low expectation, you think, right, I need to make sure that I've given them plenty of structure, I need to make sure that I've given them access to this resource, I need to make sure that I've talked about obviously, the background of these words. And yet, this child might be very, very bright, this child might already know this, this child might have already pre-read it, and they might have had ideas already. So that would be an issue as well that pre-labelling on a student. [Ella].

An intersectional perspective holds that identity and belonging are shaped by the interrelationships between gender, class, race, ethnicity, and other social divisions. The act of reflexivity disrupts power relations embedded in naming and narrating others from the top down and allows researchers and participants to see research as a dynamic process that transforms them.

Furthermore, the above extracts summarise the importance of intersectional practices within education. In Lily's extract for example she outlines the importance of intersectional practice to teaching and learning since she believes that teachers can then use it to engender student belonging while creating a more diverse, intersectional curriculum. Lily acknowledges why it is important to do this when she says very aptly 'differences in people's background present a problem.' Therefore, to counteract and prevent the differences that can arise to create varying

degrees of oppression and other problems, there is a need for teachers to develop a climate in their classrooms and curriculums where differences and differing viewpoints, perspectives, and backgrounds can be appreciated, understood and represented. Grace's extract also highlights the significance of teacher expectations to student achievement and attainment because teachers can act as inspirators for their students. In the final section of this chapter, Section 5.4, I will summarise the findings on the need for intersectionality in the classroom.

5.5 The Need for Intersectionality in the English Curriculum

To explore and achieve a deeper understanding of intersectionality's importance in teaching and learning and the English classroom, I will discuss in this section how teachers understand the importance of intersectionality in teaching and learning. Chloe sums this up when she says:

> Education can only be positive from including intersectional pedagogy by providing students with the space where they feel represented, where they feel safe, where they feel like they can express their viewpoints. I think it's just as powerful as you know, helping them to attain because once you've created that breeding ground where you know they're in a positive learning environment.' [Chloe]

In her response, Chloe emphasises the importance of providing students with a space where they feel represented. This aligns with the concept of intersectional pedagogy, which acknowledges the diverse identities and experiences of students, including race, gender, sexuality, and more. When students see themselves and their experiences reflected in the curriculum and classroom environment, it can lead to a greater sense of belonging and engagement. Chloe also mentions the need for students to feel safe. Safety in this context could refer to both physical safety and emotional safety. When students feel physically safe, they are more likely to focus on their studies without fear or distraction. Emotional safety is equally

vital, as it allows students to express themselves and their viewpoints without the fear of judgement or discrimination. Chloe underlines the significance of creating an environment where students can freely express their viewpoints. This ties into the idea of inclusive education, which encourages diverse perspectives and promotes critical thinking. When students feel empowered to share their ideas, it can lead to more vibrant classroom discussions and a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Chloe suggests that by incorporating intersectional pedagogy, we can create a positive learning environment. This environment is one where students are not only academically challenged but also emotionally and socially supported. Such an environment is conducive to effective learning and personal growth. Chloe's statement implies that intersectional pedagogy is not just about creating a pleasant learning environment but also about empowering students. When students feel represented, safe, and able to express themselves, they are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and successful in their education. In summary, Chloe's response strongly supports the idea that including intersectional pedagogy in education is a powerful means to create a more inclusive and empowering learning environment. It acknowledges the importance of representation, safety, and freedom of expression as key components of fostering a positive and effective educational experience.

Additionally, importantly, the teachers affirmed that using an intersectional approach to analyse both teachers and students in schools, seeks to correct the idea that different types of (dis)advantages stand alone or are the same for every individual who experiences them (Ferree and Hall, 1996):

It's important to understand the background of the students in terms of where they're

from… their class… what they're exposed to… their gender because differences in people's backgrounds present a problem. You tailor your teaching style to meet all these needs. It's important to understand where they're from in terms of success because you want your students to achieve. [Lily]

In the response above Lily emphasises the significance of recognising the diversity among students. She mentions various factors such as geographical origins, socio-economic class, exposure to different environments, and gender, which can significantly influence students' experiences and learning needs. This recognition of diversity is an essential starting point for any inclusive and effective educational approach. Lily acknowledges that these differences in students' backgrounds can pose challenges. She highlights the need for educators to tailor their teaching styles to accommodate these diverse backgrounds. This is a key point in the context of differentiated instruction, where teachers adapt their methods to cater to individual learning preferences and needs. The participant connects understanding students' backgrounds to the ultimate goal of student success. By recognising these various factors, educators can better support students in achieving their academic goals. This underscores the importance of equitable education and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed. Lily indirectly addresses the potential issues related to implicit bias and stereotypes. By understanding students' backgrounds, educators can avoid making assumptions or falling into the trap of stereotyping students based on their origins, class, exposure, or gender. Overall, Lily's response underscores the importance of recognising and appreciating the diversity in the student body and adapting teaching methods to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. It also highlights the overarching goal of education, which is to facilitate student success by addressing the unique needs of each individual learner.

The teachers' responses also support Gross et al. (2016a) view that developing an

understandingand awareness of intersectional practices will place teachers in a better position to address theinequity that presently exists in English education and better tackle the issue of educational inequality. This idea is expressed in the extracts below:

> Intersectionality is having an appreciation for all of the different factors that make up a person's identity and not just saying that it's down to one. Understanding how those factors interact with each other and create a full person and how you can support them with all of those different aspects of their identity is important. [Isla]

Here Isla mentions how teachers need to have an appreciation of all the different factors of their students' identity and the need to show this appreciation within the classroom is essential to the notion of using multiple perspectives, that is, looking at content through all available lenses. Additionally, Grace's extract below elucidates her belief that the act of embedding intersectional practices within the classroom will change teachers' perspectives on how they view the students they teach and underlines the view that this framework will allow teachers to present multiple co-existing narratives in the classroom which will allow them to create and implement more robust curriculums with diverse perspectives with all voices being shared and heard:

> There's sort of a mixture in terms of political, economic, social, and so in terms of race, gender, class, disability and it's a sense they all can overlap and then that becomes the child. Embedding intersectional practices within the classroom will change the way [teachers] see every child as an individual in the classroom. So even if you've got two children who supposedly are the same in terms of their background and the factors that affect their identity, there are never two children going to be the same. So, what may work for one child in terms of how you teach them and how they learn might definitely not work for the other child. [Grace]

In the above responses, not only do the teachers demonstrate their understanding of how intersectionality in the classroom can contribute to equity for both teachers and students by changing fixed perspectives, but they emphasise the importance of intersectionality within English classrooms as well. Also, the teachers emphasise the need for teachers to be aware of different identities within their classrooms, for example, by using a wide range of teaching resources that represent the students. It was also found that teachers' responses matched the literature regarding the benefits of using an intersectional framework, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds:

> I thought mainly about the kind of home lives of my pupils, … especially at the moment, that might be quite key. So, worrying about pupils from kind of lower socioeconomic classes, they've been affected by the pandemic … that can obviously have a huge impact on their learning that day, whether they've got working internet and … devices that can handle the lessons. I thought that was linked to pupils' class and people's kind of economic situation. Also, things like parenting style and motivation and parents. So, whether parents kind of pushed their children to achieve and encouraged learning, or whether there's kind of a different attitude. [Isabelle]

Here, Isabelle reflects on the profound consideration she had to give to her students' home lives, contemplating the challenges and disadvantages they faced as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In her discussion, she explores the adverse impact the pandemic had on these students.

The above extracts reveal the teachers' ability to use an intersectional lens to scrutinise their practice and become more reflective about it. This concurs with Case (2017) that an intersectional lens compels and challenges teachers to scrutinise taken-for-granted ideas about

race, class, genderand other factors linked to a student's different identities and their role in pupil attainment. Intersectionality allows teachers to better question ideas about race, class and gender and supply teachers with a framework to answer and change the answer. Additionally, the ability of teachers to be analytical in their practice and challenge preconceived ideas regarding gender or class is also seen in the following extracts and is important in developing more intersectional classrooms:

> All inequalities are not equal, and I think teachers don't have that understanding. The vast majority of teachers are to be fair White middle class. Again, the majority are heterosexual and from a particular experience and maybe quite young as well in terms of life experience and I think it's difficult for them to understand. I don't think they understand that it's compounded further when a child has multiple identities, the child is EAL and disadvantaged and has special needs and you know could be transgender.
>
> It's understanding that the layers disadvantage them further, so sometimes the teacher might only add one layer of intervention to their planning when actually the student has multiple layers of identity to be incorporated. [Charlotte]

Charlotte's response provides a critical perspective on how teachers may not fully comprehend the complexities of inequalities in the education system. Charlotte begins by acknowledging that not all inequalities are the same, highlighting the existence of multiple layers of inequality within the education system. This demonstrates her awareness of the multifaceted nature of inequality. She points out that the majority of teachers are White, middle-class, heterosexual, and relatively young in terms of life experience. This observation suggests that many teachers may lack the personal experiences and backgrounds that would allow them to fully grasp the extent of the various inequalities students face.

Charlotte also suggests that teachers' lack of personal exposure to diverse backgrounds and experiences may hinder their ability to understand the challenges faced by students who belong to different identity groups. This lack of understanding can potentially limit the effectiveness of interventions and support provided by teachers. Charlotte emphasises that some students may have multiple layers of identity, such as being English as an Additional Language (EAL), disadvantaged, having special needs, and identifying as transgender. This complexity adds to the challenge of understanding and addressing the unique needs and barriers these students face. Charlotte expresses concern that teachers might only consider one layer of intervention when planning for their students. This may result in an insufficient response to the needs of students with multiple intersecting identities, potentially exacerbating their disadvantages. Charlotte's perspective underscores the need for teacher training and professional development that enhances teachers' understanding of these issues and equips them with strategies to address the unique challenges faced by students with multiple intersecting identities.

Teachers were very firm in making it clear that to achieve more intersectional classrooms an understanding of intersectionality within the classroom had to be free from judgement and prejudging. Teachers thought that any form of bias would be counterintuitive and therefore teachers must put in place measures to eliminate this from happening in their classrooms:

> When I do my teaching and learning, I shouldn't be prejudging them. But I need to be aware of their backgrounds and… any barriers to their learning possibly might be…So, for example, if they've got a really, really poor background, such as Pupil Premium students, I need to be able to ensure that I can provide them a lot more resources, obviously in class, because they might not have the amount of resources at home, whereas some more affluent students might. [Sophie]

But it's also important you know, the children's experiences of it. So, for example, one of the things we get the students to do is to, you know, give us an evaluation of the units they've done and what they've enjoyed and what stood out and things like that. It's always the most interesting because it's like very personal to the students and it will be like, you know, 'Ma'am taught us that this is Othello and I found it really intriguing, andI think I want to go to the Globe and look at it." [Grace]

In her response, Grace provides a valuable perspective on the importance of understanding children's experiences in the context of the research. Grace's comments highlight the personal and individual nature of the students' responses. This personalisation is key for understanding how the educational material resonates with each student on a unique level. It goes beyond mere academic evaluation and taps into the emotional and personal aspects of the learning process. Grace provides a specific example of a student expressing their interest in Othello and the desire to visit the Globe Theatre to explore it further. This exemplifies how the students' experiences can lead to deeper engagement with the subject matter, which can be considered a successful outcome of the educational approach being studied. Grace's response implies that the research is not solely reliant on quantitative data but also values the qualitative aspects of the students' feedback. Understanding what intrigues and engages students on a personal level can provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers. Grace's response demonstrates an attention to the holistic educational experience and its focus on the impact of the curriculum from the students' point of view.

Grace's responses also identify the value and the importance that teachers placed on their students having rich experiences that they stressed will enable students to be inspired and motivated to achieve. Therefore, the teachers endorse Evans-Winters and Eposito's (2010) view

that the use of curricula, pedagogies, and educational policies targeted at intersectionality can be used to encourage equality within the educational system. Therefore, embedding intersectional practices within the curriculum can help and support educational systems to diversify their curriculums and indicates the importance of students having rich experiences that inspire and motivate them. Grace's response also indicates that teachers by teaching certain texts such as *Othello* help to promote a colonial curriculum because in this instance her students started to internalise the curriculum and began to 'find them intriguing'. In summary, gender impacts English education and teachers can either empower or oppress students by the way they teach and see them. Therefore, by the English curriculum intentionally integrating some communities and identities into the classroom while excluding others, teachers and schools now more than ever must find ways of creating and implementing intersectional practices and strategies to prove classroom practice and create equitable classrooms. Using intersectional practices to improve classroom practice was a common theme among teachers, as well as assessing how important intersectionality is for English curriculum and content. There is a compelling case for the integration of intersectionality within the English curriculum.

Building on the discussion of intersectionality the next chapter explores the crucial role of intersectional pedagogy and strategies in the English classroom to promote equity and student achievement. Chapter 6 also delves into the critical issue of reducing the achievement gap in English classrooms and using intersectional pedagogy as a means to challenge class, race, and gender structures. The chapter builds upon the previous findings and explores the various strategies, practices, and activities that teachers employ to promote both equity and achievement in their English classrooms.

5.6 Summary

In summary, the data within the examination of intersectionality in the English classroom provides

thorough insights into several key themes: the dimensions of intersectionality within the classroom, the English curriculum, and the crucial role of intersectionality in the English learning environment. The teachers underscore the structural, political, and representational aspects of intersectionality, emphasising the intricate interplay of factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and disability in shaping students' educational experiences.

Concerns are raised regarding the exclusionary nature of the English curriculum, focussing on cultural elitism and the perpetuation of stereotypes. Criticisms are also directed at the standardised exam system for its lack of cultural sensitivity and its potential to hinder students' engagement with diverse content. The teachers also highlight the challenges associated with diversifying teaching materials, underscoring the importance of an inclusive curriculum that addresses power structures and acknowledges existing disparities. The study also delves into representational intersectionality, expanding its focus to media images and advocating for the exploration of diverse representations to foster positive identity formation. Here the teachers stress the need to confront inequalities and overhaul the curriculum to be more inclusive.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of recognising and addressing the intricate interplay of identities and inequalities to foster a more equitable educational system. The teachers' grasp of intersectionality contributes to a nuanced understanding, transformative teaching practices, and the ability to address the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups. The findings emphasise the pivotal role of intersectionality in promoting inclusivity, challenging traditional perspectives, and cultivating a positive learning environment within the English classroom (see Table 3 below for a summary of the key findings and patterns arising from the data.)

Table 3: Summary of Key Findings and General Patterns

Intersectionality in the Classroom

- Intersectional framework in teaching addresses race, class, and gender.
- Empowers teachers to challenge and transform answers.
- Promotes inclusivity and diversity in education.
- Focus on the experiences of students with multiple subordinate identities.
- Addresses challenges and opportunities faced by marginalised groups in policies and educational contexts.
- Shift from individual analysis to 'axes of multiple inequalities.'
- Intersectionality theory is essential for addressing multiple identities (race, class, gender) in education.
- The focus on the whole individual contributes to creating a more equitable education system.
- intersectionality reveals how inequalities intersect to preserve privileges.
- Recognising one's own identity intersections is essential for teachers to address the experiences of marginalised students.
- Acknowledging the intersectional nature of classrooms is crucial for effective teaching and addressing inequality.
- Intersectionality is not just a theoretical concept; it has practical implications for classrooms and education. Intersectionality is a practical framework with profound implications for creating inclusive and equitable educational environments.
- Media representations play a pivotal role in shaping individual and collective identity, impacting the classroom environment. Media representations play a significant role in shaping and controlling identity.

The English Curriculum

- Diversity of identities and experiences within the educational setting.
- Need for teachers to cultivate 'intersectional awareness.'
- Recognition that not all approaches work universally for every student.
- Teachers express concerns about the English curriculum's lack of diversity and inclusivity.
- The curriculum is seen as exclusionary, inaccessible, and privileging the White upper class.
- Standardised exams are criticised for not considering diverse learning styles and cultural contexts.
- Lack of representation and negative depictions of BAME people in curriculum materials raise challenges.
- Teachers face difficulties in including BAME literature due to negative depictions.
- The curriculum is criticised for being biased, unrepresentative, and difficult for teachers to bridge the gap for diverse students.
- Whiteness is normalised in education, leading to the exclusion of BAME perspectives.
- BAME students and diverse voices are absent or underrepresented in the curriculum.
- The negative depiction not only affects students but also causes discomfort for BAME teachers who feel complicit in perpetuating stereotypes.

Wider Curriculum Impact

- Acknowledgment of the need to dismantle systemic inequalities within education.
- Schools, as microcosms of society, can replicate societal ideologies and inequities, impacting curriculum accessibility and success rates.
- Limited availability of positive Black materials in the English curriculum raises concerns about the negative portrayal of BAME characters.

Impact on Students' Engagement and Achievement

- Lack of relevance in the curriculum content can lead to disengagement and underachievement.
- Students express disinterest when they cannot connect with the curriculum.
- Teachers acknowledge the disconnect between the curriculum and students' realities.
- An intersectional, diversified, and inclusive curriculum is seen as crucial for addressing students' needs.

Chapter 6 Intersectional pedagogy and strategies in the English classroom to promote equity and achievement

One of the biggest challenges for Teachers of English is to reduce the achievement gap in their classes and to use intersectional pedagogy to challenge class, race, and gender structures. In this chapter, I will continue the discussion of the findings by looking at the strategies, practices and activities that teachers employ in the English classroom to promote equity and achievement. Accordingly, this chapter addresses themes 4 and 5 by focussing on the intersectional practices and strategies that teachers use in their classes to improve classroom practice and engender an intersectional classroom environment and curriculum. Thereafter, I discuss the difficulties and challenges in applying intersectionality in the English classroom (See Table 4 below for a summary of discussed themes, key focus and key points in this chapter).

Following a discussion of these intersectional strategies and practices I then discuss the connection between identity, belonging and intersectionality which are all strategies that teachers and schools can utilise to tackle the problem of differential attainment in English classes. This will therefore allow the development and implementation of intersectionality within English classrooms by supporting an intersectional framework for learning and curriculum. This thesis concludes by summarising the main findings, rearticulating the contribution of this study, and making recommendations for future studies. The next section of this paper will examine intersectional practices and strategies in English classrooms.

Table 4: Summary table of discussed themes, focus, and key points.

Theme	Key Focus	Key Points
Theme 4: **Intersectional Practices and Strategies in the English Classroom**	Examining how teachers employ intersectional practices in English classes.	Discussion of specific strategies and practices employed by teachers to enhance classroom practice and foster an intersectional environment.
	Identifying challenges and difficulties in applying intersectionality in English education.	Exploration of the obstacles faced by Teachers when implementing intersectional practices and strategies.
	Improving classroom practice through intersectionality.	Emphasis on the positive impact of intersectional strategies on enhancing the overall learning experience and inclusivity within English classrooms.
	Development of an intersectional curriculum.	Focus on how teachers contribute to the creation and implementation of an intersectional curriculum that reflects diverse identities and experiences.
Theme 5: **The Importance of Identity and Belonging to Intersectionality**	Examining the role of identity and belonging in the context of intersectionality.	Discussion on how identity and belonging play crucial roles in the understanding and application of intersectionality in the English classroom.
	Addressing the connection between identity, belonging, and intersectionality.	Exploration of the interconnected nature of identity, belonging, and intersectionality, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between these elements.
	Strategies for tackling differential attainment.	Identification of specific strategies and practices that teachers and schools can employ to address and mitigate the issue of differential attainment in English classes.
	Supporting an intersectional framework for learning and curriculum.	Advocacy for the development and implementation of an intersectional framework that supports learning and curriculum design, promoting inclusivity and diversity within English classrooms.

6.1 Intersectional practices and strategies in the English Classroom.

In a classroom, equity requires making room for multiple identities, and intersectional pedagogy recognises this convergence and interaction by constructing teaching practices that align with intersectional analysis. It is well known that a sense of success is one of the most powerful motivating factors for learning (Mccrea, 2020) therefore, an intersectional strategy can be used to support learning and raise engagement and achievement in English classes by

using images and resources that reflect students' diverse experiences thereby setting them up for success in their learning. This will also align with intersectional analysis, as well as having teachers who represent various cultures and ethnicities. Isabelle recounted her experience of using an intersectional framework when teaching by having to be deliberate about integrating and embedding topical difficult issues within the discussions in her lessons:

> When I teach, I talk about the issues head-on and relate it to the kind of issues that still persist today and how they might have changed. We looked at Black Lives Matter, wetalked about how the issues that we come across in the books and in the work that we do relates to real life and things that they might have experienced or seen around them.[Isabelle]

Isabelle's response provides valuable insight into her teaching approach and how she connects the content of her lessons to real-world issues. Isabelle demonstrates a proactive approach to teaching by addressing current and relevant issues. She mentions discussing topics like Black Lives Matter, which is a significant social movement. This shows a commitment to keeping the curriculum up-to-date and connected to the concerns of the present day. The response also highlights Isabelle's effort to make the material relatable to her students' lives. She connects the academic content (books and work) to real-life experiences and situations that students may have encountered. This approach is likely to engage students more effectively by showing them the practical relevance of what they are learning. The mention of discussing how the issues in the curriculum relate to real-life situations indicates a focus on critical thinking and analysis.

Encouraging students to think about how the concepts in their studies apply to the world around them can foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter. By talking about issues like Black Lives Matter, Isabelle displays a sensitivity to social justice and equality concerns. She is not

shying away from potentially difficult or controversial topics but is addressing them in a thoughtful and empathetic manner, which can create a safe and inclusive classroom environment. Isabelle hints at acknowledging changes in how issues evolve over time. This indicates a willingness to adapt her teaching strategies and content to reflect the evolving nature of real-world challenges. In summary, her response suggests an effective teaching approach that is both relevant and engaging for students. By addressing contemporary issues and connecting academic content to real-life experiences, she is likely to create a more meaningful and impactful learning experience for her students. Her approach also fosters critical thinking, empathy, and adaptability, which are valuable qualities in an educational setting.

Additionally, Chloe in the extract below recounts the specific resources, she has chosen to engage intersectional strategies within her classroom:

> I've used a lot of poems that talk about injustice, so for example, Maya Angelou's 'Still I Rise'. Obviously, it's a Black woman talking about her experiences, but I feel like it really can relate to all students because they see struggle… They have quite visible reactions when they see struggle and they sympathise and then they see themselves in that regardless of the type of person that they are. [Chloe]

In the above extracts Isabelle and Chloe discuss the intersectional strategies they use to address the issue of inequality in their classrooms because these resources were specifically chosen and selected with the diversity of students in mind, they promote students' engagement and learning. This can therefore help to alleviate the disaffection that teachers maintained was experienced by students since they believe that embedding intersectionality and intersectional practices within the curriculum and thereby incorporating the voices and views of the pupils into the design of curriculum materials and resources are strategies that can be used to continue

to challenge the systemic oppression while also recognising the collective experiences of the marginalised groups in society. This they stressed was a strategy to raise achievement in English and help to address the recurring problem of inequity within the English curriculum and English content taught to pupils. Additionally, this would be a change from the current situation of English content being monopolised by a proliferation of dominant white European canons, resulting in a lack of engagement and inclusion among students. This will help to transform the curriculum and educational systems because intersectional practices will help tochange the way teachers teach and interact with their students:

Another way we can look at it is the representation of teachers and becoming more diverse, so students can see an example of other ethnicities and see all the ways in which our lives are similar but also very different. It's important that the images students see also represent students ... in terms of resources showcasing a variety of different experiences that intersect that can be through text and reading about certain figures. [Chloe]

Being aware of what materials you choose as well, because some materials might not be appropriate for the children you've got in your class, ... they might be quite sensitive topics for the children you've got. So, for example, we had something on food banks. So, if you've got children, who are, in that situation where they might have had to frequent food banks, then obviously being aware of that and making sure that everyone has respect in the classroom. So, for me, it's like diversifying. The more you know your class, the more you can give them appropriate materials and set tasks that's appropriate and will enable them to achieve as well. [Grace]

The responses provided by Chloe and Grace offer insightful perspectives on the importance of diversity in educational materials and the consideration of students' backgrounds and

sensitivities in the classroom. Chloe highlights the significance of diversity in teacher representation. Her response emphasises that teachers should be more diverse to serve as role models for students from various ethnic backgrounds. She suggests that diverse teacher representation can help students recognise both the commonalities and differences in people's lives, fostering a deeper understanding of the world. Chloe stresses the importance of educational materials that showcase a variety of experiences, whether through text or stories about different figures. This helps in broadening students' perspectives.

Additionally, Grace in her response underscores the importance of teachers being mindful of the materials they choose for their classes. She raises the issue of sensitivity and appropriateness, indicating that some topics might not be suitable for all students. She does this by providing a practical example of discussing food banks and how this topic might affect students who have personal experience with it. Grace highlights the importance of respecting and supporting these students also emphasising the need for teachers to know their students well. This knowledge enables them to select appropriate materials and design tasks that are both relevant and supportive of student success. In summary, Chloe and Grace both advocate for diversity in educational materials, with Chloe focussing on the representation of teachers and the content, while Grace places particular emphasis on teachers' awareness of the students' backgrounds and sensitivities. Both perspectives underscore the need for educators to be thoughtful and inclusive in their teaching practices, ensuring that all students have access to an education that respects their diverse experiences and needs.

The above extracts also indicate that equitable teaching isn't about treating students equally regardless of their identities. This is because students whose identities are intersectional may be left out if pedagogy lacks a sense of race, gender, or other identities. Moreover, these

responses support Singmaster (2018) who contends that classrooms fostering an atmosphere conducive to the emergence of diverse ideas and insights, drawing from a wide range of backgrounds, provide students with a valuable educational experience. Crucially, when young individuals are exposed to a wide spectrum of perspectives, they are more inclined to actively pursue peace and advocate for social justice within their communities, as opposed to being influenced solely by rigid and one-sided narratives.

Teachers also had a lot to say about the strategies they employed in their English classes. Isabelle in the following extract describes her approach to embedding intersectional practices within the curriculum by focussing on the teaching materials and resources she uses in her lessons:

> The Edge by Alan Gibbons deals with racism and domestic violence and sexism in the way that it treats some of their female characters…I don't think there was much of intersectionality within those characters. It was a boy. Who was being treated in a racist way, but the characters weren't discriminated against because of more than one factor. 'Noughts and Crosses' as well. I've seen racism, but it's flipped so that the White people tend to be discriminated against… that was a way of dealing with it with students because it maybe helps White people to empathise more with what minorities go through … that might seem kind of like smaller issues to maybe White people. [Isabelle]

In the above response, Isabelle begins by highlighting the presence of racism, domestic violence, and sexism in the novel The Edge. She specifically mentions how racism is a central theme, focussing on how a male character experiences discrimination due to his race. Isabelle's response notes that there is a lack of intersectionality in the way these issues are portrayed in

the book. In this case, Isabelle is suggesting that the characters in the novel do not face discrimination based on multiple factors but rather focus on a single aspect, which is race. She also draws a comparison with <u>Noughts and Crosses</u>, another book that addresses racism. She points out that in <u>Noughts and Crosses</u>, the dynamic is different, with White people experiencing discrimination, which is flipped from the usual societal norm. Isabelle believes that this contrast serves as a means of helping White students empathise with the discrimination that minorities typically face.

She implies that by presenting the issue of racism in a different light, where White individuals experience discrimination, it may be more relatable and lead to increased empathy among White students who may not fully grasp the experiences of minorities. She also suggests that these issues may appear smaller to White people, indicating that they may not fully understand or appreciate the extent of discrimination faced by minorities. Overall, Isabelle's response offers a critical analysis of how these sensitive topics are portrayed in literature and how different approaches, such as flipping the perspective as seen in <u>Noughts and Crosses</u>, can potentially enhance empathy and understanding among students, particularly those who may not have directly experienced discrimination.

Isabelle's response shows the need for all teachers to be able to employ a range of intersectional strategies and an intersectional analysis in their practice to make sense of the difficulty and multiplicity involved in working and dealing with the inequality that exists in education. This can also be seen in Olivia's recount of how she uses poetry across the whole range of cultures to empower her students and how it had the added effect of empowering her as well not only as a Black teacher but also as a Black woman:

It was interesting for the students that weren't White British, for one a Black woman

to be talking about it. And two, to talk about other cultures and to say okay, what do you think about this?' Also giving minorities in that school a chance to discuss openly their culture or something about themselves to the group. What made it different and relevant for us was that we got to choose what type of poems we wanted to use. [Olivia]

Olivia's observations of how she uses poetry from different cultures to discuss topics such as race and identity support the literature and concur with researchers like Case (2017) that English lessons must address inequalities in education to aid in creating a positive culture through discussion and dialogue in the classroom to empower all students. This strategy of using English lessons to empower teachers to use their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race, and class to respond to their pupils' achievement is used to create success in education. Here, Olivia's observation also concurs with Phoenix and Brah (2004) that the intersectionality of race and gender is important because it recognises a reality in which individuals do not engage with social experiences through discrete, singular identities, but through multifaceted identities with complex variable effects.

Below Grace's response reflects a student-centred, adaptable, and inclusive approach to teaching. She recognises the importance of tailoring teaching methods to meet the unique needs and backgrounds of students, with the overarching goal of ensuring their success. This perspective is in line with contemporary pedagogical practices that prioritise diversity, equity, and inclusion in education:

I think it should be part of how you teach, you wanna make sure that everyone gets the same thing out of it. Everyone in my classroom I want them to be successful no matter what their background is and where they're coming from…what works well for one might not work for another. So, in one classroom I might rely on one way of doing

something, and in another classroom, I might rely on another. So, for example, for me when I teach like 2 years, obviously even if I'm teaching the same thing, I don't approach just the classes in the same way, although the materials are the same it's dependent on the students and obviously making sure everyone can be successful. [Grace]

The above extract focusses on the importance of centring students at the heart of the curriculum and lesson planning because failure to do this will ultimately lead to disaffection and disillusionment. When students are not engaged in the learning process, they will become bored and unmotivated. This can lead to poor academic performance and feelings of disconnection, disaffection and disengagement from the classroom environment and learning process. The teachers' responses concur with Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011) who believe that one of the core tenets of intersectionality is the ability to centre the experiences of people of colour with course materials and the curriculum. This can create a sense of alienation in BAME students, which can lead to decreased academic motivation and engagement in the classroom. This can create a feedback loop, where students feel disempowered and disconnected from their peers and teachers, leading to further disengagement and poor performance.

Grace's response also emphasises the importance of teachers tailoring their teaching methods to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, can succeed. This reflects Grace's commitment to inclusive teaching practices, where the goal is to accommodate the diverse needs and learning styles of students. In her response, she also recognises that what works well for one student may not work for another. She advocates for the use of different teaching approaches in different classrooms, depending on the specific needs and characteristics of the students in those classrooms. This approach aligns with the concept of intersectionality, where

teachers adjust their teaching methods to accommodate individual student differences. Grace also acknowledges that even when teaching the same material, she adapts her teaching approach based on the students she is working with which reflects a student-centred teaching approach, where the teacher places the students' needs and learning styles at the forefront of their teaching strategy. Despite teaching the same material, the participant is open to modifying their teaching approach. Overall, Grace's response demonstrates a student-centred teaching philosophy that prioritises individual student success and inclusivity.

A core tenet of intersectionality that was discovered in the findings was that of being culturally aware and respectful of other cultures and backgrounds (Case, 2017):

> I find the students that really do struggle are those of them from poor backgrounds. Those are the ones that perhaps were struggling in their primary school to achieve certain grades, those with learning disabilities as well. And these are the students that don't have a lot of cultural capital. They don't see an awful lot of things that perhaps you and I have possibly been able to and experience. And when they're reading, they don't seem to be able to make those, clear inferences or references and they're not able to visualise perhaps the scene or wherever it might be, an event or something. [Ella]

Ella's response provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by students from disadvantaged backgrounds when it comes to reading and comprehension. Ella acknowledges that there are students who face difficulties in their academic journey, particularly in the context of reading and comprehension. This recognition is a crucial starting point for addressing educational inequalities. She identifies poverty as a key factor contributing to these struggles because students from impoverished backgrounds may have had a challenging primary school

experience and may not have achieved certain academic grades. This insight highlights the role of socioeconomic status in shaping educational outcomes. The response also mentions students with learning disabilities. This is important because it acknowledges that challenges in reading and comprehension may not be solely linked to socioeconomic factors but can also include individual learning differences. The concept of "cultural capital" is introduced, which refers to the cultural knowledge, experiences, and resources available to an individual (Throsby, 1999). Ella notes that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may lack exposure to the experiences and cultural references that more privileged students have.

Consequently, Ella explores the idea that this lack of cultural capital can affect their ability to understand and relate to the content they are reading. For example, students may struggle to make clear inferences or references while reading, and they may have difficulty visualising scenes or events described in the text. This indicates a potential gap in their reading comprehension skills. Ella's response conveys empathy and an understanding of the challenges faced by these students. This perspective is crucial for teachers and policymakers seeking to address educational disparities. Overall, Ella's response underscores the importance of considering the complex interplay of socioeconomic factors, learning disabilities, and cultural context when addressing educational inequalities in reading and comprehension. It suggests that tailored interventions and support systems may be necessary to help these students overcome these challenges and access quality education.

Furthermore, another strategy that was discussed was the ability of teachers to foster open cultural dialogue. Teachers recognise that being culturally aware and understanding students' backgrounds is vital for bridging the achievement gap and creating a culture of respect in schools, ultimately leading to a more equitable society. This is especially important in

culturally diverse classrooms, where students may feel that their backgrounds are not respected or that their cultural values do not align with those of the teacher. This can add to the feeling of alienation, creating a cycle of disengagement that can be hard to break.

To create more equitable diverse gender communities, Cin (2017) argues that open cultural dialogue is necessary to encourage democratic participation by all groups. Through open dialogue, communities can discuss the issues that are impacting their gender equality and create strategies to address them. This dialogue can help to create a better understanding of the issues, develop more inclusive policies, and foster mutual respect and understanding between different genders. The teachers' responses reveal that teachers viewed the ability to be culturally aware and be able to understand their students' cultures and backgrounds as vital in raising and bridging the achievement gap because 'If you want to understand the whole child, you have to understand the factors that create them' [Olivia]. Schools play a critical role in promoting equity and counteracting societal discrimination which will lead to a culture of respect for all throughout society. The teachers agreed that this is a transformational process that will equip students and teachers to accept differences, increase compassion and empathy for others, and build multiple perspectives while heightening their appreciation of every person in the world in which we live.

Another strategy that Poppy uses is sharing her personal story with students. Poppy recounts her experience of sharing her own story of her career progression with her students as a tool to raise achievement. She believes that sharing her story adds credence to the idea that there is no one path to success and that they need to be open to the various pathways that they could take to achieve their success:

So, I try to model positive behaviours wherever I can. I also try to speak to them openly

about going off to university and different opportunities you can get as a result of doing that but also modelling that. Going into the workplace is a positive thing to do as well. I worked for 12 years for a company that sold sales and marketing software before I became a teacher. I know what it's like on both sides of the coin. I've been through the kind of educational process, but also, you know, I've been out in the workplace, and I understand how that works and I think it's to do with trying to show that actually there is value in a number of different kinds of future career paths. [Poppy]

The above extract reveals how teachers and the stories they share with their students about their lives and experiences have a huge impact in shaping their students' lives and outcomes and can be used as a strategy to raise attainment as well. The curriculum however must also support teachers with the skills, background and knowledge to build respect, tolerance and critical thinking among their students. This will enable both teachers and students to address their own bias that permeates their lives and society at large, to increase their diversity of knowledge on gender, race, class, disability etc. The willingness to reflect upon one's own biases is an important step towards the deconstruction of negative stereotypes and prejudice. This will also enable students to embrace their fear of differences, which will increase empathy for others and build multiple perspectives, all while heightening their respect and tolerance for others to ensure the right to quality education for all:

We were learning about refugees and asylum seekers in one of our units… one of our students had experiences of that, and so just being aware of that even though it wasn't her own experience, it was people she knew, so officially it wasn't in our school records…but because she knew people close to her who had this experience 'cause I think the data only gives you sort of like one part and obviously when you look at

individual students you can evaluate … situations etc. But it [data] only gives you so much. It doesn't give you the whole picture. [Grace]

I have a speech writing unit where I have a majority of women of colour and within those women of colour majority are Black women…she talks very clearly and candidly about her experience being both a woman and Black. I think it's like she almost kind of begins this discussion about intersectionality and the ways which Black women are pulled in two different directions. And I think the students saw this. We read the speech and they had discussions surrounding the idea of being different. Having multiple identities within one and I think for a lot of them this resonated with them. So, for example, the South Asian girls saw that within their own experiences and the students, all of them, looked at the ways in which their identities, intersected…in a lot of nuanced ways. It has impacted my teaching. [Chloe]

The teachers' responses exemplify the need for teachers not only to rely on their data entries that have certain identifiers for students but also to get to know their students' individual stories. The example of the student who has experiences of asylum-seeking as related by Grace shows that teachers must consider how the factors or experiences that students have been exposed to can negatively affect them and how teachers can use their lessons, their choice of resource materials and the texts used in the lesson to alleviate these issues while not adversely affecting their students.

 The teachers also advocate that teachers need to understand the cultural factors that affect their students. This cultural understanding and knowledge of their students will aid in promoting

equity in their classrooms. Additionally, the teachers discussed that disadvantage and inequity not only exist in educational settings, but this inequity is perpetuated and reinforced by society—an argument that is also supported by Gillborn (2015). Teachers' responses addressed the need for the English educational system to become more intersectionally aware because in the past teachers have been reluctant to embed intersectional practices in their teaching because of a range of factors. One factor the teachers' responses indicated was the lack of intersectional training in the current teacher training programme which reinforces Bhopal and Rhamie's (2014) point that trainee teachers could benefit from more practical support when dealing with diversity in the classroom:

> Well, not until I had a look at your question today that I really thought about intersectionality and its importance. It's never been something that's been explicitly taught to me during training or anything like that. We have spoken about things like equality, and I've had a small amount of training on unconscious bias. And we have had SEND, we have, you know, LGBTQ we have race and gender. I've never seen anything amongst the lines of intersectionality to see the person has a variety of factors that create them. [Olivia]

This training could help trainee teachers understand and recognise the differences in cultures and backgrounds of students, enabling them to create an environment that is inclusive and encouraging for all students. It could also help them develop strategies to manage class dynamics and address issues of prejudice and discrimination. Researchers like Rodenborg and Boisen (2013) believe that teachers should be prepared to teach pupils to negotiate the intricacy of social identities that they will come across in the world:

> Strategy-wise it's more about making every child feel that they can be successful. I've got groups of children who are working class. I've got also, children with physical disabilities that maybe when we do certain tasks that are more practical or have to move

around, feel like they can't be part of it or involved in it…being aware of …in my class, there is such a diverse range of students… the working-class white girl who's got a physical disability, for example…the different things aren't apparent as obviously as you walk into a classroom…you can see in terms of race things like that, but in terms of the other factors, you have to obviously know the class and get to know them and cater for the needs of your students. [Grace]

The teachers' responses suggest that this is a beneficial approach because it helps to position students within the curriculum. This allows them to see themselves in the curriculum through the texts and resources used and also through the discussions generated which help in creating a sense of belonging. By making the curriculum more accessible, students can get a better understanding of the content and see how it applies to their lives which helps to motivate them to engage with the material. Additionally, the social aspect of the approach helps to create a sense of community which encourages collaboration and engagement.

Additionally, Isabelle's response in the extract below indicates that when certain texts are used that deal with pertinent social issues this will generate interest and engagement which will lead to pupil attainment:

We've kind of dealt with the social issues, to begin with, and they seem really interested. I think that anything where we talk about social issues and kind of link it to what's happening today that tends to be more interesting to them. [Isabelle]

By engaging students in texts that are relevant to their lives and that deal with social issues, Isabelle believes that the students will be more interested in the material, and this will lead to better student performance and greater understanding of the material. Conversely, teachers emphasised in the findings which were discussed in chapter 5 that currently, this was not the

case with the English curriculum and as a result, students, in particular BAME students, from working-class backgrounds did not feel that sense of belonging because they or their experiences were not centred in the curriculum. This, therefore, meant that they were not being given the agency that they needed to make a change and be in important positions later in their lives.

Intersectionality is centred on the discussion of attainment because centring students within the curriculum will ultimately influence a pupil's prospects in later life. Pupils will become academically deprived if educational systems fail to centre their students within the curriculum. The teachers repeatedly spoke about the application of an intersectional framework to teaching where the experiences of BAME learners are centred and integrated throughout the curriculum by focussing and adopting different strategies to teaching such as placing BAME pupils at the heart of teaching and not just on the fringes. Grace's response helps to elucidate this point when she says:

> Some of our Black girls who did Malorie Blackman's Noughts and Crosses were quite inspired by the fact that she's not only a woman and a Black writer, but also, she's been recognised as quite a great children's writer and I've got quite a few girls actually, who want to write in the future, so that was also a good thing for them. With any text that you choose… you need to feel like some kind of connection with that text, and I think that's why the texts we choose are really…important, because either the students can see … some of their own experiences in it or they can learn…experiences of others. [Grace]

In the above extract, Grace's response discusses the impact of Malorie Blackman's novel, Noughts and Crosses, on a group of Black girls. She highlights that some Black girls were inspired by Malorie Blackman's work. This inspiration appears to come from the fact that she

is not only a woman but also a Black writer. This shows that representation matters, as these students could identify with the author and her success, which motivated them. It indicates that having diverse authors and characters in literature can have a positive impact on underrepresented groups. The participant mentions that Malorie Blackman is recognised as a great children's writer. Grace goes on to say that some of these girls now aspire to become writers themselves. This suggests that literature can serve as a powerful means of encouraging career aspirations. It also shows the potential for literature to influence career choices and shape the dreams of young individuals. She also acknowledges the importance of choosing texts that students can connect with. The text selection should either reflect the students' own experiences or introduce them to the experiences of others. This underlines the role of literature in fostering empathy and understanding, as it can expose readers to diverse perspectives and realities. In summary, the response highlights the positive influence of Malorie Blackman's work on Black girls, emphasising the importance of representation in literature and how it can shape aspirations and promote empathy and understanding.

Additionally, the response underlines the potential positive effects on students' progress and access to the curriculum which are in accordance with Ingram and Abrahams (2016) and Reay (2012) who argue that students must be centred in the curriculum to motivate and inspire them to succeed. Additionally, Grace explores the idea of centring as a two-fold process. Firstly, for students to be able to see themselves mirrored in the curriculum but also for students to be allowed to explore and be exposed to texts and resources within the curriculum that allow them to be appreciative of varied experiences and contexts. This is also in line with researchers such as Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011), Case (2017), and Dill and Zambrana (2009) who argue that pedagogic processes are critical in bringing about genuine change and improving educational attainment for all pupils and are key when analysing educational attainment and the relationship

between school policy and everyday practice in the classroom because teachers need a clear and precise model for them to effectively embed intersectionality across the curriculum.

The teachers revealed the need for the English curriculum to have a provision of real-life examples and experiences in the course materials, curriculum, and schemes of work and by providing students with instant feedback for them to be able to effectively evaluate and assess their progress. The teachers agree with Case (2017, p. 2) that they are 'professionally and ethically responsible for making sure pupils from a broad range of backgrounds feel represented in the course materials and get the message that their identities are worthy of academic study' because if this is not done 'students become disaffected because they think that what they're doing is not being valued.' [Henry]

The above observation made by Henry raises important points related to the issue of valuing students' efforts and its potential impact on their motivation and engagement. Henry points out that this disaffection is linked to students feeling that "what they're doing is not being valued." This is a crucial insight because it highlights the role of perceived value in students' motivation. It implies that students may lose interest and motivation if they believe their efforts are not appreciated or recognised. The use of the word "think" in the extract is noteworthy. It emphasises the importance of students' perceptions. It's not just about whether their efforts are actually valued, but whether students believe they are. This perception can have a significant impact on their attitudes and behaviours. Additionally, recognising and valuing students' efforts and achievements is vital for maintaining their engagement and preventing disaffection. This aligns with the well-established theory that students are more motivated and engaged when they feel that their work is acknowledged and respected. This response highlights a crucial aspect of student motivation and engagement in educational

settings. It suggests that teachers and schools should pay attention to recognising and valuing student efforts as a strategy to enhance their motivation and prevent disaffection. In summary, Henry's response effectively raises the issue of student disaffection linked to the perception of undervalued efforts, which is a significant concern in education. It highlights the importance of recognising and valuing students' work as a potential solution to this problem.

Additionally, teachers discussed how parents can raise their children's aspirations. Despite teachers' belief that parents play a valuable role and that parental expectations have a positive impact on their children's achievement, teachers also believe that working-class parents may lack expectations for their children. Within the realm of intersectional strategies, one noteworthy approach is the elevation of parental expectations. The following section delves into how this strategy, informed by intersectional principles, can positively impact students' educational experiences while addressing the potential disparities in working-class parents' aspirations for their children.

6.1.2 Raising Parental expectations- an intersectional strategy

This section will explore the importance of other adults and stakeholders such as parents that teachers believe could be used as an intersectional strategy to raise pupil achievement. For example, the essential role that parents had to play as role models in engendering belonging and being valued were investigated by the teachers in the study. The teachers spoke about using parental intervention to help parents support their children because 'sometimes it's sitting down with parents and the child to have a talk and say, 'You know let's just refocus on where you are going.' [Ava]

Additionally, teachers spoke about their interaction with parents through Parents' Evenings

and telephone calls to aid in student engagement. Teachers found that these interactions allowed them to better understand the home environment and support parents in helping their students reach their academic potential. This allowed teachers to gain insight into the student's individual needs and provide tailored support:

> It is largely on account of this child not making progress in my class, or I have some sort of concern, behavioural concern or an academic concern, but that's where I would then pick up the phone or email and say, "Look, so and so is not making as much progress and I'm concerned." [Alice]

> I will try and ask for support from the parent, I will say, this is what I'm doing at school to help your child what can you do at home to help me help your child you know, so it's basically to request for support. [Evie]

Here both Alice's and Evie's responses indicate that by asking for support from parents and guardians, teachers can show that they are invested in their student's success and that they are willing to work together with parents to ensure that their child is achieving their best. This type of collaboration is essential when it comes to helping a student succeed in school. This is important because it allows the teacher to reach out to the parents or guardians of the student to discuss the issue and come up with a plan to help the student make progress. It also allows the teacher to get an understanding of the student's home life and any other factors that could be affecting the student's performance. Using an intersectional framework places the students' individual needs as well as their academic needs at the heart of their education. Therefore, having parents onboard to help and support learning acts as a two-tiered approach. Student aspirations was another topic that recurred in the interviews and focus group discussions. The

teachers' responses focussed on aspirations and how sometimes parents from a working-class background can have a negative impact on the aspirations of their children:

> In our students that have more of a working-class background, there is not so much reliance on getting those sorts of like Russell Group universities, and you know, A* orGrade 9s, becoming a doctor or a barrister, that kind of thing. [Henry]

Henry makes an important point because for parental support to be effective teachers will need to give parents the appropriate information on how best to support their children; the language to use and the facts on what their children can realistically achieve in their external exams. This links to parents being role models for their children and thus can replicate positive or negative values that can then negatively or positively affect their children's attainment and achievement. Parents need to understand how to foster a positive learning environment for their children and how to encourage them to reach their full potential. They need to be aware of how to talk to their children and the importance of allowing them to take responsibility for their own learning. Having the appropriate information and guidance from teachers help parents to establish a supportive and nurturing environment where students can thrive.

Similarly, Phoebe reasons that some pupils can 'be a bit disaffected' and it was 'quite useful to have a chat with the parentsand see if you can work out where that might have come from and try to get them on side to engage with'. Here Phoebe identifies the necessity of teacher/parent collaboration in raising achievement and securing a sense of belonging within the classroom. These responses also indicate that through parental collaboration teachers can develop a better understanding of their pupils' differing needs and individual situations which is vital in addressing attainment issues and one clear strategy that can be utilised for greater impact in the classroom with parental involvement in school deepening.

Additionally, Jessica adds to this link between teacher and parent by underlining the important role that parents must play in education. She emphasises the importance of parents being involved in their child's learning and providing them with adequate support and resources. Jessica also argues that parents must be willing to communicate with teachers to ensure that students are getting the best possible education:

> Students who are disengaged with their learning also have parents who are disengaged with their learning - not all the time - sometimes there are really engaged parents and still disengaged children but it does seem to be that actually if a student feels that way maybe mum or dad aren't bothered with how they're doing, or they don't care about how they're doing, or they think that mum or dad don't value education then it comes through in what they're doing. [Jessica]

Jessica provides valuable insight into the relationship between student engagement and parental engagement in the context of education. Jessica highlights a correlation between the disengagement of students and the disengagement of their parents in the educational process. She suggests that when students are disengaged, it may often be related to their perception that their parents are similarly disengaged. Jessica acknowledges that this correlation is not absolute and recognises that there are exceptions. However, she points out that there are cases where students are disengaged despite having engaged parents, suggesting that the relationship is not solely deterministic but plays a significant role. Jessica raises the important aspect of parental attitudes and values towards education. She implies that when parents do not show concern, care, or value for their child's education, it can affect the child's engagement with learning. This could include parents not actively participating in their child's education or not emphasising its importance.

Jessica hints at the potential psychological impact of a student perceiving their parents as disinterested or undervaluing education. Such perceptions can influence a student's motivation and self-esteem, potentially leading to disengagement from learning. Jessica's response provides valuable qualitative insights into the complex relationship between student engagement and parental engagement. It suggests that while the connection exists, it is not solely deterministic and that the attitudes and values of parents regarding education play a crucial role in shaping a student's approach to learning. These insights were useful for this thesis in which I sought to better understand and improve student engagement.

Additionally, in the extract below Scarlett discusses the problem of lack of motivation in some students that can be attributed to the student's lack of understanding of the importance of their education and the impact it can have on their future. Similar to Jessica's observations Scarlett also believes that it is possible that the student is influenced by their parents' attitude towards education and has adopted the same perspective:

> If a student thinks that they've got parents that never needed to pass exams and look at look how I did, look how well I did. Quite often you'll get a student that goes I don't need to pass my exams it doesn't matter. [Scarlett]

Scarlett discusses how a student's perception of their parents' success or lack of a need to pass exams can impact their attitudes. This suggests that students may be influenced by the behaviours and attitudes of their parents when it comes to the importance of academic exams. Scarlett highlights the tendency for some students to compare themselves to their parents and may think, "look how I did" or "look how well I did." This implies that students might use their parents' success or lack of emphasis on exams as a benchmark for their motivation or the lack thereof. The phrase "I don't need to pass my exams; it doesn't matter" signifies a possible attitude among some students that exams are not essential for their future success. This could

be a reflection of a disinterest in academic performance or a belief that their parents' achievements are proof that exams are not a determining factor for success.

Scarlett's response highlights the variability in students' attitudes. While some students may not feel the need to pass exams due to their parents' example, it's important to recognise that not all students will share this perspective. This response aligns with the thesis topic and contributes to understanding how parental attitudes and behaviours can influence a student's approach to exams. It suggests that there is a complex interplay of factors at play in shaping a student's motivations and attitudes towards academic assessments. It highlights the need for further research and analysis to explore the factors contributing to these attitudes and how they impact students' academic performance.

This lack of motivation can be further attributed to the student's lack of support from teachers, peers, and family. If the student feels like they are not supported in their learning journey, they may not be inspired enough to put in the hard work needed to succeed. It can also be a result of the student not seeing the value in their education, and instead focussing on extrinsic rewards such as grades and awards. Here the responses indicate that increasing parental involvement in the school system is an effective strategy that can be used to increase achievement. In this section, we have explored a range of intersectional strategies that the teachers employed to create more intersectional classrooms. However, employing intersectional strategies and practices within the English classroom does not come without its difficulties and drawbacks. While intersectional strategies hold promise, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges and complexities associated with their implementation. In the following section, I will examine the difficulties that teachers face when applying intersectionality within the English classroom.

6.2 Difficulties in applying intersectionality within the English classroom

For many of the teachers interviewed intersectionality was interpreted as a negative approach that was difficult to implement in their practice. This is because intersectionality requires teachers to address multiple forms of discrimination simultaneously, which can be overwhelming and difficult to implement in a classroom setting. Additionally, many teachers may lack the training and resources to effectively understand and employ intersectional approaches. This is expressed in the following extracts:

> Historically, it's been more of a like, oh, you know these students of a Black background, so this might be suitable. These students from this class and this might be suitable, but obviously intersectionality is acknowledging that students have so many different, I suppose influences, identities and backgrounds that affect their learning, so it's not as easy, although we have a situation where we still in schools almost like do put children in a box. [Jessica]

> It doesn't always happen with every single child. You are going to connect with some and not with others. [Freya]

Jessica and Freya both discuss the complexity of creating intersectional classrooms because, although the teachers wanted to include intersectional practices in their teaching, they experienced varied difficulties such as ensuring intersectional practices within the classroom accounted for all the identities that their students may have and building positive relationships that further support learning and achievement within the classroom. Additionally, Jessica's response to the fear of bringing our own biases into the classroom is also a difficulty when implementing intersectional strategies within the classroom and can act as a barrier to proper implementation. It is therefore an issue that must be addressed and taken into consideration.

Teachers need to be aware of their own biases so as not to perpetuate the inequity:

> But it's not that easy in terms of teaching and learning to in a way sort of like you know, discriminate in that way and say for everyone this is going to work for all you know, Black students, or this is going to work for girls, or this is going to work for boys. [Jessica]

Jessica's response highlights that the difficulties that teachers face in the classroom are real. Therefore, having an open dialogue about issues like race, class, and gender is crucial and relevant. This is because these various attributes can potentially interact and create separate disadvantageous factors, intersecting at various points to form distinct power relationships. These conversations can raise awareness about the complex challenges teachers encounter in the classroom. They also offer a platform for students to express their own experiences and opinions. Engaging in open dialogue and understanding these issues can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students. In the final section of this chapter, Section 6.3, I synthesise the key findings, insights, and implications from my exploration of intersectionality in the English classroom. This summary and conclusion provide a comprehensive overview and a call to action for advancing intersectional approaches in education.

6.3 Summary

In conclusion, the incorporation of intersectionality into the curriculum is identified as a crucial step toward fostering diversity and inclusion in educational settings. This approach is expected to provide students with a sense of value and belonging, thereby contributing significantly to their academic success. Teachers of English, recognised as key stakeholders, play a central role in preventing discrimination and fostering mutual respect among students. However, the study acknowledges that certain English class texts may inadvertently reinforce racialised narratives, potentially marginalising

BAME students. To establish a truly equitable and inclusive educational environment, teachers and curriculum designers are urged to critically evaluate and select materials that authentically reflect the diverse identities and experiences of all students.

The participating Black Teachers of English in the study shared their encounters with equity issues and a sense of belonging in their own educational journeys, positioning them as valuable role models for students facing similar challenges. Additionally, positive relationships with key stakeholders, including parents and students, were identified by all teachers in the study as a crucial factor in fostering a respectful classroom environment, facilitating the long-term promotion of diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, it was underlined by the teachers that the success of these efforts relies on teachers maintaining an unwavering belief in the potential of every student, regardless of gender, race, or class.

Moreover, the study underscores the vital importance of teachers not only comprehending but also applying intersectional practices within their teaching methodologies. Effective incorporation of intersectionality in the English curriculum and classrooms necessitates teachers' clear understanding of how these practices support teaching and learning, leading to positive outcomes for all students. To create an educational landscape prioritising diversity, inclusion, and equitable outcomes, teachers must be well-versed in intersectional principles and commit to their application in their teaching practices. The findings from the study reveal significant insights into intersectional practices and strategies within the English classroom, addressing themes such as intersectional practices, strategies, and the importance of identity and belonging to intersectionality. The dataset reflects a comprehensive approach adopted by Teachers of English to infuse intersectionality into the curriculum, addressing various dimensions of inclusivity and diversity. These key findings and general patterns highlight the multifaceted nature of intersectional practices in the English classroom, underlining the importance of inclusivity, cultural awareness, and varied teaching strategies to address educational disparities. Teachers play a pivotal role in creating an

environment that values diversity and promotes the success of all students.

(see Table 5 for a summary of key findings and general patterns).

Table 5: Key Findings and General Patterns in Intersectional Practices and Strategies in the English Classroom
Student Aspirations and Parental Influence • Teachers recognise the impact of parental attitudes on student aspirations. Increasing parental involvement is identified as an effective strategy to enhance student achievement and motivation. • Effective parental support requires teachers to provide appropriate information on realistic academic expectations and engage parents as positive role models. • Teachers actively seek support from parents, fostering a collaborative approach to ensure student success. • Communication between teachers and parents helps in understanding students' needs and developing tailored strategies. • Collaborative efforts are crucial in addressing disaffection in students, with teacher-parent discussions serving to identify and resolve underlying issues affecting student engagement. There is a correlation between student disengagement and perceived parental disengagement. • Parental attitudes and values toward education play a significant role in shaping a student's approach to learning. Students may feel unmotivated if they sense their parents don't value education. • Some students may adopt a disinterested stance if they perceive that their parents did not prioritise exam performance. • Lack of motivation in students can stem from a perceived lack of support from teachers, peers, and family. • Students may focus on extrinsic rewards like grades and awards instead of recognising the intrinsic value of education. • Teachers emphasise the crucial role of parents as role models and their ability to engender a sense of belonging and value in students. • Parental intervention involves collaborative efforts to refocus students on academic goals, through discussions and joint planning. • Teachers utilise Parents' Evenings and phone calls to better understand the home environment and tailor support to individual student needs.

Table 5: Key Findings and General Patterns in Intersectional Practices and Strategies in the English Classroom

Strategies in English Classes

- Using literature (e.g., 'The Edge' and 'Noughts and Crosses') to address racism and discrimination.
- Employing intersectional strategies can help students empathise with experiences different from their own. Teachers emphasise the need for a student-centred approach, tailoring teaching methods to meet diverse needs. This aligns with contemporary pedagogical practices focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Teachers stress the importance of centring students within the curriculum, allowing them to see themselves in the content and fostering a sense of belonging. This approach positively influences student progress and engagement.
- Teachers highlight the importance of teachers being aware of sensitive topics and adapting materials based on students' backgrounds. This approach promotes respect in the classroom and ensures appropriateness in teaching content.
- Teachers stress the importance of cultural awareness and fostering open cultural dialogue. Understanding students' backgrounds contributes to bridging the achievement gap and creating a culture of respect.
- Teachers point out that students' disaffection is linked to the perception of undervalued efforts. Recognising and valuing students' work is crucial for maintaining engagement and preventing disaffection.
- Teachers discuss the impact of parental expectations on students' achievement. While recognizing the positive influence, they also note potential disparities in expectations, especially among working-class parents.

Empowerment through Inclusive Teaching

- The Black teachers believed that the use of poetry from various cultures empowers students and teachers.
- Inclusive teaching practices have a positive impact not only on students but also on teachers, fostering empowerment.
- Teachers play a crucial role in shaping perspectives by choosing materials that reflect diverse experiences.

Chapter 7 Conclusion and Summary of Main Research Findings

To comprehend the complex dynamics of intersectionality within the English classroom, this thesis explored three pivotal research questions as a means of unravelling the complex dynamics of intersectionality. This crucial chapter calls for a thorough examination of these fundamental questions. Ultimately, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the intersectionality of English classrooms and its significance for educational research.

This project aims to contribute to a broader understanding of intersectionality within the specific context of the English classroom. In addition to offering theoretical insights, this thesis attempts to shed light on diverse perspectives, experiences, and dynamics at play. It is the goal of the upcoming sections of this paper to not only address the research questions but also to synthesize their findings into a cohesive narrative that advances our understanding of intersectionality as it relates to education. The purpose of this conclusion is to encapsulate the essence of the inquiry and contribute to a more nuanced and informed discussion of intersectionality in the English classroom.

7.1 Research Question 1: How do Teachers of English understand the intersection of gender, race, and class andits impact on their students' achievement and success in education?

This study addresses the research question concerning English teachers' understanding of the intersection of race, class, and gender and their impact on students' achievement. The study reveals an advancing understanding of how these factors interact. Teachers' responses underscore the inherent intersectional nature of the English classroom, recognising that experiences of discrimination or privilege are linked to specific combinations of an individual's characteristics. Anchored in Crenshaw's (1991) framework, the research delves into three dimensions of intersectionality—structural, political, and representational—illuminating teachers' nuanced navigation and their impact on student achievement in English secondary schools.

Teachers' insights into structural intersectionality underscore the multifaceted nature of identity, emphasising the complex interweaving of race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and disability. This understanding is crucial for recognising systemic inequalities extending beyond isolated instances of sexism or racism. The application of an intersectional lens in teaching emerges as a potent tool for fostering critical discussions on race, class, and gender, challenging ingrained perspectives, and making English classrooms more inclusive. Teachers are encouraged to reflect not only on their own identities but also to extend this understanding to the diverse identities within their classrooms.

Political intersectionality, as highlighted by the teachers, underscores the importance of exploring and acknowledging students from marginalised groups who occupy multiple subordinate identities in the curriculum and educational policies. This recognition shifts the analysis from an individual level to a group level, recognising identity categories as 'axes of multiple inequalities' (Cole, 2008, p.450). However, the critical aspect of preserving privileges within political intersectionality surfaces, accentuating the need for active efforts to dismantle systemic inequalities in education.

The dimension of representational intersectionality in the findings delves into how media portrayals influence classroom dynamics, highlighting the role of media in shaping individual and collective identity within the educational context. Teachers critique the English curriculum for its inadequate representation of diverse voices, particularly those belonging to BAME individuals. The curriculum's focus on White, male, and upper-class perspectives marginalises BAME, working-class, and female students, contributing to a sense of exclusion and privilege.

In summary, the study upholds for a more inclusive and equitable approach to education that considers the complex interplay of race, class, and gender. The teachers' understanding of intersectionality extends beyond theoretical concepts to practical frameworks, emphasising the

transformative potential of adopting an intersectional lens in teaching. This approach has profound implications for classrooms and education, contributing significantly to a more equitable and diverse educational landscape. The findings highlight the importance of intersectionality, identity, and belonging in the educational context. Teachers play a crucial role in creating inclusive and supportive environments for students of diverse backgrounds, acknowledging the challenges and inequalities present in the education system and calling for intersectional practices to address these issues. Having summarised the results of the first research question, I will proceed to provide a summary of the results pertaining to the second research question.

7.2 Research Question 2: To what extent do Teachers of English use intersectional pedagogy to challenge gender,race and class structures in their classes to ensure their pupils' attainment?

Based on the study's main findings about English teachers' knowledge of intersectionality and its impact on pupils' achievement, it has been found that pupils' experiences in English classes are shaped in different ways by class, race, and gender intersections and their interaction. Additionally, the research findings, also reflect that the intersectionality of class, race, and gender can have a significant impact on pupils' achievement and attitude towards English. Teachers spoke about both the inequity and the inequality that exist in English classrooms, and how inequity and inequality serve to limit and restrict their students' ability to reach their educational potential.

The findings of this research have important implications for policymakers, English teachers, and other stakeholders working to promote equity and access to educational opportunities in England. Teachers in the study utilised intersectional pedagogy to challenge class, race, and gender structures in their English classes by using a range of intersectional approaches and strategies such as discussions, texts, and other resources to address intersectional issues.

However, the teachers explored the range of barriers that they encountered daily in the classroom in implementing such intersectional pedagogy. For example, the standardised educational approach in English secondary schools, exemplified by exams like the GCSEs, constrain teachers within mechanistic pedagogies dictated by external pressures (Gillborn and Youdell, 1999). This limitation impedes inclusive and creative teaching, hindering the development of intersectional policies that would foster more inclusive educational spaces (Gerwitz et al., 2021). Consequently, students face difficulties navigating the educational system, highlighting the crucial role of teachers in empowering students through fostering individual identities.

An intersectional teaching approach is proposed as a means to comprehend and mitigate different forms of oppression, contributing to a reduction in discrimination within the classroom (Bullock, 2018). Teachers also reflected on the potential for low expectations and aspirations for students from working-class backgrounds (Ingram, 2018) and expressed concerns about the negative portrayal of BAME characters in the curriculum, advocating for the inclusion of positive representations and a broader range of voices to challenge one-dimensional portrayals. The correlation between low socioeconomic status and academic underachievement, as acknowledged by one teacher, aligns with existing literature (Vadivel et al., 2023). This underscores the necessity for tailored teaching strategies considering individual needs, particularly for students facing disadvantages beyond the school environment.

Additionally, teachers shared concerns about the challenges faced by Black students, particularly Black boys, and the negative portrayal of BAME individuals in the English curriculum, reflecting broader concerns about representation and its potential impact on students' self-esteem and identity. Stereotypes and reservations about positive discrimination

were also highlighted, underlining the importance of recognising individual excellence irrespective of race and advocating for a more comprehensive approach to addressing racial inequalities. Additionally, there was reference to the subtle racism in mainstream schools, indicating an awareness of the nuanced nature of racism and the need for inclusivity and respect for cultural differences. Acknowledging the impact of material deprivation on students' access to resources, particularly in contributing to underachievement, aligns with the notion of a significant educational achievement gap associated with social class in the UK (Perry and Francis, 2010). The teachers also acknowledged that negative experiences with the school system are contributing to students' disillusionment and dissatisfaction, underscoring the importance of creating an educational environment that facilitates self-motivation for students of different abilities.

Additionally, in terms of intersectional dynamics, the research highlighted that class, race, and gender intersect and interact to shape pupils' achievement and attitudes towards English. For example, the study uncovered that student hailing from low-income backgrounds, concurrently belonging to racially marginalised and gender-oppressed groups, or experiencing challenges based on intersections of class, race, and gender, encounter compounded obstacles in attaining success in English. This suggests that the influence of various forms of discrimination and disadvantage contributes to lower achievement levels in English of these groups of students when compared to their counterparts from more privileged or dominant groups. Additionally, the teachers argue that pupils from marginalised or disadvantaged groups may also experience identity conflicts or struggle with issues of representation and belonging in English classes, which can impact their motivation, engagement, and achievement.

Black teachers, in particular, discussed how societal prejudices and racism are reflected in

educational systems, affecting BAME students' sense of belonging. Black teachers use their personal experiences as role models for students and expressed a profound connection to their identity. The teachers highlight the need to address systemic biases in schools due to the presence of racial and gender discrimination. Teachers also share personal experiences and identities, which they believe that sharing these personal narratives foster a sense of identity and belonging within the classroom. Additionally, teachers believe in using diverse narratives in literature to help students relate to different perspectives, acknowledging and respecting diverse identities and backgrounds to create an inclusive curriculum. The importance of teacher-student relationships is stressed, underscoring the need to establish connections based on shared understanding and common ground. Teachers see positive engagement as a key factor in student success. Belonging is considered crucial for student retention and achievement, with teachers linking engagement and belonging while emphasising the need to understand students' backgrounds.

Overall, the teachers' perspectives underscore the multifaceted challenges in establishing an inclusive and supportive educational environment that addresses the intersectionality of gender, race, and class. These insights emphasise the importance of adopting intersectional approaches in teaching and curriculum development to foster equitable educational outcomes for all students. The themes and findings include an agreement among teachers with scholars like Yuval-Davis (2006) and Bhopal and Preston (2011) regarding the interconnectedness of identity and belonging with gender, class, race, and other social divisions. There's an emphasis on understanding students' backgrounds, including gender and race, to tailor teaching styles for success. In addition to highlighting the need for school leadership and educational policies to support intersectional practices, teachers discussed the challenges of implementing intersectional practices.

Addressing inequity in education is another focal point. The teachers underscore the importance of teachers adapting their teaching styles to recognise and accommodate the diverse backgrounds of students, advocating differentiated instruction based on factors like geographical origin, socioeconomic class, exposure to different environments, and gender. Teachers assert that an intersectional approach is crucial for tackling the prevailing inequities in English education. Furthermore, teachers advocate for embedding intersectional practices within the classroom to reshape teachers' perspectives on individual students. The goal is to appreciate the uniqueness of each student, steering clear of assumptions or stereotypes based on race, gender, class, or other identities. Teachers therefore advocate for the integration of intersectionality within the English curriculum to create more inclusive and equitable classrooms.

Teachers underline that not all inequalities are equal. They stress the need for teachers to grasp the compounded impact of multiple layers of identity on a student. The findings acknowledge a lack of understanding among teachers about the complexities of inequalities, stressing the importance of teacher training and professional development. Teachers stress the importance of maintaining an intersectional understanding in the classroom that is free from judgement and bias. Prejudging students based on their backgrounds is considered counterintuitive, necessitating measures to eliminate bias in the educational environment. Understanding students' experiences is highlighted by teachers as crucial for effective teaching. Personalised and rich experiences are deemed essential for inspiring and motivating students to achieve. The study recognises the role of intersectional pedagogy and strategies in promoting equity and reducing the achievement gap in English classrooms. The teachers collectively recognise the importance of acknowledging and addressing the complex interplay of identities and inequalities. This recognition is seen as integral to creating a more inclusive and positive learning environment within the English classroom.

Although other factors could contribute to this the teachers attributed this mainly to the content of the English curriculum which they asserted was limited in terms of cultural variety and had the potential of holding bias. This also linked to attitudinal differences with the findings indicating that pupils' attitudes towards English were also influenced by their class, race, and gender intersections. For example, the teachers believed that pupils from marginalised or disadvantaged groups had negative attitudes towards English, perceiving it as distant, irrelevant, or even exclusionary. These findings highlight the importance of classroom environments as well as teacher relationships to student attainment and achievement. The teachers identified feelings of competence, autonomy and social - relatedness as necessary for their students to feel motivated and able to achieve in the classroom (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

Gender disparities in English education are also recognised, with the need to address gender dynamics in the classroom. The research highlights the importance of teacher agency in negotiating with the curriculum to address cultural and linguistic strengths and students' lived experiences. The teachers' reflections shed light on the complexities of addressing gender, race, and class intersectionality in the English classroom. The teachers also highlight the diverse starting points of students, there is a recognition that a uniform teaching approach may prove ineffective due to varying levels of prior knowledge influenced by socio-economic backgrounds and life experiences of students outside of school.

Teachers advocate for empowering teachers to use race and gender positively in the classroom, rejecting the idea of ignoring these factors. They emphasise the need for intersectional practices in education to counteract underachievement and disaffection by highlighting the positive influence of incorporating intersectional pedagogy in education. Teachers believe that this approach aims to offer students representation, a sense of safety, and the freedom to express their viewpoints. Furthermore, beyond fostering a pleasant

learning atmosphere, intersectional pedagogy is viewed as empowering students for academic success.

In summary, the study reveals teachers' critical perspectives on the English curriculum's limitations in representing diverse voices and addressing the intersectional needs of students. It upholds for a more inclusive and equitable approach to education that considers the complex interplay of race, class, and gender.

7.3 Research Question 3: How can Teachers of English use their knowledge of the intersection of gender, race, and class to implement intersectional strategies to respond to their pupils' achievement and successin English?

This thesis invites reflection on the role of intersection and intersectional pedagogy in the English classroom and the knowledge and skills that teachers utilise in implementing intersectional strategies within the classroom which I will now discuss in the following section. Teachers of English, such as Isabelle and Chloe, stand out in the study as skilful integrators of intersectional approaches within the English classroom. They adeptly intertwine academic content with real-life experiences, engaging students in discussions on contemporary social issues like Black Lives Matter which fosters critical thinking. The teachers emphasise the importance of using diverse resources, like Maya Angelou's 'Still I Rise,' to address issues of injustice from a Black woman's perspective. Furthermore, the teachers collectively express the necessity to confront systemic oppression and enhance student engagement, particularly for marginalised groups.

The drive to learn is profoundly shaped by a feeling of achievement (Mccrea, 2020). Consequently, establishing an environment that incorporates images and resources reflecting

diverse student experiences, coupled with having teachers who embody various cultures and ethnicities, emerges as a pivotal strategy to promote student success in learning. Moreover, teacher representation and diversity take centre stage, as the teachers in the study advocate for a teaching staff that mirrors diverse ethnic backgrounds who can also serve as influential role models. This research builds upon existing arguments advocating for an education that embraces diversity and values differences as essential components of learning in the twenty-first century (Maylor et al., 2007; Sanger, 2020; Anyichie and Butler, 2023). Furthermore, the thesis articulates how a diverse and culturally-relevant curriculum can nurture a sense of connectedness, community and acceptance, providing students with opportunities to engage with various cultures, identities, and experiences. By adopting an intersectional approach to teaching, teachers can illustrate how various forms of oppression intersect, contributing to personal growth, social cohesion, and the advancement of a more inclusive and equitable society.

Moreover, this practice cultivates an environment where students can identify with the diverse representation in the teaching staff, fostering not only a greater sense of inclusivity but also a profound feeling of belonging. The significance of adaptability and sensitivity underscores the imperative for educators to demonstrate flexibility and thoughtfulness in their approach to selecting materials, ensuring they are carefully tailored to accommodate the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their students. In doing so, the learning environment becomes enriched and resonates with the varied perspectives within the student body, creating a more inclusive and supportive educational atmosphere.

The teachers assert that their ability to employ their understanding of the intersectionality of gender, race, and class is crucial for establishing safe and inclusive classroom environments.

They emphasise that for such initiatives to be effective in their English classes, substantial support from both the school administration and the English curriculum is essential. The teachers contend that cultivating an intersectional ethos involves various processes, including setting clear expectations for behaviour, nurturing positive relationships among students, and addressing any instances of discrimination or bias. In essence, they propose that a collaborative effort between educators, the school, and the curriculum is necessary to foster an environment where all students feel valued and respected, irrespective of their class, race, or gender.

Additionally, teachers contend that there is a pressing need to facilitate teachers' development of meaningful relationships with students by providing more resources, space, and time. Schools are seen as effective systems that can support the building of relationships like these by reflecting on the diverse identities and concerns of learners and tackling the social and cultural injustices that can alienate so many students from school. The teachers assert that the absence of supportive relationships with teachers and inclusive school cultures has serious implications for the engagement of young people with education as a whole and their physical health and mental well-being and this must be a priority for policymakers (Bennett, 2017).

Furthermore, the teachers reached the conclusion that implementing differentiated instruction tailored to the varied needs of their students, incorporating additional support or challenges based on individual strengths and weaknesses, and considering intersectional factors affecting learning are effective strategies for enhancing classroom practice. These measures contribute to ensuring that the English classroom adopts an intersectional approach. Additionally, the teachers maintained that encouraging and promoting student voice and agency was an effective intersectional strategy that could be utilised in the classroom. This amplification of student voice could involve providing opportunities for students to share their perspectives,

experiences, and insights, and incorporating their voices into classroom discussions, assignments, and assessments.

The teachers additionally recognised the necessity for continuous professional development among teachers to augment their proficiency in addressing intersectional inequalities within the classroom. Concerns voiced by Olivia about the absence of explicit intersectionality training in teacher preparation programmes highlight the need for such training to deepen teachers' understanding of diverse cultures and backgrounds, fostering inclusive environments. The teachers suggest that this might encompass participating in workshops, conferences, or training sessions dedicated to equity, diversity, and inclusion in education. This would also allow teachers to collaborate with other teachers, school leaders, stakeholders and other multifaceted agencies to develop and implement strategies to tackle differential attainment in English classes (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). The teachers explained that what this would look like in the classroom was the involvement in engaging in collaborative planning, sharing resources and best practices, and advocating for policy changes that promote equity in education. Teachers' responses also indicated that whatever intersectional strategies were employed, strategies needed to be context-specific and responsive to the unique needs of students and schools. This would also include regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies, and adjusting them as needed, all these actions will be crucial in promoting equitable intersectional outcomes in English classrooms.

There is a strong focus on cultural awareness and respect in Theme 5. As a result, the teachers emphasise the impact of poverty on students' academic struggles and introduce the concept of "cultural capital" as an important factor. Culture of respect and open cultural dialogue are key strategies for bridging the achievement gap in culturally diverse classrooms. Collectively, the teachers deemed it essential to understand students' individual stories beyond data entry.

Using personal stories to inspire students and challenge conventional ideas of success is also identified as a powerful tool.

In recognition of the influence of parental expectations on students' achievement, teachers argue that raising parental expectations, particularly among working-class parents, can positively impact aspirations (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Brown-Jeffy and Cooper, 2011). As such, teachers emphasise the importance of encouraging parental involvement in their children's education, particularly among working-class families, in order to increase student achievement. These findings indicate that intersectional practices are nuanced and multifaceted within the English classroom. By integrating diverse perspectives, cultivating cultural awareness, and adopting adaptability and sensitivity in their pedagogical practices, Teachers of English aim to create inclusive learning environments, address disparities, and enhance student engagement and success. Teachers of English can also play an important role in advocating for social justice and advocating for the rights of marginalised communities. In summary, Teachers of English can also use their classrooms as a platform to discuss and challenge oppressive ideas and attitudes.

7.4 Contribution to knowledge

My contribution to knowledge is three-fold. Firstly, this thesis extends the knowledge on intersectionality from researchers such as Jones and Wijeyesinghe (2011) who explore intersectionality in education; Case (2017); Wallin-Ruschman et al. (2020); and Case and Lewis(2017) who explore intersectional pedagogy; Grant and Zwier (2011) and Rathmann et al. (2018) who postulate the view that teachers who include their students in their classrooms through varied activities will have students who are also more likely to feel satisfied in life and have better school outcomes. Building on these established ideas, this thesis explores how

intersectional teaching practices can be used to create more equitable and successful learning outcomes for students in diverse contexts.

 Secondly, this thesis extends our understanding of the contemporary problems that arise in the classroom today in a variety of school settings by helping to identify and address inequality sources and create more equitable and inclusive classrooms. Additionally, by looking at the inequity that exists in English classrooms this thesis helps to build a more comprehensive understanding of how the different identities that students hold interact to cause marginalisation or oppression that further leads to disaffection and underachievement in school, as well as complementing research on education inequalities and underachievement (Demie, 2023; Reay 2022; Strand, 2021). By utilising intersectionality, a framework that takes into consideration the various identities present in a given situation, Teachers of English can better understand the systemic and structural barriers that prevent students from fully participating in the classroom.

Thirdly, it contributes to the body of knowledge (Harris and Leonardo, 2018; Rice and Friedman, 2019; Collins, 2015) that explores how intersectionality and intersectionality pedagogy can be utilised in educational systems and policies to acknowledge that there are multiple systems of oppression at play in any given situation which means that a single identity such as race, gender, or social class - cannot be seen in isolation, but instead must be examined in relation to the other identities present. Accordingly, it offers a framework for understanding how intersectionality can be used to challenge and deconstruct existing power structures to create more equitable learning spaces because by examining how different identities interact to create inequity, Teachers of English can create more inclusive and equitable classrooms.

This thesis therefore sets out to contribute to how intersectionality can be used to develop equitable teaching practices by helping to inform policy decisions and interventions to reduce or eliminate inequalities in classrooms, such as providing additional resources and support for marginalised students or implementing more inclusive curriculums that promote the inclusion and success of all students (Bennett, 2017). This thesis also highlights the need for an intersectional lens to challenge and question the curriculum (Cole, 2009) as well as more culturally relevant and diverse curriculums and practices that promote positive outcomes for BAME students. It therefore contributes to the knowledge around diversity and culturally-relevant curriculums which this thesis contends can help to create an inclusive learning environment and promote greater understanding and acceptance of different identities.

Additionally, it could be used to help teachers better understand and engage with their diverse student population because this thesis illustrates the benefits of conceptualising adaptive teaching rather than prescriptive "one size fits all" approaches. This sort of adaptive teaching allows teachers to craft their lesson plans to suit the needs of their students, taking into account their backgrounds, learning styles, and interests (Westwood, 2018). By doing this, teachers can create a more engaging and effective learning environment for their students. This approach is important because it allows students to learn in a way that is tailored to their individual needs, and it also helps to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging. Consequently, this thesis not only have consequences for teachers but also for the students they teach because it encourages teachers to explore and develop critical thinking skills in their students which will encourage students to think critically about the topics they are learning and to develop an understanding of the complex intersectional relationships between different identities.

To summarise, this thesis makes the following contributions to the literature by bringing to focus the practices and the curriculum that promotes a system of underachievement of BAME students by its exclusionary practices. As a result, this thesis contributes to Case's research on intersectional pedagogy by ensuring that the research was specific to the English secondary classroom settings and including strategies for engendering intersectionality and inclusion that were specific to this context. Additionally, it contributes insights into how teachers can create an inclusive learning environment for all pupils. It also underlines the importance of intersectionality embedded in school systems by recognising and validating the multiple identities of students and teachers and also focusses on how teachers can create a safe space for their students to thrive and learn. This thesis, therefore, offers strategies to foster students' identities and provide them with a safe space to engage in meaningful dialogue. This is based on the premise that, for all students to reach their full potential, they must feel safe, respected, and valued. By creating an inclusive environment, teachers can help students feel connected to their learning, the curriculum, each other and their school (Guay e tal., 2008).

7.5 Recommendations

It is therefore imperative to design more innovative approaches to school curricula and accountability processes. This is because traditional methods of teaching and grading often fail to recognise the diverse needs of different students and their unique approaches to learning. New approaches should be designed to ensure that all students receive a quality education and are held accountable for their learning. Changing approaches and processes in education must reflect a broader understanding of how education works and what success in education looks like. For example, one study when examining the relationship between engagement and achievement outcomes found that students who are given more autonomy and choice in their learning process tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and improved academic outcomes (Willms, 2000). This suggests that traditional methods of teaching and assessment

should be replaced by more holistic approaches that take into account the individual needs of each student. Furthermore, they must be more responsive to the diverse experiences and perspectives of young people. By doing so, schools can create an inclusive learning environment that promotes critical thinking and encourages students to take ownership of their education.

Additionally, it will help teachers develop their skills in differentiating instruction, which is essential for meeting the needs of all students. Teacher participation and other stakeholders are required as part of this effort. Having teachers and other stakeholders involved in this process, will create an environment of collaboration that will allow the school to better understand how to create an inclusive learning experience that is tailored to the individual needs of the students. This will also help to ensure that students feel supported and engaged in their learning, allowing them to become more independent and take ownership of their education. A significant contribution needs to be made by young people whose voices have been ignored for too long in education decision-making. It will help to create an environment where students are empowered to take responsibility for their learning, and where their voices are heard and respected. This will enable students to be more involved in the educational process, and it will also help to create an atmosphere of trust and understanding between students and teachers.

Using the findings of this research on intersectionality to enhance my teaching is important to me as an English teacher. Creating an inclusive and empathetic classroom environment requires understanding the nuanced ways in which identity intersects and shapes individuals' experiences. Throughout my curriculum, I will incorporate diverse voices and perspectives to ensure that literature and texts reflect the multiplicity of identities and experiences present in our society. Furthermore, I will encourage open discussions that allow students to explore and

critically analyze the intersectional dimensions of the characters and themes in the texts we are studying. As a result, I aim to promote empathy and social awareness among my students while deepening their understanding of identity, privilege, and oppression. To ensure my teaching remains responsive and inclusive to my students' diverse needs, I will continuously seek professional development opportunities to stay current with research and best practices in intersectionality.

7.6 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Due to the small sample size and qualitative nature of this study, no generalisations can be made, and more research would be needed to back up the conclusions presented here (Suter, 2012; Willis, 2007). Additionally, due to the high number of female participants (which reflects the situation in secondary schools that have a high proportion of female teachers) and only two male participants, the sample size does not accurately represent the perspectives of male teachers. For example, it is possible that the results of this research might have been different if there were more male teachers involved. I struggled to find male Teachers of English and out of the six I found and approached only three agreed to participate in the research. Therefore, out of the twenty teachers who participated in the case study only three were male Teachers of English.

 Consequently, this limits the validity of the findings regarding male teachers, as the sample size is not large enough to draw any statistically significant conclusions. Therefore, any generalisations made about male teachers must be done with caution and should be supported by further research. As well as being heterogeneous in terms of geography, social strata, and backgrounds, the sample included participants with a variety of experiences, in terms of years, in teaching English to secondary school students. The purpose of this was to gain a deeper

understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It is also possible that my status as a Black female researcher who is also a Teacher of English influenced participants' responses. By collecting data from a diverse group of participants, it is possible to gain a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon in question. Additionally, the researcher's identity as a Black female teacher of English may have provided a unique insight into the participants' responses, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the data.

7.7 Final Reflections

As a Teacher of English with over 20 years of teaching experience, I am aware that using an intersectional lens allows teachers to examine the wider range of ethnic, racial, and social inequality that may be responsible for the inequity that they observe in their lessons. I have used intersectional strategies within my classroom to look beyond the surface-level issues and get to the root causes of why certain groups of students may be falling behind. I have done this by understanding the various forms of oppression and how they interact, to craft more effective interventions and create more equitable learning environments for all students.

In this research, I examined the impact of intersectionality in the English classroom and how Teachers of English utilise intersectionality within their classes. As part of this research, I conducted interviews and focus group discussions with English teachers to gain insight into how they viewed intersectionality and how they used it in their teaching practices. The focus group discussions and interviews revealed that intersectionality is used to create inclusive classrooms where students of all backgrounds feel welcomed and appreciated. Teachers also use intersectionality to examine language and literature from a variety of perspectives and to foster critical thinking and dialogue among students. Furthermore, it was revealed that teachers are becoming more aware of intersectionality and how it can be used to create equitable

learning environments.

Therefore, to tackle these ingrained embedded issues, it is necessary to tune into the real cause of the problem. This is because the underlying causes of inequity can be complex and nuanced, and teachers need to be able to identify them to create adequate solutions. When teachers understand the various systems of oppression that students are faced with, they can work to create interventions and strategies that are tailored to the specific issues of each student or group of students. Intersectionality makes it possible for teachers to reflect on how these identities interact with the world around them. This can help foster an environment that is more understanding and equitable. It can also help teachers create a classroom environment that acknowledges and honours the unique experiences of their students, allowing students to feel seen, heard, and respected. Moreover, an intersectional framework will help teachers address racial, gender, and class issues in the classroom. As a result, we will be able to bring about the changes in education we need. These changes will help create classrooms that are more welcoming and inclusive and allow students to express themselves unapologetically and without fear of judgement. This will also help foster a sense of connection and understanding between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves. Ultimately, such an environment can lead to greater student engagement and achievement.

To address deep-seated inequities in education, it's crucial to understand their root causes, which are often complex. It is essential that teachers identify these causes and create interventions that are tailored to them. In an equitable classroom environment, students feel heard and respected when systems of oppression, such as race and gender, are recognised through intersectionality. This approach helps address racial, gender, and class issues, fostering welcoming, inclusive classrooms. By creating such an environment, students are

more likely to connect, achieve, and engage, resulting in the necessary changes in education. Therefore, intersectionality is a core tool for transforming education into a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive space for all students.

References

Acker, J. (2012). Gendered organizations and intersectionality: Problems and possibilities. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *31*(3), 214-224.

Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Teaching for diversity and social justice, 2nd Edition*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Adoniou, M., & Gallagher, M. (2017). Professional standards for teachers—what are they good for? *Oxford review of education*, *43*(1), 109-126.

Adjogatse, K., & Miedema, E. (2022). What to do with 'white working-class' underachievement? Framing 'white working-class' underachievement in post-Brexit Referendum England. *Whiteness and Education*, *7*(2), 123-142.

Ajegbo, K., Kiwan, D., and Sharma, S. (2007). Curriculum review: Diversity and citizenship. *London: Department for Education and Skills*.

Anthias, F. (2012). Transnational mobilities, migration research and intersectionality. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, *2*(2), 102-110.

Ansell, A. (2013). *Race and ethnicity: the key concepts*. Routledge.

Anyichie, A. C., & Butler, D. L. (2023). Examining culturally diverse learners' motivation and engagement processes as situated in the context of a complex task. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 8, p. 1041946). Frontiers.

Apple, M. W. (1999). Power, meaning, and identity: Essays in critical educational studies. *(No Title)*.

Apter. M. (2001) *Motivational styles in Everyday life: A Guide to Reversal Theory*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Arday, J., Zoe Belluigi, D., & Thomas, D. (2021). Attempting to break the chain: reimaging

inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *53*(3), 298-313.

Arnot, M. and Gubb, J. (2001) *Adding Value to Boys' and Girls' education: a gender and achievement project in West Sussex*, Chichester: West Sussex County Council.

Ashley, M. (2003) Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning. *Routledge, a part of the Taylor Francis Group*, Volume 3, p. 3.

Atewologun, D. (2011). An examination of senior Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic women and men's identity work following episodes of identity salience at work. PhD Thesis. Cranfield University, UK.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, *1*(3), 385-405.

Banks, C. A., Pliner, S. M., & Hopkins, M. B. (2013). Intersectionality and paradigms of privilege. *Deconstructing privilege: Teaching and learning as allies in the classroom*, 102-114.

Barber, M. (1994) *Young people and their attitudes to school: interim report*. Centre for Successful Schools, University of Keele

Barone, C., and Schizzerotto, A. (2011). Introduction: Career mobility, education, and intergenerational reproduction in five European societies. *European Societies*, *13*(3), 331-345.

Bassey, M. (1999) *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bassey, M. (2001). A solution to the problem of generalisation in educational research: Fuzzy prediction. *Oxford Review of Education*, *27*(1), 5-22.

Bauer, G. R. (2014). Incorporating intersectionality theory into population health research

methodology: challenges and the potential to advance health equity. *Social science & medicine*, *110*, 10-17.

Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voss, T., Jordan, A., ... & Tsai, Y. M. (2010). Teachers' mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and student progress. *American educational research journal*, *47*(1), 133-180.

BERA. 2018. Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research 4th Ed. London: British Educational Research Association.

Berg. (2001). Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (4th ed.). Allyn and Bacon.

Berger, M. T., and Guidroz, K. (Eds.). (2009). *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy through Race, Class, and Gender*. University of North Carolina Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807895566_berger

Bishop R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives*, 6(3), ix–xi.

Bhopal, K., & Rhamie, J. (2014). Race Ethnicity and Education. *RACE ETHNICITY AND EDUCATION*, *17*(3), 471-471.

Biddulph, S. (1998) *Raising Boys: Why boys are different – and how to help them become happy and well-balanced men*. Sydney: Finch.

Bilge, S. (2013)   Intersectionality Undone Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies Du Bois Review, 10(2), pp. 405–424.

Blaxter, L., Hughes C. and Tight M. (1996) *How to Research.* Buckingham: Open University.

Bleach, K. (1998) *Raising boys' achievement in schools*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Blunkett, D. (2000) 'Single-sex classes to help failing boys', *The Observer*, 20 August, p.4

Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), pp. 77-101

Bronner, K., & Paulus, S. (2017). Intersektionalität: Geschichte, theorie und praxis [Intersectionality: History, theory, and practice]. Opladen: utb.

Brown, A., & Danaher, P. A. (2019). CHE principles: Facilitating authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *42*(1), 76-90.

Browne, I., and Misra, J. (2003). The intersection of gender and race in the labor market. *Annual review of sociology*, *29*(1), 487-513.

Brown-Jeffy, S., & Cooper, J. E. (2011). Toward a conceptual framework of culturally relevant pedagogy: An overview of the conceptual and theoretical literature. *Teacher education quarterly*, *38*(1), 65-84.

Bryman, A. (2008). Of methods and methodology. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *3*(2), 159-168.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.

Bullock, E. C. (2018). Intersectional analysis in critical mathematics education research: A response to figure hiding. *Review of Research in Education*, *42*(1), 122-145.

Cairney, P. (2012). Complexity theory in political science and public policy. *Political studies review*, *10*(3), 346-358.

Campbell, T. (2015). Stereotyped at seven? Biases in teacher judgement of pupils' ability and attainment. *Journal of Social Policy*, *44*(3), 517-547.

Carastathis, A. (2016). *Intersectionality: Origins, contestations, horizons*. U of Nebraska Press.

Carbado, D. W., Crenshaw, K. W., Mays, V. M., & Tomlinson, B. (2013). INTERSECTIONALITY: Mapping the Movements of a Theory1. *Du Bois review: social*

science research on race, *10*(2), 303-312.

Case, K. A., & Cole, E. R. (2013). Deconstructing privilege when students resist. *Deconstructing privilege: Teaching and learning as allies in the classroom*, 34-48.

Case, K. A. (2017). Toward an intersectional pedagogy model: Engaged learning for social justice. In K. A. Case (Ed.), *Intersectional pedagogy: Complicating identity and social justice* (pp. 1–24). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315672793-1

Case, K. A., & Lewis, M. (2017). Teaching intersectional psychology in racially diverse settings. *Intersectional pedagogy: Complicating identity and social justice*, 129-149.

Cassese, E. C. (2019). Intersectional stereotyping in political decision making. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

Cassidy, S. (2003). Learning styles: an overview of theories, models and measures. *Proceedings of 8th Annual Conference of the European Learning Styles Information Network (ELSIN)*, Hull, UK.

Cin, F. M. (2017). Gender Justice, Education and Equality: Creating Capabilities for Girls' and Women's Development. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.

Ciot, M. G. (2009). A constructivist approach to educational action's structure. *Bulletin of University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca. Horticulture*, *66*(2), 621-626.

Chen, Y., Shek, D.T., & Bu, F. (2011). Applications of interpretive and constructionist research methods in adolescent research: philosophy, principles and examples. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*.

Chepp, V., & Collins, P. H. (2013). Intersectionality. *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and*

Politics, 57-87.

Chiu, M. M., Chow, B. W. Y., McBride, C., & Mol, S. T. (2016). Students' sense of belonging at school in 41 countries: Cross-cultural variability. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, *47*(2), 175-196.

Cho, S. (2013) Post-intersectionality. *Du Bois Review*, 10 (2), pp. 385–404.

Cho, S., Crenshaw, K.W. and McCall, L. (2013) Toward a field of intersectionality studies: theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs,* 38 (4) pp.785– 810.

Choenarom, C., Williams, R. A., & Hagerty, B. M. (2005). The role of sense of belonging and social support on stress and depression in individuals with depression. *Archives of psychiatric nursing*, *19*(1), 18-29.

Christensen, A. D. (2009). Belonging and unbelonging from an intersectional perspective. *Gender, Technology and Development*, *13*(1), 21-41.

Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., Vigdor, J. L., & Diaz, R. A. (2004). Do school accountability systems make it more difficult for low-performing schools to attract and retain high-quality teachers? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *23*(2), 251-271.

Coates, J. (1995) *Language, Gender and Career*. London: Longman

Cochran-Smith, M. (2009). Toward a theory of teacher education for social justice. *Second international handbook of educational change*, 445-467.

Codiroli McMaster, N., & Cook, R. (2019). Context and Implications Document for: The contribution of intersectionality to quantitative research into educational inequalities. *Review of Education*, *7*(2), 293-294.

Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S., & Major, L. E. (2014). What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research. Durham University: UK.

Coffield, FC., Moseley, DVM., Hall, E. and Ecclestone, K. (2004) *Learning Styles and Pedagogy in Post-16 Learning: Findings of a Systematic and Critical Review of Learning Styles Models*. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2005). Research methods in education (5th edition). London and New York: Routledge Farmer.

Cole, E. R. (2008). Coalitions as a model for intersectionality: From practice to theory. *Sex roles*, *59*, 443-453.

Cole, E. R. (2009). Intersectionality and research in psychology. American Psychologist, 64(3), 170.

Collins, P.H. (1990) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, pp. 221–238.

Collins, J., and Cook, D. (2001) *Understanding Learning Influences and Outcomes.* Buckingham: Open University.

Collins, P. H. (2002). What's going on? Black feminist thought and the politics of postmodernism. In *Working the Ruins* (pp. 47-79). Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual review of sociology*, *41*, 1-20.

Collins P. H., Bilge S. (2016). *Intersectionality*. John Wiley & Sons

Collins, P. H., and Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality*. John Wiley & Sons.

Connell, R. (2000) *The Men and the Boys*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cooper, B., Disch, L., & Hawkesworth, M. (2016). The Oxford handbook of feminist theory.

Corson, D. (1997) *Gender, discourse and senior education: Ligatures for girls, options for boys?* London: Sage.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine. University of Chicago Legal Forum, pp. 139–168.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), pp. 1241-1299. doi:10.2307/1229039

Crenshaw, K. W. (1994). Foreword: Toward a Race-Conscious Pedagogy in Legal Education. *S. Cal. Rev. L. & Women's Stud.*, *4*, 33

Crenshaw, K. W., Ocen, P., & Nanda, J. (2015). Black girls matter: Pushed out, overpoliced and underprotected.

Cresswell, J. W. (2013). Educational Research: Pearson New International Edition, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited

Crotty, M. J. (1998). The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process. *The foundations of social research*, 1-256.

Crow, G., Wiles, R., Heath, S., & Charles, V. (2006). Research ethics and data quality: The implications of informed consent. *International journal of social research methodology*, *9*(2), 83-95.

Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist theory*, *9*(1),

Cyr, J. (2016). The pitfalls and promise of focus groups as a data collection method. *Sociological methods & research*, *45*(2), 231-259. 67-85.

Davis, K. (2014). Intersectionality as critical methodology. *Writing academic texts differently: Intersectional feminist methodologies and the playful art of writing*, 17-29.

Dhamoon, R. K. (2011). Considerations on mainstreaming intersectionality. *Political Research Quarterly*, *64*(1), 230-243.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (Vol. 87). NyU press.

Demie, F., & Lewis, K. (2010). Raising the achievement of white working-class pupils. *Lambeth. Retrieved November 11*, 2011.

Demie, F., and Mclean, C. (2017). Black Caribbean Pupils Underachievement in Schools in England.

Denscombe, M. (2007). The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research projects (3rd ed). Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education

Denscombe, M. (2017). *EBOOK: The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

DfES (2004) *The Autumn Package, 2004: Pupil Performance Information.* London: Department of Education and Skills. Department for Education (2014) Attainment gap at age 19 between Free School Meals pupils and the rest. [online] [accessed https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418381/SFR_11-2015.pdf accessed November 2020

Department for Education (2012a) Teachers' Standards. London: DfE. Available at: www.education.gov.uk.

Department for Education (2013) The National Curriculum in England. London: DfE. Available at: www.education.gov.uk.

Devotta, K., Woodhall-Melnik, J., Pedersen, C., Wendaferew, A., Dowbor, T. P., Guilcher, S. J., Hamilton-Wright, S., Ferentzy, P., Hwang, S. W., & Matheson, F. I. (2016). Enriching qualitative research by engaging peer interviewers: a case study. Qualitative Research, 16(6), 661-680. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115626244

DfE. (2015).SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

DFE (2016). Schools, pupils and their characteristics January 2016 (SFR 20/2016). London: Department for Education.

DFE (2017). Special Educational Needs in England: January 2017 (SFR 37/2017). London: Department for Education.

DfE. (2020). Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2020. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-   pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2020

DfE. (2021). Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stageframework--2

DfE. (2023). The Reading Framework. GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1186732/The_reading_framework.pdf

Dill, B. T., & Zambrana, R. E. (2009, Emerging intersections: Race, class, and gender in theory, policy, and practice (pp. 1–21). Rutgers University Press.

Donnelly, R., & Patrinos, H. A. (2021). Learning loss during Covid-19: An early systematic review. *Prospects*, 1-9.

Dottolo, A. L., & Kaschak, E. (2015). Whiteness and white privilege. *Women & Therapy*, *38*(3-4), 179-184.

Dyson, A., S. Goldrick, L. Jones, and K. Kerr (2010) Equity in Education: Creating a fairer education system, Manchester: Centre for Equity in Education, University of Manchester.

Elliott, A. (2020). *Concepts of the Self*. John Wiley & Sons.

Else-Quest, N. M., and Hyde, J. S. (2016). Intersectionality in quantitative psychological research: II. Methods and techniques. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *40*(3), 319-336.

Ely, M. (1991) *Doing qualitative research: circles within circles.* Basingstoke: Falmer.

Enow, L. (2016). *Teacher cognition: a study of secondary English teachers* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Reading).

Ensign, J. (2009). Multiculturalism in four teacher education programs: For replication or transformation. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *11*(3), 169-173.

Epstein, D. (1998). Real boys don't work: Underachievement, masculinity and the harassment of sissies. *Failing boys*, 96-108.

Equality Act (2010) The Stationery Office Limited, London.

Ernest, P. (1994). *An introduction to research methodology and paradigms: Educational Research, its Philosophy and Purpose*. University of Exeter, School of Education.

Evans-Winters, V. E., & Esposito, J. (2010). Other People's Daughters: Critical Race Feminism and Black Girls' Education. *Educational Foundations*, *24*, 11-24.

Faubert, B., (2012), "In-school policies and practices for overcoming school failure: A Literature Review", OECD Education Working Paper, OECD, Paris.

Ferber, A. L., & Herrera, A. O. R. (2013). Teaching privilege through an intersectional lens. In *Deconstructing Privilege* (pp. 83-101). Routledge.

Ferree, M. M., and Hall, E. J. (1996). Rethinking stratification from a feminist perspective: Gender, race, and class in mainstream textbooks. *American Sociological Review*, 929-950.

Few-Demo, A. L. (2014). Intersectionality as the "new" critical approach in feminist family studies: Evolving racial/ethnic feminisms and critical race theories. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *6*(2), 169-183.

Fine, C. (2017). *Testosterone rex: Unmaking the myths of our gendered minds*. Icon Books.

Francis, B. (2015) Impacting policy discourse? An analysis of discourses and rhetorical devices

deployed in the case of the Academies Commission. Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education, 36, 437-451.

Gill, V. S. (2021). *Intersectional Pedagogy: Doing Space and Soul Work in the Community, Classroom, and Curriculum* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania).

Gillborn, D., & Mirza, H. S. (2000). Mapping race, class and gender. *Educational inequality*.

Gillborn, D. (2005). Education policy as an act of white supremacy: Whiteness, critical race theory and education reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, *20*(4), 485-505.

Gillborn, D. (2010). The colour of numbers: surveys, statistics and deficit-thinking about race and class. *Journal of Education Policy*, *25*(2), 253-276.

Gillborn, D., Rollock, N., Vincent, C., & Ball, S. J. (2012). 'You got a pass, so what more do you want?': Race, class and gender intersections in the educational experiences of the Black middle class. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *15*(1), 121-139.

Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism: Race, class, gender, and disability in education. *Qualitative inquiry*, *21*(3), 277-287.

Gillborn, D. (2018). Heads I win, tails you lose: Anti-Black racism as fluid, relentless, individual and systemic. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *93*(1), 66-77.

Givens, J. R. (2021). *Fugitive pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the art of Black teaching*. Harvard University Press.

Gopal, P. (2021). On decolonisation and the university. *Textual Practice*, *35*(6), 873-899.
Grant, C. A., & Zwier, E. (2011). Intersectionality and student outcomes: Sharpening the struggle against racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, nationalism, and linguistic, religious, and geographical discrimination in teaching and learning. *Multicultural perspectives*, *13*(4), 181-188.

Greene, M. J. (2014). On the inside looking in: Methodological insights and challenges in

conducting qualitative insider research. *The qualitative report*, *19*(29), 1-13.

Griffin, C. (2000). Discourses of crisis and loss: Analysing the 'boys' underachievement' debate. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *3*(2), 167-188.

Grix, J. (2002). Introducing students to the generic terminology of social research. *Politics*, *22*(3), 175-186.

Grix, J. (2010). The foundations of research (2nd ed.), Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gross, C., Gottburgsen, A. & Phoenix, A. (2016a) Education systems and intersectionality, in: A. Hadjar & C. Gross (Eds) Education systems and inequalities (Bristol, Policy Press).

Gross, C., Meyer, H. D., & Hadjar, A. (2016b). Theorising the impact of education systems on inequalities. In *Education systems and inequalities* (pp. 11-32). Policy Press.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, *2*(163-194), 105.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, *18*(1), 59-82.

Halej, J. (2017). Ethics in primary research (focus groups, interviews and surveys). *Equality Challenge Unit*, *3*, 1-13.

Hamilton, L. (2011). Case studies in educational research. *British Educational Research Association on-line resource*.

Hamilton, L., & Corbett-Whittier, C. (2013). Defining case study in education research. *Using case study in education research*, 3-22.

Hancock, A. M. (2007). Intersectionality as a normative and empirical paradigm. *Politics & Gender*, *3*(2), 248-254.

Hanna, P. (2012). Using internet technologies (such as Skype) as a research medium: A

research note. *Qualitative research*, *12*(2), 239-242.

Harris, A., & Leonardo, Z. (2018). Intersectionality, race-gender subordination, and education. *Review of Research in Education*, *42*(1), 1-27.

Hills, J. (2010). An anatomy of economic inequality in the UK-report of the National Equality panel. *LSE STICERD Research Paper No. CASEREPORT60*.

Hippisley, S. (2019). Occupying Self and Other: The Politics of Teaching Heart of Darkness as a Teacher of Colour. *Changing English*, *26*(2), 105-116.

Hobbs, G. (2016). Explaining social class inequalities in educational achievement in the UK: quantifying the contribution of social class differences in school 'effectiveness'. *Oxford Review of Education*, *42*(1), 16-35.

Hodgson, A., and Spours, K. (2011). Educating 14-to 19-year olds in England: a UK lens on possible futures. *London Review of Education*, *9*(2), 259-270.

Hoff-Sommers, C. (2000) cited in Warrington, M. and Younger. (2006) *Raising Boys' Achievement in Primary Schools*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Hohenthal, J., Owidi, E., Minoia, P., & Pellikka, P. (2015). Local assessment of changes in water-related ecosystem services and their management: DPASER conceptual model and its application in Taita Hills, Kenya. International Journal of Biodiversity Science, Ecosystem Services & Management, 11, 225–238

Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality--A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research--A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *8*(4), 1-10.

Hopkins, D. (1993) *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Howard, T. C., and Navarro, O. (2016). Critical race theory 20 years later: Where do we go from here? *Urban Education*, *51*(3), 253-273.

Hudson-Sharp, N., Rolfe, H., & Stokes, L. (2015). *A Compendium of Evidence on Ethnic Minority Resilience to the Effects of Deprivation on Attainment: Research Report, June 2015*. National Institute of Economic and Social Research & University of Oxford.

Hunting, G. (2014). Intersectionality-informed qualitative research: A primer. *Criminology*, *4*(1), 32-56.

Ingram, N. (2011). Within school and beyond the gate: The complexities of being educationally successful and working class. *Sociology*, *45*(2), 287-302.

Ingram, N. and Abrahams, J. (2016). Stepping outside of oneself. How a cleft-habitus can lead to greater reflexivity through occupying "the third space". In J. Thatcher, J., Ingram, N. Burke, C. and Abrahams (Ed.), Bourdieu: The Next Generation. The development of Bourdieu's intellectual heritage in contemporary UK sociology. (pp. 141–156). Routledge.

Ingram, N. (2018). *Working-class boys and educational success*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ireland, D. T., Freeman, K. E., Winston-Proctor, C. E., DeLaine, K. D., McDonald Lowe, S., & Woodson, K. M. (2018). (Un) hidden figures: A synthesis of research examining the intersectional experiences of Black women and girls in STEM education. *Review of Research in Education*, *42*(1), 226-254.

Jackson, C. (2002) 'Laddishness' as a self-worth protection strategy, *Gender and Education Vol.14*, pp. 37-51.

Jacobs, J. A. (1996). Gender inequality and higher education. *Annual review of sociology*, *22*(1), 153-185.

Janghorban, R., Latifnejad Roudsari, R., & Taghipour, A. (2014). Pilot study in qualitative research: The roles and values. *Hayat*, *19*(4), 1-5.

Jerrim, J., & Macmillan, L. (2015). Income inequality, intergenerational mobility, and the Great Gatsby Curve: Is education the key? *Social Forces*, *94*(2), 505-533.

Jiménez, L. M. (2021). Mirrors and windows with texts and readers: Intersectional social justice at work in the classroom. *Language Arts*, *98*(3), 156-161.

Jones, S. R., & Wijeyesinghe, C. L. (2011). The promises and challenges of teaching from an intersectional perspective: Core components and applied strategies. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, *2011*(125), 11-20.

Joseph-Salisbury, R. (2018). Confronting my duty as an academic: We should all be activists. *The Fire Now: Anti-Racist Scholarship in Times of Explicit Racial Violence*, 44.

Jussim, L., & Harber, K. D. (2005). Teacher expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies: Knowns and unknowns, resolved and unresolved controversies. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *9*(2), 131-155.

Kerr, K. and M. West (2010) (eds) BERA Insight: Schools and Social Inequality, London: BERA.

Khambhaita, P. (2014). Indian mothers' perceptions of their roles in their daughters' university course choices. *British Educational Research Journal*, *40*(6), 1019-1035.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2012). *Teachers as researchers (classic edition): Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. Routledge.

Kline, R. B. (2008). *Becoming a behavioural science researcher: A guide to producing research that matters*. Guilford Press.

Kluger, A. N., and DeNisi, A. (1996). The effects of feedback interventions on performance: a

historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological bulletin*, *119*(2), 254.

Krippendorf, K. (2013). Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology, 3d Edition, London. Sage Publications Inc

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). Focus group interviewing. *Handbook of practical program evaluation*, 506-534.

Kvale, S. (1983). The qualitative research interview: A phenomenological and a hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of phenomenological psychology*, *14*(2), 171.

Kvale, S. (1994). Ten Standard Objections to Qualitative Research Interviews, Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 25(2), pp. 147-173.

 Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues. Qualitative Inquiry, 12(3), pp. 480-500.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into practice*, *34*(3), 159-165.

Lander, V. (2014). 'Initial Teacher Education: The Practice of Whiteness', in R. Race & V. Lander (Eds.) Advancing Race and Ethnicity in Education, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lazowski, R.A. and Hulleman, C.S. (2016). Motivation interventions in education: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*(2), pp.602-640.

Lebbakhar, A., Hoskins, K., and Chappell, A. (2022). Equality and diversity in secondary schools: teachers' agentic and constrained enactments of the curriculum. *London Review of Education*, *20*(1), 1-13.

Liamputtong, P. (2011). Focus group methodology: Principle and practice. *Focus Group Methodology*, 1-224.

Lipman, M. A. (2021). On relativist approaches to many-one identity. *Synthese*, *198*(Suppl 18), 4453-4465.

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American psychologist*, *57*(9), 705.

Loe, R. (2007) The Classroom Research Column. *English Drama Media*, No 8, pp. 62 – 64

López, N., & Hogan, H. (2021). What's your street race? The urgency of critical race theory and intersectionality as lenses for revising the US Office of Management and budget guidelines, census and administrative data in Latinx communities and beyond. *Genealogy*, *5*(3), 75.

Majid, M. A. A., Othman, M., Mohamad, S. F., Lim, S. A. H., & Yusof, A. (2017). Piloting for interviews in qualitative research: Operationalization and lessons learnt. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *7*(4), 1073-1080.

Majzub, R. M., & Rais, M. M. (2010). Boys' underachievement: Causes and strategies. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *2*(2), 3160-3164.

Mann, S. (2011). A critical review of qualitative interviews in applied linguistics. *Applied linguistics*, *32*(1), 6-24.

Mason, J. (2002). *Researching your own practice: The discipline of noticing*. Routledge.

May, V. M. (2015). *Pursuing intersectionality, unsettling dominant imaginaries*. Routledge.

Maylor, U., Read, B., Mendick, H., Ross, A., & Rollock, N. (2007). *Diversity and citizenship in the curriculum: Research review*. London: DfES.

McBride, A., Hebson, G., & Holgate, J. (2015). Intersectionality: are we taking enough notice in the field of work and employment relations? Work, Employment and Society, 29(2), 331-341. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017014538337

McCall, L. (2001). Sources of racial wage inequality in metropolitan labour markets: Racial,

ethnic, and gender differences. *American Sociological Review*, 520-541.

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, *30*(3), 1771-1800.

Mccrea, P. (2020) Motivated Teaching: Harnessing the science of motivation to boost attention and effort in the classroom. Create Space Independent Publishing.

McLemore, M. R., & Choo, E. K. (2019). The right decisions need the right voices. *The Lancet*, *394*(10204), 1133.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook.* sage.

Milton, D., & Sims, T. (2016). How is a sense of well-being and belonging constructed in the accounts of autistic adults? *Disability & Society*, *31*(4), 520-534.

Minda, G. (1995). *Postmodern legal movements. Law and jurisprudence at century's end*. New York: University Press

Mintz, J., Mulholland, M., & Peacey, N. (2015). Towards a new reality for teacher education for SEND.

Modood, T. (2003). Ethnic differentials in educational performance. In *Explaining ethnic differences* (pp. 53-68). Policy Press.

Mohanty, A. (2017). Multilingualism, education, English and development: Whose development? In H. Coleman (Ed.), Multilingualisms and Development (pp. 261-280). London: British Council.

Morgan, D. L. (1996). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (Vol. 16). Sage publications.

Moss, G. (2007). *Literacy and gender: Researching texts, contexts and readers*. Routledge.

Mulcahy, D. (2011). Assembling the 'accomplished' teacher: The performativity and politics

of professional teaching standards. *Educational philosophy and theory*, *43*, 94-113.

Nabatchi, T., Gastil, J., Weiksner, G. M., & Leighninger, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Democracy in motion: Evaluating the practice and impact of deliberative civic engagement*. Oxford University Press.

Naples, N. A. (2013). *Feminism and method: Ethnography, discourse analysis, and activist research*. Routledge.

Nash, J. C. (2008). Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, *89*(1), 1-15.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International journal of qualitative methods*, *16*(1), 1609406917733847.

Nunkoosing, K. (2005). The problems with interviews. *Qualitative health research*, *15*(5), 698-706.

OECD (2012), Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en

Olufemi, L., Younge, O., Sebatindira, W., and Manzoor-Khan, S. (2019). *A Fly Girl's Guide to University: Being a Woman of Colour at Cambridge and Other Institutions of Power and Elitism*. Verve Poetry Press.

Ortiz, C. J., Valerio, M. A., & Lopez, K. (2012). Trends in Hispanic academic achievement: Where do we go from here? *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *11*(2), 136-148.

Ortiz, V., Cain, R., Formica, S. W., Bishop, R., Hernández, H., & Lama, L. (2021). Our voices matter: using lived experience to promote equity in problem gambling prevention. *Current Addiction Reports*, *8*(2), 255-262.

Panter-Brick, C., Dajani, R., Hamadmad, D., & Hadfield, K. (2022). Comparing online and in-person surveys: Assessing a measure of resilience with Syrian refugee youth. *International*

Journal of Social Research Methodology, *25*(5), 703-709.

Patton, L. D., Crenshaw, K., Haynes, C., & Watson, T. N. (2016). Why we can't wait:(Re) examining the opportunities and challenges for Black women and girls in education (Guest Editorial). *The Journal of Negro Education*, *85*(3), 194-198.

Perry, E., & Francis, B. (2010). The social class gap for educational achievement: A review of the literature. *RSA Projects*, 1-21.

Phoenix, A., & Brah, A. (2004). Ain't I a woman? Revisiting Intersectionality. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *5*(3), 75-86.

Phoenix, A., and Pattynama, P. (2006). intersectionality. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *13*(3), 187-192.

Polit, D.F., Beck, C.T. and Hungler, B.P. (2001), *Essentials of Nursing Research: Methods, Appraisal and Utilization*. 5th Ed., Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. P. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. *Sex roles*, *59*, 377-391.

Rathmann, K., Herke, M., Bilz, L., Rimpelä, A., Hurrelmann, K., & Richter, M. (2018). Class-level school performance and life satisfaction: Differential sensitivity for low- and high-performing school-aged children. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. https:// doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15122750.

Reay, D. (2012). What would a socially just education system look like?: Saving the minnows from the pike. *Journal of Education Policy*, *27*(5), 587-599.

Reay, D. (2017). The cruelty of social mobility: Individual success at the cost of collective failure. In *Social Mobility for the 21st Century* (pp. 146-157). Routledge.

Rhamie, J. (2012). Achievement and underachievement: the experiences of African

Caribbeans. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *15*(5), 683-704.

Rice, C., Harrison, E., and Friedman, M. (2019). Doing justice to intersectionality in research. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies*, *19*(6), 409-420.

Rodenborg, N. A., & Boisen, L. A. (2013). Aversive racism and intergroup contact theories: Cultural competence in a segregated world. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *49*(4), 564-579.

Rollock, N. (2007). Why Black girls don't matter: exploring how race and gender shape academic success in an inner city school. Support for Learning, 22(4), 197–202. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9604.2007.00471.x

Rosenshine, B. (2012). Principles of Instruction: Research-based strategies that all teachers should know. American Educator, 36, 12–20.

Ross, L. E. (2017). An account from the inside: Examining the emotional impact of qualitative research through the lens of "insider" research. *Qualitative Psychology*, *4*(3), 326.

Rowe, W. E. (2014). Positionality. *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research*, *628*, 627-628

Rubin, H. J., and Rubin, I. S. (2012). Qualitative Interviewing. The Art of Hearing Data. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2015). Informed consent and other ethical concerns. *Surviving your dissertation*, 313-332.

Salmons, J. (2011). Designing and Conducting. *Cases in online interview research*, 1.

Sanders, J. and Rose-Adams, J. (2014) 'Black and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment: A Survey of Research and Exploration of the Importance of Teacher and Student Expectations', Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 16, 2: 5-27.

Sanger, C. S. (2020). Inclusive pedagogy and universal design approaches for diverse learning environments. *Diversity and inclusion in global higher education: Lessons from across Asia*,

31-71.

Serrat, O. (2021). Book analysis of interviewing as qualitative research (Seidman, 2013). *Leading Solutions: Essays in Business Psychology*, 281-286.

Settles, I. H., & Buchanan, N. T. (2014). Multiple groups, multiple identities, and intersectionality. *The Oxford handbook of multicultural identity*, *1*, 160-180.

Sieciel, H. (2011). Epistemological relativism: Arguments pro and con.

Sikes, P. (2004). Methodology, procedures and ethical concerns. *Doing educational research*, 15-33.

Singmaster, H. (2018). The importance of diverse perspectives and how to foster them. Education Week.

Shields, S. A. (2008). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. *Sex roles*, *59*, 301-311.

Skelton, C., & Francis, B. (2009). *Feminism and 'the schooling scandal'*. Routledge.

Skerrett, A. (2011). English teachers' racial literacy knowledge and practice. Race Ethnicity and Education, 14(3), 313–330.

Smiet, K. (2017). Travelling truths: Sojourner Truth, intersectionality and feminist scholarship. *Radboud University, Nijmegen*.

Smith, E. (2003). Failing boys and moral panics: Perspectives on the underachievement debate. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *51*(3), 282-295.

Sodha, S. and J. Margo (2010) "A generation of disengaged children is waiting in the wings…", London: DEMOS.

Steinmetz, K. (2020). She coined the term 'intersectionality' over 30 years ago. Here's what it means to her today. *Time Magazine*, *23*.

Stewart, D.W. (2018): Focus groups. In: Frey, B.B. (ed.) The SAGE Encyclopedia of

Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation, vol. 2, pp. 687–692. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks

Strand, S. (2010). Do some schools narrow the gap? Differential school effectiveness by ethnicity, gender, poverty and prior attainment. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 21(3), 289-314.

Strand, S. (2014). Ethnicity, gender, social class and achievement gaps at age 16: Intersectionality and 'Getting it' for the white working class. Research Papers in Education, 29, (2), 131-171. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2013.767370

Strand, S. (2015). Ethnicity, deprivation and educational achievement at age 16 in England: Trends over time.

Strauss, A. (1995). Notes on the nature and development of general theories. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *1*(1), 7-18.

Sukhnandan, L., Lee, B. and Kelleher, S. (2000) *An investigation into Gender Differences in Achievement Phase 2: School and classroom strategies*. Slough: NFER

Swann, J. (1992) *Girls, Boys and Language*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Taylor, K. Y. (2016). *From# BlackLivesMatter to black liberation*. Haymarket Books.

Tefera, A. A., Powers, J. M., & Fischman, G. E. (2018). Intersectionality in education: A conceptual aspiration and research imperative. *Review of research in education*, *42*(1), vii-xvii.

Tatli, A. and Özbilgin, M. (2012), "*Surprising intersectionalities of inequality and privilege: the case of the arts and cultural sector*", Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 249-265.

Thomas, L. (2012). Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change. *Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 100*.

Thomas E. E. (2015). "We always talk about race": Navigating race talk dilemmas in the teaching of literature. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 50, 154–175. ISI.

Thondhlana, J., & Madziva, R. (2017). English language as an integration tool: the case of Syrian refugees to the UK.

Thornberg, R., & Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded theory and theoretical coding. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*, *5*(2014), 153-69.

Tomlin, C., Wright, C., & Mocombe, P. C. (2014). A structural approach to understanding Black British Caribbean academic underachievement in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Social Sciences for Policy Implications, American Research Institute for Policy Development*, *2014*, 37-58.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Tsiplakides, I., & Keramida, A. (2010). The Relationship between Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. *English Language Teaching*, *3*(2), 22-26.

Tuckett, A. G. (2005) Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: A researcher's experience, Contemporary Nurse, 19(1-2), pp. 75-87.

Tuckett, S., Hunt, E., Robinson, D., & Cruickshanks, R. (2022) Covid-19 and Disadvantage Gaps in England 2021. Education Policy Institute, 15.

Ültanir, E. (2012). An epistemological glance at the constructivist approach: Constructivist learning in Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori. *International journal of instruction*, *5*(2).

Vadivel, B., Alam, S., Nikpoo, I., & Ajanil, B. (2023). The Impact of Low Socioeconomic Background on a Child's Educational Achievements. *Education Research*

International, *2023*.

Van Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. *Social research update*, (35), 1-4.

Vincent, C. (2017) 'The Children Have Only Got One Education and You Have to Make Sure It's a Good One'. *Parenting and Parent-School Relations in a Neoliberal Age, Gender and Education* 29(5): 541–57, Crossref

Wallin-Ruschman, J., Richey, C., Case, A., & Carns, K. (2020). Reflections and results from the intersections: Teaching and learning the praxis of intersectionality in the psychology classroom. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling & Psychology*, *12*(1), 13-26.

Warner, L. R., & Shields, S. A. (2013). The intersections of sexuality, gender, and race: Identity research at the crossroads. *Sex roles*, *68*, 803-810.

Warrington, M. and Younger, M (2004) We decided to give it a twirl: single-sex teaching in English Comprehensive Schools. *Gender and Education* Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 339-350

Warrington, M. and Younger, M (2006) *Raising Boys' Achievement in Primary Schools*: *an holistic approach.* Maidenhead: Open University Press

Weber, L. (2001). *Understanding race, class, gender, and sexuality: A conceptual framework.* McGraw-Hill Humanities, Social Sciences & World Languages.

Weber, L. (2010). Understanding race, class, gender, and sexuality: A conceptual framework (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Weber L. & Parra-Medina D. (2003). Intersectionality and women‟s health: Charting a path to eliminating health disparities. In Texler Segal M., Demos V. & Kronenfeld J. (eds.) Gender perspectives on health and medicine: Key Themes, pp. 181-229. Oxford: Elsevier.

Wellington, J. J. (2005). *Succeeding with your Doctorate*. Sage.

Werbner, P. (2013). Everyday multiculturalism: Theorising the difference between 'intersectionality 'and 'multiple identities'. *Ethnicities*, *13*(4), 401-419.

Westwood, P. (2018). *Inclusive and adaptive teaching: Meeting the challenge of diversity in the classroom*. Routledge.

Williams, S. L. (2013). Belonging, Believing, Being: A Journey Toward Social Justice.

Williamson T. (2017). Avoiding the gaze of the test: High stakes literacy policy implementation. *Texas Education Review*, 5, 66–90.

Wise, T., Case, K. A. (2013). Pedagogy for the privileged: Addressing inequality and injustice without shame or blame. In K. A. Case (Ed.), Deconstructing privilege: Teaching and learning as allies in the classroom (pp. 17–33). Routledge.

Wittwer, J., & Renkl, A. (2010) How Effective are Instructional Explanations in Example-Based Learning? A Meta-Analytic Review. Educational Psychology Review, 22(4), 393–409.

Witz, K. G., and Bae, S. A. (2011). Understanding another person and Cooley's principle of sympathetic introspection: Consciousness in the study of human life and experience II. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *17*(5), 433-445.

Woodhead, C. (1996) Boys who learn to be losers, *The Times,* 6 March.

Wray, D., Medwell, J., Poulson, L. and Fox, R. (2002) *Teaching Literacy Effectively in the Primary School.* London: Routledge.

Younger, M., Warrington, M. and McLellan, R. (2005) *Raising Boys' Achievement in Secondary Schools: issues, dilemmas and opportunities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2006a. Human/women's rights and feminist transversal politics. In Transnational Feminisms: Women's global activism and human rights, edited by Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp. New York: New York University

Yuval-Davis, N. (2007). Intersectionality, citizenship and contemporary politics of

belonging. *Critical review of international social and political philosophy*, *10*(4), 561-574.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Participant Information Letter and Consent Form

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter serves to ascertain if you would be able to take part in my research study about how teachers achieve equity in the classroom using intersectionality. I am a Teacher of English with 20 years of experience and a PhD research student at Lancaster University.

Please take the time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether you wish to take part. The research is a case study into teacher skills and knowledge of intersectionality and the effect on student learning in English. Intersectionality refers to the social, economic, and political ways in which our multiple identities intersect to make us who we are. It also refers to the fact that what are often considered dissimilar systems of subjugation are mutually dependent and intersecting in nature and together, they constitute an integrated system of oppression. Intersectionality, therefore, is also about social justice and inequalities. If you decide to take part, this will involve conducting a virtual interview using Zoom. The interview will last between 30 – 60 mins with each participant discussing their perceptions on student achievement and how this intersects with class, race, and gender.

Taking part in this study will allow you to share your experiences on this topic of intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy and your practice. I would like to stress here that any comments made will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Anonymity is assured. Also, it is completely up to you to decide whether you take part. All participation is voluntary. If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time during your participation in this study. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and I will extract any ideas or information you contributed to the study and destroy them. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. Therefore, you can only withdraw up to 4 weeks after taking part in the study.

 Once my project is completed, only I, the researcher conducting this study will have access to the ideas you share with me. I will keep all personal information about you confidential that is, I will not share it with others, and I will remove any personal information from the written

record of your contribution. I will use the information you have shared with me only in the following ways:

I will use it for research purposes only. This will be included in my PhD thesis and other publications, for example, journal articles. I may also present the results of my study at academic conferences.

When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you have shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with participants) so that although I will use your exact words, they cannot be identified in our publications. In addition, my findings will be made available to participants, should they be interested. In the meantime, I will check my interpretation of comments with you by forwarding to you a copy of my transcript of your interview.

Your participation in this research is very important and I hope that you will feel able to participate.

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers. I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office. I will keep data that can identify participants separately from non-personal information (e.g. participants' views on a specific topic). In accordance with university guidelines, I will keep the data securely for a minimum of ten years. If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact me or my supervisor at the following:

Sophia Kapcia – s.kapcia@lancaster.ac.uk

Melis Cin- m.cin@lanacaster.ac.uk

Yours truly

Sophia Kapcia

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Consent Form

Title of Project: How Can Teachers of English Create Intersectional English Classrooms to Achieve Equity? A case study on how teachers use intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy in the English classroom to address educational inequalities and facilitate their pupils' differing needs.

Name of Researcher: Sophia Kapcia

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

3. I consent to the interview/session being audio-recorded.

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 2   Interview Schedule

<u>Teacher Interview Questions</u>

<u>Glossary</u>

Intersectionality: Intersectionality refers to the social, economic and political ways in which our multiple identities intersect to make us who we are. As a result, what are often considered different systems of subjugation are not because they are mutually dependent and intersect together to create systems of oppression.

Intersectional Pedagogy: Intersectional Pedagogy is a methodology of teaching and learning where the inequality and marginalisation caused by intersecting social identities are understood, clarified and interrogated within the classroom.

1. What is the general demographic profile of your school intake?

2. What is the background of the students in your English classes in terms of their gender, race and class?

3. How long have you been a Teacher of English?

   b) How long have you been teaching at your present school?

4. Can you explain your understanding of intersectionality and its importance to teaching and learning?

   a) How is intersectionality seen in your lessons?

   b) What factors do you believe account for the educational achievement and the underachievement of students in your English classes?

   c) To what extent can favouring equality over pedagogical approaches in the English classroom be a disadvantage for pupils in terms of their achievement?

d) To what extent do you believe that there are drawbacks to using intersectional pedagogy within your classroom?

5. Do you use any systems at the classroom level for monitoring and evaluating the progress and attainment of students in terms of their gender, race and class in English?

   a) What is the effect/impact of these systems of evaluation on your pupils' attainment?

   b) When you think of your English lessons do you notice any patterns of who participates or what types of activities specific students enjoy doing?

   b) What differences do you notice in terms of race, class and gender?

6. Can you give specific examples/strategies that you incorporate in your practice that cater to the needs of your pupils in terms of their race, class and gender? What evidence do you have of their success?

7. How do you differentiate the English curriculum to suit the needs and cater to your pupils in terms of their gender, race and class?

   8. To what extent do you believe you can influence your pupils' educational attainment? In what ways?

Appendix 3- Focus Group Discussion Questions
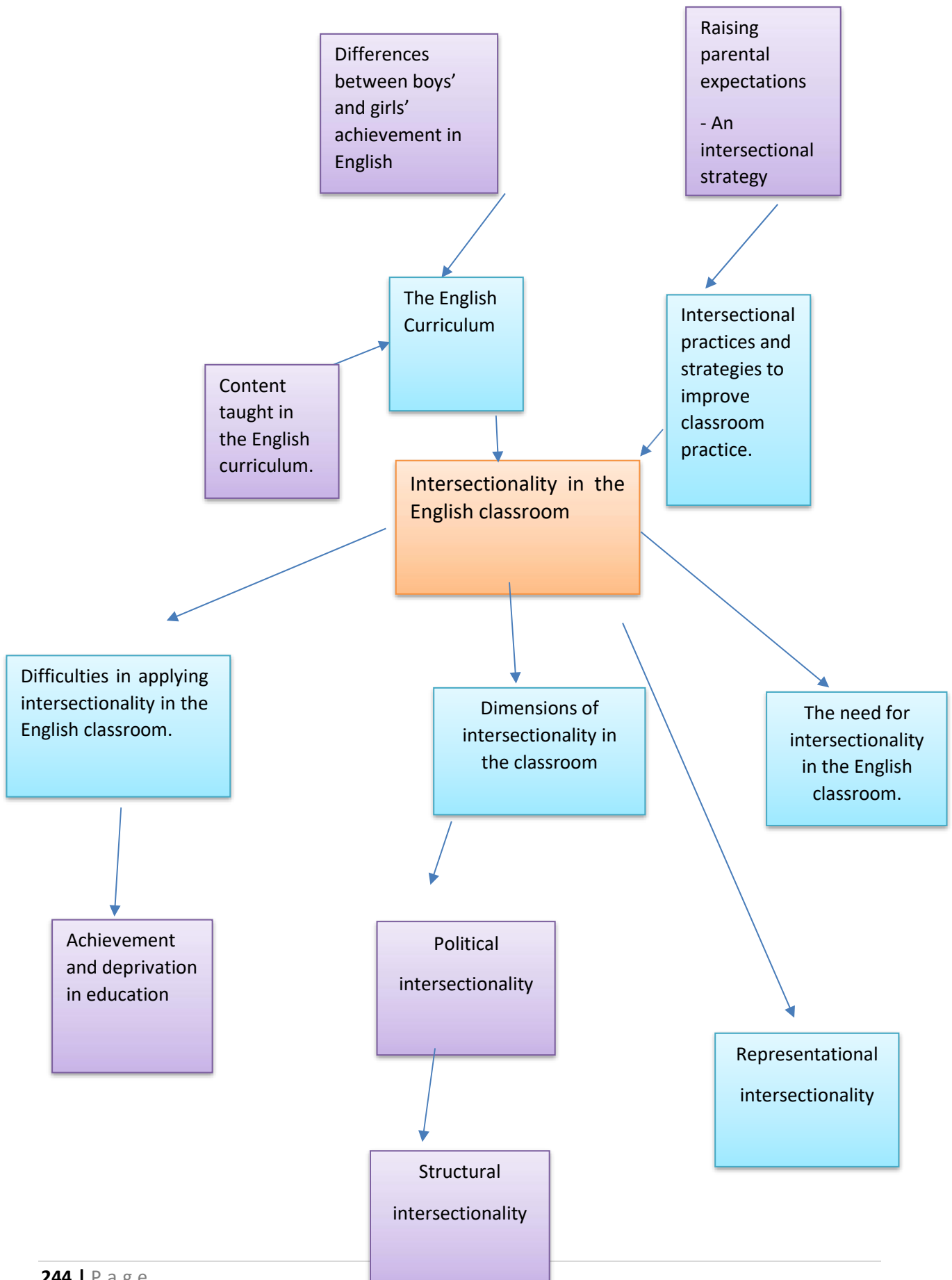
Focus Group Discussion Questions

<u>Glossary</u>

Intersectionality: Intersectionality refers to the social, economic and political ways in which our multiple identities intersect to make us who we are. As a result, what are often considered different systems of subjugation are not because they are mutually dependent and intersect together to create systems of oppression.

Intersectional Pedagogy: Intersectional Pedagogy is a methodology of teaching and learning where the inequality and marginalisation caused by intersecting social identities are understood, clarified and interrogated within the classroom.

1. What experiences have you had of using intersectional pedagogy in your practice?
2. How have you used intersectional pedagogy within your teaching?
3. What are the benefits of using intersectional pedagogy?
4. What would a scheme of work/ curriculum look like that has intersectionality and intersectional pedagogy embedded?

Appendix 4- Themes, sub-themes and codes

Differences between boys' and girls' achievement in English

Raising parental expectations

- An intersectional strategy

The English Curriculum

Content taught in the English curriculum.

Intersectional practices and strategies to improve classroom practice.

Intersectionality in the English classroom

Difficulties in applying intersectionality in the English classroom.

Dimensions of intersectionality in the classroom

The need for intersectionality in the English classroom.

Achievement and deprivation in education

Political intersectionality

Representational intersectionality

Structural intersectionality

Appendix 4- Themes, sub-themes and codes

<u>Theme 1: The dimensions of intersectionality in the classroom</u>

- Sub-theme 1:1: Race and Ethnicity

  - Code 1.1.1: Experiences of racial discrimination

  - Code 1.1.2: Racial identity development

- Sub-theme 1.2: Gender

  - Code 1.2.1: Gender stereotypes and biases

  - Code 1.2.2: Gender expression and fluidity

- Sub-theme 1.3: Socioeconomic Status

  - Code 1.3.1: Economic disparities and their impact

  - Code 1.3.2: Educational opportunities and inequalities

- Sub-theme 1.4: Experiences of discrimination

  - Code 1:4.1: Microaggressions

<u>Theme 2: The English Curriculum</u>

- Sub-theme 2.1: Representation in Literature

-Code 2:1.1: Diverse authors

 - Code 2.1.2: Representation of diverse voices

 - Code 2.1.2: Inclusive reading materials/ Inclusive Literature

- Code 2:1.3: Stereotypes in literature

- Sub-theme 2.2: Pedagogy

  - Code 2.2.1: Inclusive teaching methods

  - Code 2.2.2: Critical analysis of texts

 - Code 2:2.3: Cultural sensitivity in communication

- Sub-theme 2.3: Curriculum Development

  - Code 2.3.1: Curriculum design for intersectional education

  - Code 2.3.2: Curriculum adaptation for diverse learners

  - Code 2:2.3: Decolonizing the curriculum

Theme 3: Importance of intersectionality within the English classroom

- Sub-theme 3.1: Awareness and Sensitivity

  - Code 3.1.1: Raising awareness of intersectionality

  - Code 3.1.2: Fostering empathy among students

- Sub-theme 3.2: Social Justice

  - Code 3.2.1: Promoting social justice through education

  - Code 3.2.2: Advocacy and activism in the classroom

- Sub-theme 3.3: Student engagement and motivation

  - Code 3:3.1: Relatability of content

  - Code 3:3.2: Empowerment through representation

Theme 4: Intersectional practices and strategies in the English classroom

- Sub-theme 4.1: Inclusive Language

  - Code 4.1.1: Use of gender-neutral language

  - Code 4.1.2: Avoiding microaggressions in communication

- Sub-theme 4.2: Differentiated Instruction

  - Code 4.2.1: Tailoring instruction to diverse learning styles

  - Code 4.2.2: Addressing individual student needs

- Sub-theme 4.3: Inclusive teaching methods

  - Code 4:3.1: Culturally responsive teaching

  - Code 4:3.2: Collaborative learning

- Sub-theme 4.4: Teacher training and professional development

  - Code 4:4.1: Intersectional pedagogy training

  - Code 4:4.2: Support networks for educators

Theme 5: The importance of identity and belonging to intersectionality.

- Sub-theme 5.1: Identity Development

  - Code 5.1.1: Formation of self-identity

  - Code 5.1.2: Cultural and personal identity exploration

- Sub-theme 5.2: Belonging and Inclusion

- Code 5.2.1: Creating a sense of belonging for all students

- Code 5.2.2: Overcoming exclusion

- Sub-theme 5.3: School culture and climate

- Code 5:3.1: Inclusive policies and practices

- Code 5:3.2: Sense of belonging

- Code 5:3.3: Equity and justice initiatives